

英语翻译研究导论

The Introduction to English Translation Research

王卓洪宇 张大鹏 著

中国铁道出版社
CHINA RAILWAY PUBLISHING HOUSE

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内 容 简 介

本书主要论述了如何在具有了一定的语言功底和翻译基础之上进行翻译(笔译),从翻译理论在不同的文本体裁的应用入手,提出如何将跨文化思维应用到实际翻译研究之中。通过培养英语语法思维,从而培养出英语的翻译思维。

本书适合英语翻译工作人员参考,也适合普通高等学校英语专业学生练习翻译英语作品时参考和借鉴。

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作 者: 王 卓 洪 宇 张大鹏 著

策 划: 潘星泉

读者热线: (010) 63550836

责任编辑: 潘星泉

编辑助理: 绳 超

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责任校对: 张玉华

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FOREWORD

翻译活动是人类文明发展和交流的媒介与桥梁。无论是西方的圣经翻译、中国的佛经翻译，还是东西方文学、政治、经济、文化等多个领域的翻译活动，都极大地促进了全球的融合，加强了不同民族与文化之间的沟通。在现代化建设的推动下，我国与世界其他各国的交流更加频繁，中国翻译事业呈现出前所未有的繁荣。

然而，当前从英文这个“世界性语言”中翻译和引进的书籍无论是数量还是种类都大大超过了从中文翻译和输出的数量与种类。中国悠久的历史文化、丰富多样的现当代文学作品、政治经济文化建设取得的理论成果等都需要通过将汉语翻译成其他语言才能为世界所熟知，以此为人类的发展贡献一份力量。可惜的是从“质”上看，我国目前虽有庞大的翻译队伍，但从“量”上看，高素质、高水平的翻译人才仍极为缺乏。

著名翻译理论家费道罗夫曾说过：“翻译是一门专业性很强的语言学学科，它研究两种语言的对比规律，而任何一种翻译都要靠两种语言的对比。”可见，对比是翻译理论的核心。翻译的理论、方法和技巧建立在英汉两种语言异同对比的基础上。由于历史、文化和社会状况的不同，英汉两种语言在很多方面存在不少的差异，这就给翻译工作者带来不少的挑战。而翻译实践告诉我们：对双语研究得越深刻，对原文理解越准确，运笔自觉性也越高，从而真正做到胸有成竹，下笔有神。因此，

可以说英汉对比研究是翻译学的一个重要研究课题。了解并掌握好英汉语言、文化上的共性和异性有助于提高翻译的质量。

从翻译的实际过程来看,英语和汉语不仅在语言上存在差异,两种语言使用者在思维、认知、文化以及价值观上也存在差异,这些差异通常会在词汇、语义、语法和语篇层次上表现出来,给语言转换造成困难。翻译是跨文化、跨语言的交际活动,但不是一种语言与另一种语言间的简单转换。翻译活动既要考虑翻译目的,也要考虑翻译的效果。翻译工作者在加强本族语水平的同时,有意识进行英汉两种语言、文化的对比,有利于减少和消除英汉互译的障碍。在一定意义上而言,学习翻译除了是学习两种语言的转换之外,更重要的是学习两种思维方式、两种文化的转换。

本书的突出特点是注重英汉对比分析对翻译的指导作用,强调理论与实践兼备,从全新的角度——宏观与微观相结合,宏观为主,微观为辅,对比英、汉两种语言、思维,尤其是文化的异同。本书前面部分在比较的基础上阐述翻译理论,并着重论述常见翻译技巧运用的动因和实施方式,帮助读者认知和预测各种翻译中的问题。本书后面部分分析了多种不同文本、语料和体裁的各自特点,总结了翻译技巧及其运用,将双语知识转化为有力的方法论工具,深化对翻译技巧的实践,提高翻译技能。

本书共分9章,其中洪宇撰写了Chapter 1~Chapter 5,王卓撰写了Chapter 6~Chapter 8,张大鹏撰写了Chapter 9。

由于水平所限,不乏疏漏和欠妥之处,恳请广大读者不吝指正,以臻完善。

著者

2016年10月



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Chapter 1 General Theories of Translation

1.1 Definition of Translation

Translation, generally speaking, implies rendering from one language into another of something written or spoken. It is essentially the faithful representation in one language of what is written or spoken in another. It is the replacement of the information of the source language by its counterpart of the target language. Also it can be roughly defined as a reproduction or recreation in one language of what is written or said in another language.

