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Approaches to Translation

翻译问题探讨



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APPROACHES TO TRANSLATION

PETER NEWMARK

Polytechnic of Central London



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出版说明

近年来,国内翻译研究取得了很大进展,有关翻译研究的丛书也出了多套。不过,长期以来,国内引进的原版翻译著作匮乏,不少研究都是根据二手资料;另外,学习翻译专业的研究生人数越来越多,这种状况若继续存在,将十分不利于学科的发展和翻译人才的培养。鉴于此,上海外语教育出版社约请了多名国内翻译研究著名学者分别开列出最值得引进的国外翻译研究论著的书目,并对这些书目进行整理、排序,最终确定了准备引进的正式书单。该丛书涉及的论著时间跨度大,既有经典,也有新论;内容的覆盖面也相当广泛,既有翻译本体的研究,也有跨学科的研究。这套丛书的引进将会满足翻译专业研究生教学原版参考书和翻译理论研究的需要。

上海外语教育出版社谨以此丛书献给我国的翻译学界。

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(代序)

上海外语教育出版社自成立以来一直是我国外语教育最优秀的后勤部和侦探部。因为它不但为我国各个层次(尤其本科与研究生层次)的外语教育提供了多种高水平的教材、教参和工具书,而且还出版了多学科、多语种和多系列的中文版和外文版的学术著作,比如“现代语言学丛书”、“牛津应用语言学丛书”、“美国文学史论译丛”、“外国文学史丛书”、“剑桥文学指南丛书”、“当代英语语言学丛书”以及列入国家及教育部规划的人文社科重点项目的外国语言文学、文化等方面的图书等。为了适应我国现代化建设和教育改革的需要,还出版了一批国际金融、对外贸易、涉外保险、国际经济法、国际新闻和管理科学等方面的教材与专著。这些著作在外语的学科建设与学术研究以及复合型人才培养等方面都在发挥着强有力的侦察、调研和指导作用。这是外语界有口皆碑的。

随着中外文化交流的纵深发展以及我国现代化建设对人才的需求,对比语言学和翻译学近些年来在我国有了较快的发展,最突出的证据就是①外语类硕士博士点上研究对比与翻译方向的学生在逐年迅速增多,而且我们的高校已经有了翻译学院和翻译系(当然还太少)。②外语专业的学生考中文、法律等其他人文社科专业的硕士、博士以及反方向的走向已经起步。这种跨学科的人才已成为人才资源竞争的最主要对象,因此发展趋势定会看好。上海外语教育出版社为适应这种高层次人才培养和新学科建设的需要,不但积极出版国内关于对比研究和翻译研究的专著和论文集,最近又推出了原版“国外翻译研究丛书”,这套丛书时

间跨度从古代到现代,所选书目皆为译学发展史上有里程碑作用的名家名著,堪称译学经典。他们计划分批出版,以满足读者的需求。

这套丛书的出版首先可以解决国内翻译教学原版参考书多年匮乏的困难,真可以说是我国翻译教学与理论研究的及时雨。我想学习和关心这个学科的师生和其他人士定会对此套书的引进为之欢呼,为之祝贺。

这套丛书的价值还在于能大大促进我国翻译学科建设的发展。译学学科的发展依赖于研究者在三个方面的深入研究和结合。一是对本国译学的继承性研究;二是对外国译学的借鉴性研究;三是对翻译实践和翻译教学中新问题的探索性研究。只有这三者研究深入并结合好了,才可能从经验与技巧逐步升华为具有科学性的译学理论。这三个方面的研究,改革开放以来,在我国已取得了很显著的成就,这是有目共睹的。翻译学在我国已于20世纪80年代末有了独立学科的初级形态,90年代又有了新的发展,对学科的独立性以及理论体系的结构与功能有了更多的探讨。依照学科建设的规律和研究现状,我们尚需在上述三个方面加大研究力度,而这套丛书就是借鉴性研究的主要资源。从这个角度讲,这套丛书的引进也是我国文化基本建设的重要工程之一。

在新的世纪,文化(包括各类科学技术)会多方面快速深入人类的日常生活,各国之间的交流会空前深广,因此翻译的功能会逐步扩大,实用性翻译人才的需求量定会空前增加。这就要求我们除了做好高层次研究型人才的培养以外,还应十分重视实用性人才的培养和应用译学的研究。我想出版社一定会关注和引导译学建设的理论研究与应用的发展趋势。

