


◎ 吉林大学研究生立项教材

Culture Turn & Turn to Culture

—Comparison and Translation between
Chinese and English

作者 孙 萍 綦天柱

 吉林大学 出版社

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前 言

这部 *Culture Turn & Turn to Culture* 是用英文撰写的,其雏形是本书作者为英语专业硕士研究生“翻译理论与实践课”编写的讲义,在几年的使用中,得到了不断的补充、修改、更新和完善,力争与时俱进,最终成型。

本书主要涵盖四个方面的内容:一、文化和语言之间的关系(其中包括文化概论、文化与语言之间的关系);二、翻译概论(其中包括翻译的定义、翻译的过程和翻译的常用策略等);三、英汉语言文化比较研究与翻译(其中包括英汉语音比较及英源音译词研究、英汉词汇比较与翻译、英汉习语比较与翻译、英汉句子比较与翻译、英汉篇章比较与翻译);四、中西译史简介(其中包括中国翻译史简介、西方翻译史简介)。

本书的特色主要体现在以下几个方面:

一、注重引导使用者注意英汉两种语言文化方面的异同,尤其注重对英汉不同的文化背景、不同的思维方式和不同的语言表达习惯进行比较研究,寻找异同,其根本目的是帮助使用者提高翻译能力。

二、注重选材的科学性和研究价值,尽力做到英译汉、汉译英同行并举。

三、许多例句或段落乃至篇章均出自作者已经出版并获奖的译著或名家的名篇,并对翻译中遇到的难点和要点进行解析和指津,形成宝贵的第一手资料。

四、书中融入了“中西译史简介”,这是一种全新的尝试。搞翻译需要对中外译史有个大致的了解,以便对翻译事业的发展有个总体的把握,对翻译在历史和现实中的重要作用有个正确的认识。

本书在撰写过程中得到了吉林大学研究生院及公共外语教育学院的大力支持和鼓励,在此仅表衷心的感谢。

书后所附的中外参考文献仅为主要参考文献,限于篇幅,还有很多没有列入其中。这些参考文献使作者受益匪浅,在此,作者满怀深深的敬意向所有参考文献的作者致以最诚挚的谢意!

作者 2010年10月4日

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PART ONE

Chapter 1 Conspectus of Culture

In discussing conspectus of culture, we should first make clear what culture is, and then deal with cultural convergence and divergence, and the relationship between culture and language, etc.

1.1 What Is Culture?

Culture is a complex system of interacting elements. It is ubiquitous, multi-dimensional and all-pervasive. Because it is so broad, there is not a single definition or central theory of what it is. It can be approached from different perspectives and consequently defined in quite different ways.

The first important anthropological definition of culture is presented by Sir Edward Tylor (泰勒) in *Primitive Cultures* (1871). He defines culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Tylor’s definition has continually been the basis of most modern anthropological conceptions of culture.

Compared with this, Nida’s (奈达) definition is quite brief: “Culture is the totality of beliefs and practices of a society.”

Culture can be defined as the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, timing, roles, spatial relationships, concepts of the universe, and material objects acquired by a group of people in course of generations through individual and group striving. This simple, but inclusive definition of culture implies that culture virtually covers all the aspects of life.

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of understanding of culture, which can be classified into two large categories - culture with a small c and culture with a capital C. The former refers to culture in an anthropological sense, i. e. all the aspects of shared life of a people. The latter in the socio-historical sense can be defined as the sum total of the material wealth and spiritual wealth created by man in the course of the historical development of society, such as literature, art, education, architecture and science, etc.

As stated above, culture is an inclusive complicated system. It is rich in denotation and connotation. In a broad sense, culture can also be divided into material culture and spiritual culture. Material culture refers to material wealth created through the social practices of human history, all of which are observable and discernible, such as science, technol-

ogy, literature, art, architecture, etc. Different from material culture, most spiritual culture is implicit or abstract. So it may include ideology, education, ethics, fashion, social norms and customs, interpersonal relationships, and even concept of time and space. Part of spiritual culture can be recorded or reflected in work of history, philosophy, art and literature. In the words of Hegel, "Culture is the second nature that man has created".

Most anthropologists agree on the following features of culture: (1) learned, (2) transmitted from generation to generation, (3) based on symbols, (4) dynamic, (5) integrated, (6) ethnocentric, and (7) adaptive. It deserves to be noted that ethnocentrism tends to lead to a rejection of the richness and knowledge of other cultures, impede communication and block the exchange of ideas and skills among peoples. Because of this, members of a society easily tend to adapt another culture to their own, either consciously or unconsciously. They usually regard their own culture as the self and alien one as the other. The self of a certain culture means its identity or personality. As a result, the issue of cultural differences arises in many culture-related things, including translation, which is, to some degree, more bicultural communication than interlingual transfer. In other words, the semantic meaning of verbal signs is supplemented by the pragmatic meanings of verbal actions in context. The anthropologist Malinowski (马林诺夫斯基) believed "the cultural context to be crucial in the interpretation of the message, taking in a variety of factors ranging from ritualistic ... to the most practical aspects of day-to-day existence". Therefore, people living in various societies view the world in quite different ways.