However, translation, in a narrow sense, is the practice of finding the equivalent both in form and essence between two cultures. The two terms translation and translating should be distinguished for a translator. Translation just refers to the act that the translator translates from one language into another, and translating is the process in which the translator does his best to convey the message of the source language. Furthermore, translating is not a word-for-word conversion, but a process of bilingual and intercultural from the communication. It expresses the message of the source language: the receptor language message, and the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that between the original receptor and the message.

Translating means communicating, and this process depends on what is received by persons hearing or reading a translation. Judging the validity of a translation cannot stop with comparison of corresponding lexical meanings, grammatical classes, or rhetorical devices. As a means of communication, translation plays an important role in human civilization. In the West, literary translation can be traced back to 300 B.C., while in China, recorded translation activities were even earlier, dating from the Zhou Dynasty (1100 B.C.). However, not until recent centuries, especially by the end of the 19th century did systematic study of translation get under way. In the past decades translation theories and activities have developed fast both at home and abroad.

World-famous British writer and dictionary compiler, Samuel Johnson, once said, "To translate is to change into another language, retaining as much of the sense as one can." This definition for translation has two key points. One is "to change into", which tells us that translation is an act of putting one language in place of another language. The other is "retaining much of the sense", which implies avoiding losing the sense or meaning of the original. It seems to be simple because translation cannot simply reproduce, or be the original. "A translator is always trying to extend his knowledge and improve his means of expression; he is always pursuing facts and words. He works on four levels: translation is first a science, which entails the knowledge and verification of the facts and the language that describe them—here, what is wrong, mistakes of truth, can be identified; secondly, it is a skill, which calls for appropriate language and acceptable usage; thirdly, an art, which distinguishes good from undistinguished writing and is the creative, the intuitive, sometimes the inspired, level of the translation; lastly, a matter of taste, where argument ceases, preferences are expressed, and the variety of meritorious translation is the reflection of individual differences." (Peter Newmark, 1988)

What is important is the extent to which receptors correctly understand and appreciate the translated text. Accordingly, it is essential that functional equivalence be stated primarily in terms of a comparison between the way in which the original receptors understand and appreciate the text with the way in which receptors of the translated text understand and appreciate the text. Being a very complicated human activity, its whole picture is never easy to describe. Scholars with different academic backgrounds have attempted to define it from various perspectives.

In the linguistic views, translation theorists from the linguistic school conceive of translation as a linguistic activity, and some believe that translation theory is a branch of linguistics, approaching the issues of translating primarily from the viewpoint of the linguistic differences between source and target texts.

Catford thinks that translation may be defined as the replacement of textual material in one language or the source language by equivalent textual material in another language or the target language.

Nida & Taber suppose that translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in

terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.

Newmark believes that translation theory derives from comparative linguistics, and within linguistics, it is mainly an aspect of semantics; all questions of semantics relate to translation theory.

In the cultural views, some scholars think that translation, is regarded not only as a transfer of linguistic signs, but also as a communication of cultures, i. e. translation is an “intercultural communication”; hence the terms of “intercultural cooperation”, “acculturation”, and “transculturation” are usually used in translation studies.

Shuttleworth & Cowie think that translation is a process which occurs between cultures rather than simply between languages. A translator who uses a cultural approach is simply recognizing that each language contains elements which are derived from its culture (such as greetings and fixed expressions, that every text is anchored in a specific culture, and that conventions of text production and reception vary from culture to culture).

Nida (2001:82) believes that biculturalism, for truly successful translating, is even more important than bilingualism, since words only have meanings in terms of the cultures in which they function.