杨自俭

青岛海洋大学六三居室

2001年3月28日

出版前言

本书是一部探讨翻译理论与实践的论文集。作者彼得·纽马克教授是英国著名翻译理论家,曾任中伦敦理工学院语言学院院长。

在本书中,纽马克提出交际翻译(communivative translation)和语义翻译(semantic translation)的新概念,并作了系统而深入的论述,这可以说是对现代翻译理论研究的一大贡献。此外,作者还讨论和界定了其他一些有关翻译的问题,如翻译是否是科学问题,语言和思维的关系问题,如何处理隐喻的翻译以及专有名词、称呼语、文化用语的翻译等等。尤其是本书第二部分涵盖了翻译实践的 145 个命题,对实际翻译活动具有广泛的指导意义。

本书的第一部分“翻译理论面面观”共分九章。第一章讨论了翻译的本质以及翻译理论与翻译技巧。作者认为,翻译是一门复杂的跨学科研究领域,涉及语言学、逻辑学、哲学等诸多学科的内容。作者在本章中还介绍了西方各翻译流派的主要观点。第二章论及翻译理论的研究对象和作用。第三、四、五章重点介绍了交际翻译和语义翻译。作者指出,交际翻译和语义翻译的区别主要体现在译语表达形式上。语义翻译要求译文接近原文的形式,在结构和词序安排上力求贴近原文;交际翻译则注重接受者的理解和反应,即信息传递的效果。交际翻译要求译者重新组织语言结构,以使译文地道、流畅。作者认为奈达的“等效”翻译理论忽视了形式意义,有其局限性,译者应根据不同的语篇类型选用合适的翻译方法。在第四章中,作者认为思维先于言语和写作,对传统的“口语为先”的观点提出了质疑。第六章论述了专有名词、称呼语、社会机构名词及历史文化术语的翻译,并提出了相应的操作程序。第七章讨论了隐喻的翻译,作者提出了处理原文意象的七种方法。第八章论述翻译过程以及同义词的处

理。第九章对元语言与翻译作了探讨。

在第二部分,作者对翻译实践中的常见问题发表了自己的见解并提出相应建议,内容涉及翻译理论的诸多方面,如语言学对翻译的重要意义、翻译技巧的具体运用、语篇分析、翻译与文化、翻译单位、语义场以及标点符号的作用等等。

本书对翻译中的众多问题进行了极有意义的探讨,论述全面,内容翔实,适用于翻译工作者、研究人员、英语专业本科生、研究生以及其他对语言学、文体学、比较文学等学科感兴趣的读者。

Foreword

In this Volume *Approaches to Translation* Professor Peter Newmark of Polytechnic of Central London has made an important contribution to a more satisfactory understanding of the real nature of translation. Wide acquaintance with the literature on translation theory, many years of experience in teaching translation techniques, and obvious expertise as a translator have all contributed to this well-illustrated and highly useful contribution to a better comprehension of the many phases of the translator's task.

Professor Newmark's major contribution is in a detailed treatment of semantic vs. communicative translating in which semantic translation focuses primarily upon the semantic content of the source text and communicative translation focuses essentially upon the comprehension and response of receptors. This distinction becomes especially relevant for the wide diversity of text types which Professor Newmark considers.

This approach to translation flatly rejects the proposition that translation is a science, but it does insist on treating the basic propositions of translation in terms of a theory of communication, one which is not restricted to a single literary genre or text type but which has applicability to a wide range of discourse and related problems. Accordingly, this volume deals extensively with the problems of figurative language and proposes a number of valuable suggestions as to how these can and should be handled.

Professor Newmark's teaching experience leads him to deal with a number of matters which most books on translation largely overlook—e.g. the rendering of proper names and titles and the translation of metalinguistic texts, which, with the exception of lyric poetry, are perhaps the most difficult types of texts to render without considerable readjustments in content and form.

The second part of this volume treats not only a wide range of practical issues, including punctuation, translation techniques, and technical translating, but also some elements of central importance to any student of translation—e.g. the significance of linguistics for translation and the relevance of translation theories to the translator's task.

Probably some of the most insightful comments in this volume are those which suggest a basis for a critique of translation methodology—something which one could well expect of someone who has had such a long and rich experience in teaching prospective translators and evaluating their efforts.

EUGENE A. NIDA

April

Preface

I first wrote on translation in 1957 for the long-defunct *Journal of Education*—an article which is duly recorded in the Nida (1964) and Jumpelt (1961) bibliographies. In 1967 I started writing again, not long after Anthony Crane and I had launched the first full-time postgraduate course in technical and specialized translation at what was then the Holborn College of Law, Languages and Commerce. In fact, I am something of a compulsive writer, but I am first a teacher, and though I owe much to Nida and the Leipzig School (or rather, as I saw them when I first became interested in translation theory, the *Fremdsprachen* writers), the main source of stimulation for my papers, and more particularly my propositions, is my classes.

