

英语翻译技巧

*Technique
of
English-Chinese Translation*

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PART ONE GENERAL THEORY

Chapter I Introduction

1. *Significance and function*

(A) Means of intercourse, mutual understanding, and propaganda

Lenin: "Language is the most important means of human intercourse."

Stalin: "Language is a medium, an instrument with the help of which people communicate with one another, exchange thoughts and understand each other."

—quoted from *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*

Chairman Mao: "We should continue to absorb many fresh things from abroad, not only progressive ideas but new expressions as well."

—quoted from *Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing*

(B) *Useful weapon* in international class struggle and communist movement

(C) Guided by Chairman Mao's teachings (*On the Ten Major Relationships*); playing an important part

in realizing the great aim of four modernizations expounded by Premier Chou En-lai

2. *Requirements of adequate translation*

- (A) Definition: Adequate reproduction of a certain work (including thought, feeling, sense, style, etc.) in a different language.
- (B) *Six-word principle* (Three cardinal requirements): Correctness, fluency, and lucidity.
- (C) *Primary requirement: be faithful to the original text*; reproduction, not creation; fully understanding the precise meaning and true sense of the original; without the slightest neglect or distortion; grasping the entire text.
- (D) *Rendering into a smooth and natural style*, with idiomatic Chinese expressions; re-creation in a certain sense.
- (E) Inadequacy of the terms "literal translation" and "free translation"; *avoiding both mechanical translation* (word for word) *and random translation* (arbitrary, taking it for granted); not photographic but like a graphic portrait (conveying the essence).
- (F) Marx's teachings on translation; his criticism of the French translator of *Capital*. (Refer to attached copy of quotations and examples.)
- (G) *Engels's teaching on translation*; his criticism of Bernstein's translation of *The Poverty of Phi-*

losophy. (See attached copy.)

- (H) *Chairman Mao's instruction*: "We should not import foreign expressions mechanically or use them indiscriminately, but should absorb what is good and suits our needs."

—from *Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing*

- (I) 1. Lu Hsun's remarks: ... readily understood, preserving the distinct original style; his satirical criticism of a Chinese translator rendering "the Milky Way" into "the milk road".
2. Lu Hsun quoting Yen Fu's remark: "To translate a term precisely, I have to rack my brains for ten days, nay, thirty days."

—from *An Essay without Title* (1)

3. Lu Hsun's adequate translation of a passage from Gogol's novel *Dead Souls* as compared with the arbitrary French translation of the same (see relative examples).
(J) *Ideal translation*: dialectical integration of correct interpretation of the original and natural, idiomatic expression in Chinese.
(K) Various examples (adequate mechanical inadequate).

Chapter II Comparison Between Chinese and English

1. *Fundamental difference* between Chinese and English in many respects: word-formation, word order, morphology, syntax, idiomatic usage, mode of expression.
2. *Different language families*: Chinese—Sino-Tibetan, English—Indo-European.
3. *Different linguistic types*: Chinese—analytic, English

—from analytic to synthetic.

(A) Analytic language: not inflective in form; word order of essential importance, almost fixed; connection of words shown by particles and word order.

(B) Synthetic language: inflective in word-form; word order rather free, subject and predicate placed at any position; connection of words shown by inflexional forms (French, Russian, etc.), English lying midway).

4. *Difference in morphology*

(A) Chinese particles: 的, 了, 呢, 吗, 吧, 哪, 啊, 呀, 之, 乎, 者, 也, 矣, 焉, 哉……

Chinese adverbial particles: 就, 竟, 却, 则, 而, 又…

(B) English articles and expletives (it, there).

(C) Polysemantic-common to both; difference in var-

ious collocations (see examples).

5. *Difference in syntax*

(A) English: subject and predicate-verb indispensable
in most cases.

Chinese: often omitted.

(B) English: strict classification of sentences.

Chinese: not so strict.

(C) English: relatively long sentences with a series
of clauses.

Chinese: unaccustomed to such sentences, owing
to difference in sentence structure.