In fact, Chinese scholars are also conscious of the importance of culture in translation. Wang Zuoliang (王佐良, 1989) thinks that translation is not only involved in linguistic issues, but also involved in cultural ones. The translator needs to be acquainted himself or herself with foreign cultures and self-ethical ones. In addition, he or she compares the two cultures constantly because the translation should be equivalent in meanings, function, scopes, emotion, effects and others.

In the literary views, translators who hold this view believe that translation is an artistic recreation or a recreated art. Some modern Western scholars from the literary school take literary translation to be “the manipulation or rewriting of the source texts”. The task of literary translation is to show the intact social life of the works from one language to another, to aspire after its language artistry and value. As Mao Dun(茅盾) puts, literary translation needs to get hold of the same elicitation, inspiration and esthetical reception of the original as what the reader reads the source text when he or she is reading the target text.

In a sense, all the above-mentioned are correct because language is a kind of

tool to mold the literary image, and therefore the quality of the literary visualization is certainly put up in language. The features of literary language like image, lifelikeness, trenchancy, connotation, coagulation, fidelity, humor, jocularly, ethnical qualities, local touches, jargons, idioms and proverbs, etc. , are all the necessities to mold the image. Translation needs to keep the characteristics and style of the original.

In the semantic views on translation, the translator attempts, within the bare syntactic and semantic constraints of the target language, to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the author (Newmark 1982). Translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text (Newmark 1988). This view focuses on the semantic equivalence between the two languages, as well expressed by Eugene Nida (1986) : "Translating means translating meaning". In semantic translation, greater attention is paid to rendering the author's original thought-processes in target language than to attempting to re-interpret source text in a way which the translator considers more appropriate for the target setting (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997).

In the functional views, translation is a specific form of human action with a certain purpose, a kind of linguistic service provided to the society. Translators should take into account the needs of the client, the reader as well as the purpose or use of the translation. It is not the source text, or its effects on the source-text recipient, or the function assigned to it by the author, that determines the translation process, but the prospective function or purpose of the target text as determined by the initiator's, i. e. client's needs (Baker 2001).

In the communicative views on translation, the translator attempts to produce the same effect on the target language readers as was produced by the original on the source language readers (Newmark 1982). This approach views translation as a communicative process which takes place within a social context. Communicative translation is generally oriented towards the needs of the target language reader or recipient. A translator who is translating communicatively will treat source text as a message rather than a mere string of linguistic units, and will be concerned to preserve source text's original function and to reproduce its effect on the new audience (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997).

In all, we conclude that translation is a kind of social and communicative act, with reference to the text and with the specific purposes, of cross-cultural and

inter-lingual, which investigation objects and processes vary from the different desires and social demands of the translator.

In addition, translation covers a very broad range. As far as the form of expression is concerned, translation is classified as oral interpretation, written translation and machine translation. In terms of language, it can be divided into two categories, native language to foreign language and vice versa. In terms of the categorical coverage, it is classified as translation of social science and that of physical science, namely, the translation of scientific materials; translation of literary works such as novels, stories, prose, poetry, drama, etc.; translation of political essays such as treatises on social problems, reports, speeches, etc.; translation of practical writing such as official documents, contracts and agreements, notices, receipts, etc. As far as the disposal, it is classified into full text translation, abridged translation or adapted translation.

1.2 Rules in Translation

The so-called criteria of translation are actually the two sides of the same thing. The former lays emphasis on the translator, who should follow them while translating; while the latter on the reader or critic, who may use the criteria to evaluate translation versions. In fact, the criteria of translation practically concern three fundamental aspects: firstly the nature of translation as linking together content and form; secondly, the principles for adequate and acceptable translation; and lastly the problems one translator ought to be able to recognize and resolve in order to produce a satisfactory translation. Some well-known translators or translation theorists at home and abroad have put forward criteria to judge the quality of a translation.