Linguistics, in the modern sense of the word, did not exist in Great Britain 25 years ago except perhaps at J. R. Firth's SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) of the University of London. In its wake, translation theory is slowly developing from a series of rather general reflections and essays on the merits of faithful and free translation—interspersed with clichified epigrams identifying translation with women, carpets, traitors, coats, mirrors, Turkish tapestry (the reverse side), copper coins, false portraits, clear or coloured glass, musical transcriptions, wives, heroism and folly—to represent an identifiable and somewhat peculiar discipline. It is an academic pursuit that is dependent upon and apparently subordinate to a practical exercise. In a sense it is at third remove. Those who can, write; those who cannot, translate; those who cannot translate, write about translation. However, Goethe and a host of respectable writers who wrote well, translated well and wrote well about translation are an obvious disproof of this adapted Shavianism.

The fascination of translation theory lies in the large scope of its pertinence, its basic appeal (the concern with words) and its disparate levels, from the meaning within a context, of, say, a full stop to the meaning within another context of, say, the word 'God'. Translation theory's present standing is not yet secure. To begin with, 'everyone' has views about translation, many have written about it, few have written books about it. It is taught at various universities in the Federal Republic, the GDR and in other Eastern European countries; at the universities of Paris, Amsterdam, Montreal, Ottawa and Tel-Aviv. 'Verrons-nous un jour figurer aux programmes des universités un cours de "Sciences de la Traduction" qui placera à leur juste rang le traducteur et l'interprète dans la communauté culturelle?' M. E. Williams, Président of the École de Traduction et d'Interprétation of Geneva University, wrote wistfully in *Parallèles*, 1978. As far as I know, such courses are unknown in most anglophone countries. In the United Kingdom there have been undergraduate courses for the last 6 years at the Polytechnic of Central London; the University of Dundee and Portsmouth Polytechnic run a course in conjunction with their German options, and

Bristol Polytechnic is about to start a course. There is still no chair in translation theory.

I have always intended to write a textbook of translation theory and practice when I give up full-time teaching. I should then be in a better position to understand the bounds and to grasp the scope of my subject. As it is, I still see many virtually neglected areas and topics. In the meantime, I am happy to follow Vaughan James's invitation to publish some of my papers.

I have selected two introductory papers; three on communicative and semantic translation, which is my main contribution to general theory; one on texts related to language functions, to which I shall later add papers relating to the expressive and informative language functions; one on the translation of encyclopaedic and cultural terms—which is perhaps the most practical aspect of translation theory—and two on synonymy and metaphor; and, finally, from three papers I am reproducing nearly 150 so-called propositions on translation (these a not too distant echo of Nietzsche's paragraphs, I hope) which range from large topics such as the status of translation as an academic exercise and its relation to language-teaching and etymology to indication of the sense-values of the various punctuation marks.

I am aware of many gaps: such topics as lexical and grammatical ambiguity, the translation of poetry, technical translation (I have published papers on medical translation in the *Incorporated Linguist*, vol. 14, nos. 2 and 3, 1976, and in the *British Medical Journal*, Dec. 1979), synonymy (discussed in 'Some problems of translation theory and methodology', *Fremdsprachen*, 1978-9), the translation of plays, the history of translation, translation's influence on culture are hardly touched on. Other subjects such as the unit of translation, translation equivalence, translation invariance, detailed schemes for assessing translation, I regard as dead ducks—either too theoretical or too arbitrary.

With many limitations, these papers attempt to discuss certain significant aspects of translation and to give some indication of its importance in transmitting culture, in revitalizing language, in interpreting texts, in diffusing knowledge, in suggesting the relationship between thought and language and in contributing towards understanding between nations. That is a mouthful, so I would add that some of the unending fascination of the pursuit of words and things and utterances rubs off onto the pursuit of translation rules and recipes.

I thank Eugene Nida for writing the Foreword, and I gratefully acknowledge help from Pauline Newmark, Elizabeth Newmark, Matthew Newmark, Anthony Cranby, John Trim, Vera North, Derek Cook-Radmore, Ralph Pemberton, Ewald Osers, John Smith, Alex Auswaks, Michael Alpert, Duncan Macrae, F. Hirst, Rosemary Young, Roger Lambart, M. R. Weston, Roger Barrett, Katharina Reiss, Bernadette Millard and Dominique Steggle.