(D) English: passive voice widely used.

Chinese: relatively seldom used.

Chapter III Various Types of Translation

1. *Social science*

- (A) Including politics, economics, philosophy, history, geography, international affairs, documents, journalistic writing, political biography, etc.
- (B) *Essential point*: the political stand and ideological viewpoint of the author; his main purpose.
- (C) Proper names and terms to be translated according to standard or established form.

2. *Natural science and technology*

- (A) Usually written in a lucid and concise style, without complicated grammatical construction.
- (B) *Technical terms* to be rendered precisely.
- (C) Prerequisite: sufficient knowledge of the particular branch (basic rules, general aspect, operative procedure, latest development, etc.)

3. *Literature and art*

- (A) Different styles in conformity with different genres (poetry, drama, fiction, etc.); corresponding to the original style.
- (B) Skilful reproduction of the essential spirit of the original work and the idiosyncratic style of the author (shades of emotion, subtle implication, witticism, paradox, slang, etc.).

(C) Diction according to given age, anachronism—
ridiculous effect.

4. *Practical English*

(A) Commercial correspondence, letters of application or recommendation, advertisement, etc.

(B) Matter-of-fact style; formalistic expressions, fixed forms; jargons.

(C) *Pay special attention to* sums, amounts, numerals, dates, etc.

Chapter IV Requirements of a Qualified Translator

1. *High Political Consciousness*

Firm proletarian stand, loyal to the Party and the people, devotion to the cause of communism.

2. *Earnest study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought*

Deep cultivation in *political theory* and *continual practice* in the three great revolutionary movements — *prerequisites* for better judgment and critical analysis of the material to be chosen for translation; to “make foreign things serve china”.

3. *Good command of both Chinese and English*

(A) Primary condition for correct understanding and adequate representation; proficiency in both languages—foundation for fine quality and high level.

(B) Assiduous study of basic rules of linguistics, grammar, rhetoric, sentence pattern, idiomatic usage (both languages).

Jot down and learn by rote useful and expressive words, idioms, proverbs, slangs, set phrases collocations (especially phrasal verbs); use notebooks or cards (classified under separate headings and subheadings).

(C) Wide reading of various kinds of materials.

(D) Conscientious study of model works of translation: *Marxist-Leninist classics*, *Selected Words of Mao Tsetung*; Lu Hsun's works of translation; other acknowledged specimens.

Compare original text with translated version; mark or jot down good sentences and happy turns of expression for reference.

Model works to be read over and over again; genuine appreciation of content and style follow the example.

(E) *Continual practice*, of vital importance; Chairman Mao's instructions; learn to swim by swimming; "Practice makes perfect."

4. *Extensive Knowledge and Rich Experience*

(A) *Language, a social phenomenon*; Stalin's remarks:

"Apart from society there is no language accordingly, language and its laws of development can be understood only if studied in inseparable connection with the history of society, with the history of the people to whom the language under study belongs, and who are its creators and repositories."

from *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*

(B) *Necessary to enrich knowledge* in many respects: historical background, political and economic development, social conditions, cultural tenden-

cy, military affairs, scientific and technic achievements, customs and conventions, etc, of foreign countries in general, of things and persons described and narrated in the word to be translated in particular.

The biography of Do Pont covering a wide range of subject matter and spheres of activity; American capitalist society, historical and contemporary; including historical events and current affairs in other continents as well; impossible to translate well without necessary knowledge.

(C) Relative example: the great Charle. (de Gaulle) Russian translation, simply. "Charles": ignorance on the part of translator.

(D) *Knowledge originates in life*; only by taking an active part in social life and class struggle can one acquire and enrich genuine knowledge; not only helpful but indispensable.

5. *Cautiousness and meticulousness*

(A) *Of paramount importance* in the work of translation throughout the entire process, regarding the minutest detail (punctuation marks, handwriting, etc.).

(B) *Chairman Mao's instruction*:

"Lu Hsun said, 'Read it over twice at least.' And at most? he did not say, But in my opinion it does no harm to go over an important article more