In Chinese history, we have got a few influential criteria during the different ages. Early in the Tang Dynasty(ca 620 A.D.), the learned monk Xuan Zang(玄奘, 602-664 A.D.) contributed his life to translation and put forth the criteria of translation“既须求真, 又须喻俗”, which placed emphasis on accuracy and general knowledge, and it is still acceptable and useful in translation today. In the Qing Dynasty (ca 1898 A.D.), Yan Fu (严复, 1853—1921 A.D.), a famous translator, put forth the famous criteria of translation“信、达、雅”(faithfulness, communicability and elegance) when he finished translating *Evolution and Ethics* (《天演论》) and other essays. He once said, “译事三难: 信、达、雅。求其

信，已大难矣！顾信矣，不达，虽译，犹不译也，则达尚焉。”(There are three difficulties in translation: faithfulness, communicability and elegance. The consideration of faithfulness to the original is so difficult; when it is got, communicability is unavailable, and if one gives a version that is faithful without being communicative at the same time, the translated work is almost tantamount to nonexistence. Hence communicability should be required too.) His criteria of translation have been generally considered as the plumb line for measuring the professional level of translation and the goal for translation to strive after in the past decades. However, people have argued about his criteria of translation because they think that there are some limitations in the application of them.

On the basis of Yan Fu's criteria of translation, some scholars put forward various criteria of translation. Lu Xun(鲁迅)proposed “信、顺”(faithfulness and smoothness) as the criteria of translation, and talked about the relationship between them.

Qu Qiubai(瞿秋白)pointed out the principle of equivalent in *A Letter to Mr Lu Xun* (《给鲁迅的信》) in 1931. He said, “我的意见是，翻译应当把原文的本意，完全正确的介绍给中国读者，使中国读者所得到的概念等同于英俄日德法读者从原文得到的概念。”(《鲁迅全集·二心集》，人民文学出版社，1981). He thought that translation should introduce the original meaning to Chinese readers in a completely adequate way, and enable them to get concepts equivalent to those readers of Great Britain, Russia, Japan, Germany and France extract from the original. His principle of equivalent firstly, in Chinese translation history, concentrated on the conversion of the readers of the original from the writer of the original. That is, he had already noticed that the information sender should be converted to the information receiver, and that communication or translation is always considered as the matter of both sides.

Fu Lei(傅雷)had his criteria of translation, “神似”(spiritual conformity), which emphasized the reproduction of the spirit or the flavor of the original. He once said, “以效果而论，翻译应当像临画一样，所求的不在形似而在神似。”(转引自刘季春《实用翻译教程》，中山大学出版社，1996) In other words, it is called “meaning conformity” if the translation can be conformed with the contents of the original; it is called “spiritual conformity” if the translation can be conformed with the form and spirit or flavor of the original.

Qian Zhongshu(钱锺书)advocated the criteria“人化 / 化境” (sublimed

adaptation), which focuses on the translator's smooth and idiomatic Chinese version for the sake of Chinese readers. He thought that: 文学翻译的最高标准是“化”。把作品从一国文字转变成另一国文字, 既能不因语文习惯的差异而露出生硬牵强的痕迹, 又能完全保存原有的风味, 那就算得入于“化境”。(《林纾的翻译》, 上海古籍出版社, 1979) That is to say, the so-called sublimed adaptation means that though the literal form of the original is converted into another, the thought, feeling, style and flavor of the original are formerly conveyed in the translation version so that the reader reads the translation version as reads the original.

Professor Xu Yuanchong(许渊冲)raised his own principle of translation in his book *The Art of Translation*(《翻译的艺术》, 中国对外翻译出版公司, 1985). He thinks that a literary translator should exploit the advantage of the target language. Now let us study his words: 忠实于原文内容, 通顺的译文形式, 发扬译文的优势, 可以当作文学翻译的标准。翻译可以不发挥译文语言的优势, 但发挥了译文语言的优势的是更好的翻译。是否符合必要条件是个对错问题, 是否符合充分条件却是个好坏问题。(Those that are faithful to the original, smooth in form of the version, enhancing the advantages of the version, can be treated as criteria in literary works. Translation had better develop the advantages of the target language, though it may not do. Whether it conforms with indispensable conditions is a matter of something right or wrong, whereas whether it conforms with adequate conditions is a matter of something good or bad.)