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- 'A note on translation and translators', *Incorporated Linguist*, April 1969, October 1969.
- 'On lexical correlativity', *Audio-Visual Language Journal*, March, Winter 1969.
- 'Teaching Italian translation', *Incorporated Linguist*, April 1971.
- 'The case for literature', *Universities Quarterly*, June 1972.
- 'Twenty-four restricted rules of translation', *Incorporated Linguist*, January 1973.
- 'An approach to translation', *Babel* xix (1) 3-19, January 1973.
- 'Further propositions on translation parts I and II', *Incorporated Linguist* 13 (2 and 3) 34-43 and 62-73, 1974.
- 'The case for précis', *The use of English* 25 (3) 226-8, Spring 1974.
- 'Book review (*The new Muret-Sanders' Encyclopaedic Dictionary*)', *Incorporated Linguist*, April 1975 and Winter 1976.
- 'Book review (D. von Horvath: *Jugend ohne Gott*)', *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, p. 23, May 1975.
- 'Learning a foreign language', *Education and Training* 17 (6 and 7) 141-3, June/July 1975.
- 'Book-review (G. Steiner: *After Babel*)', *Incorporated Linguist* 14 (4), October 1975.
- 'European languages: some perspectives', *Curriculum Development*, (10) 8-33, University of Sussex, Winter 1975.
- 'The theory and craft of translation', *Language Teaching and Linguistics: Abstracts* 10 (1), CUP, January 1976.
- 'A layman's approach to medical translation, part I', *Incorporated Linguist* 15 (2) 41-43, Spring 1976.
- 'A layman's approach to medical translation, part II', *Incorporated Linguist* 15 (3) 63-68, Summer 1976.
- 'The importance of accuracy', *CILT Reports and Papers* 13 (German in the UK, Problems and Prospects), pp. 60-62, 1976.
- 'A tentative preface to translation', *AVL Journal* 14 (3), Winter 1976.
- 'The translation of proper names and institutional terms', *Incorporated Linguist*, 1977.
- 'Translation and the metalingual function of languages', *Lebende Sprachen*, 1977.
- 'Communicative and semantic translation', *Babel* (4) 1977.
- 'Some problems of translation theory and methodology', *Fremdsprachen*, (Leipzig) 1978.
- 'Componential analysis and translation theory', *Papers in Traductology*, University of Ottawa, 1978.
- 'Thought, language and translation', *Babel* (4) 1978.
- Article on 'Applied linguistics' in *Areté Encyclopaedia*, 1979.
- 'Sixty further propositions on translation', *Incorporated Linguist*, March 1979.
- 'The translation of metaphor', *Babel* (2) 1980.

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PART ONE

Aspects of Translation Theory

1. The theory and the craft of translation

The first traces of translation date from 3000 bc, during the Egyptian Old Kingdom, in the area of the First Cataract, Elephantine, where inscriptions in two languages have been found. It became a significant factor in the West in 300 bc, when the Romans took over wholesale many elements of Greek culture, including the whole religious apparatus. In the twelfth century, the West came into contact with Islam in Moorish Spain. The situation favoured the two essential conditions for large-scale translation (Störig, 1963): a qualitative difference in culture (the West was inferior but scientifically acquisitive and receptive to new ideas) and continuous contact between two languages. When the Moorish supremacy collapsed in Spain, the Toledo school of translators translated Arabic versions of Greek scientific and philosophical classics. Luther's Bible translation in 1522 laid the foundations of modern German and King James's Bible (1611) had a seminal influence on English language and literature. Significant periods of translation preceded Shakespeare and his contemporaries, French classicism and the Romantic Movements.

* * *

The twentieth century has been called the 'age of translation' (Jumpelt, 1961) or 'reproduction' (Benjamin, 1923). Whereas in the nineteenth century translation was mainly a one-way means of communication between prominent men of letters and, to a lesser degree, philosophers and scientists and their educated readers abroad, whilst trade was conducted in the language of the dominant nation, and diplomacy, previously in Latin, was in French, international agreements between state, public and private organizations are now translated for all interested parties, whether or not the signatories understand each other's languages. The setting up of a new international body, the constitution of an independent state, the formation of a multinational company, gives translation enhanced political importance. The exponential increase in technology (patents, specifications, documentation), the attempt to bring it to developing countries, the simultaneous publication of the same book in various languages, the increase in world communication, has correspondingly increased requirements. UNESCO, which up to 1970 published an *Index translationum*, recorded a 4½-fold increase since 1948, with translations into German nearly twice as many as into Russian, the second most numerous. (Correspondingly, most theoretical literature is in German.) Scientific, technical and medical journals are translated wholesale in the USA and USSR. The EEC now employs 1600 translators. In 1967, 80,000 scientific journals were being translated annually (Spitzbart, 1972). Some 'international' writers (in the age of 'international' culture and world-literature) immediately sell more widely in translation than in the original, whilst others in Italy