Here it is worth mentioning another Chinese scholar Si Guo(思果). He supposed that the translation principle might be changed into “信、达、贴”(faithfulness, expressiveness and appropriateness) on the basis of Yan Fu's principle. The so-called faithfulness refers to the responsibility to the writer. A translator should express the original meaning faithfully. Expressiveness means that a translator should stand beside the reader's side after faithfully translating the original. The reader should understand the translation. As for the third character, it wants to say that the translation should be proper or appropriate to the original style, manner, flavor, strength, etc.

In the West, translation principles are also discussed in different times. In 1789, British translator and scholar George Campbell firstly put forward his translation principle. He stressed that a translator should do three things. The first

thing is to give a just representation of the sense of the original. The second thing is, to convey his version, as much as possible, in a consistency with the genius of the language which he writes, the author's spirit and manner... The third and last thing is, to take care, the version have at least. So far the quality of an original performance, as to appear natural and easy.

The year after the creation of the above-mentioned principles, another British translator Alexander Fraser Tytler (1747—1814), professor of history at Edinburgh University, published his milestone book *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (1790). His theory is very similar to Campbell's. He wrote, "(1) The translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work. (2) The style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original. (3) The translation should have all the ease of original composition."

The other famous American translator who established influential criteria of translation is Dr. Eugene A. Nida who took part in translating the Bible and devoted himself to studies of linguistics, semantics, anthropology, etc. In his book *Towards Science of Translating*, which is regarded as one of his representative works, he laid down the following fundamentals:

- (1) True to the original(忠实原文);
- (2) Vivid(传神);
- (3) Smooth and natural(语言顺畅自然);
- (4) Equivalence of response(同等效应)。

Of these fundamentals, the last one is the key point. The so-called equivalence of response means that a good translation can call forth the response of its readers equivalent to that of the readers of the original work. The influence of his theory was so great in China that almost every translator thought of it as true and heatedly discussed it. But after a long time discussion, they began to doubt its feasibility and to criticize it. This is because it overestimates translators' abilities in understanding cultures between both languages, neglects readers' differences in recognizing things, negates the effect of transplanting in translation, confuses direct (face-to-face) communication with indirect (written) communication, and denies the features of different styles in writing.

Eugene A. Nida puts forward his recent interpretation of functional equivalence in his *Language and Culture: Context in Translating*.

- (1) A minimal, realistic definition of functional equivalence: The readers of a

translated text should be able to comprehend it to the point that they can conceive of how the original readers of the text must have understood and appreciated it. (最低限度而又切合实际的功能对等定义: 译文读者对译文的理解应当达到能够想象出原文读者是怎样理解和领会原文的程度。)

(2) A maximal, ideal definition of functional equivalence: The readers of a translated text should be able to understand and appreciate it in essentially the same manner as the original readers did. (最高限度合乎理想的功能对等定义: 译文读者应当能够基本上按照原文读者理解和领会原文的方式来理解和领会译文。)

Peter Newmark puts forward his concepts of communicative and semantic translation in his *Approaches to Translation* (1982/1998:39): Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. (交际翻译力图对译作读者产生尽可能接近原作读者所获得的效果。) Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original. (语义翻译力图在译作语言的语义结构和句法结构允许的情况下, 译出原作在上下文中的准确意义。)

Despite the variety of opinions, the following criteria are almost unanimously accepted and followed, namely, the criteria of faithfulness, smoothness and expressiveness.

1.2.1 Smoothness and Expressiveness

It is the necessary requirement in translating. On the premise of faithfulness, we should come along with the language naturally, and try to avoid translationese. By smoothness and expressiveness, we mean not only easy and readable rendering, but also idiomatic expression in the target language, free from stiff formula and mechanical copying from dictionaries.

This season saw an ominous dawning of the tenth of November.

在这个季节, 11月10日黎明时分的景象, 是个不祥之兆。

Size doesn't matter, chopping wood...

个头没啥关系, 劈柴嘛……

The versions of the two sentences are smooth in expression and intelligible in meaning. We Chinese can easily understand it and feel it fluent, genuine and authentic. Suppose that you read the version like this “这个季节遇到了11月10