1.2 Cultural Convergence and Divergence

According to biologists, convergence/divergence refers to "the tendency of unrelated/related animals and plants to evolve superficially similar/different characteristics under similar environmental conditions". According to Howard Giles's accommodation theory, "when people interact with each other they either try to make their speech similar to that of their addressee in order to emphasize social cohesiveness or to make it different in order to emphasize their social distinctiveness (a process of divergence)".

It can be said by comparing that convergence/divergence is a gradual and dynamic process of change, which tends to be superficially similar/different. It is agreed that culture is characterized by diachronism and synchronism. From the diachronic perspective, culture evolves with social development; from the synchronic perspective, different countries and peoples enjoy distinctive national cultures, which interpenetrate and interact with each other. That to say, cultures are dynamic systems that do not exist in a vacuum, so they are subject to change. Cultures are constantly being confronted with ideas and information from outside sources - and contact, by its very nature, brings change.

The trend of the late 20th and early 21st centuries towards political and economic glo-

balization has been reflected in the establishment and expansion of multinational companies and international organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union. Closely connected with this trend are technological changes within the fields of computer science and telecommunications including the creation of the Internet. These interrelated changes have had a huge impact on Chinese social life. Accordingly, "the main trend of cultural evolution is convergence, which means that with social development, all cultures increasingly tend to be unified; so long as cultures exist, cultural convergence is limitless". Although many aspects of culture are subject to change, the deep structure of a culture resists major alterations. That is, changes in dress, food, transportation, housing and the like are compatible with the existing value system. However, values associated with such things as ethics, morals and religions are so deeply embedded in a culture that they persist generation after generation. For example, the spread of Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Confucianism did not homogenize the societies they enveloped. English is widely used today, but it is unlikely to become the first language spoken by all peoples in the world. Since national cultural identities will stand largely unchallenged, based on common history, ethnic background, and so on, the language of any culture will be important, indeed crucial to national identity. To be true, English is used by many authors, but at the same time, English is splitting up into many "Englishes" or even "englishes". Similarly, with the development of culture, Chinese has also undergone splits or metamorphoses, so that rather than one Han Chinese, there are many Chinese. Thus, Chinese as a language has numerous local or regional dialects such as Cantonese (spoken in Guangdong and in Hong Kong), Taiwanese (also with dialects), Singaporean Chinese, and the Chinese spoken in overseas Chinese communities, etc. In such a globalized context, cultures are becoming more and more homogenized. It is clear that the "locality" of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as other' in relation to what is outside or beyond it". This means that even present-day homogeneous cultures may undergo pluralistic developments, namely, cultural divergence.

In the present age of globalization, cultural convergence may seem to be more pronounced in that more people learn English. This is understandable in that in postindustrial information society, information means power and it also means richness. Yet, as pointed out above, despite a certain convergence, there is also increased cultural divergence. This implies that the binary opposition between cultural convergence and divergence has never ceased.

Claire Kramsch writes as follows in *Language and Culture* (1998):

Cultures, and especially national cultures, resonate with the voices of the powerful, and are filled with the silences of the powerless. Both words and their silences contribute to shaping one's own and other's culture. For example, Edward Said describes how the French constructed for themselves a view of the culture of "the Orient" that only served, he

says, to reinforce the sense of superiority of the European culture. Similarly, scholars have shown the hegemonic effects of dominant cultures and the authority they have in representing and in speaking for the other.

One feature of globalization in cultural representation is culture convergence, that is, the hegemony of the culture of the West that imposes its cultural values and aesthetic principles on the weak, developing cultures by means of translation. However, in the process of translation, these values and principles can not but metamorphosed. Cultural interpenetration always appears in international cultural communication, including translation practice. From a postcolonial perspective, Homi Bhabha describes translation in the global context:

Translation is the performative nature of cultural communication. It is language in actu (enunciation, positionality) rather than language in situ (enonc or propositionality). And the sign of translation continually tells the different times and spaces between cultural authority and its performative practice. The "time" of translation consists in that movement of meaning, the principle and practice of a communication that, in the words of de Man, "puts the original in motion to decanonize it, giving it the movement of fragmentation a wandering of errance, a kind of permanent exile".

In other words, the perception of language - and consequently of translation - has become more profound in that it now includes culture and narration, and the emphasis has shifted to aspects concerned with cross-cultural communication. This is why translation is central to the simultaneous "converging" and "diverging" of national cultures.

In cultural globalization, all cultures influence others in cultural interpenetration. In the interaction in Chinese-Western translation, Western cultural values and literary ideas, no matter how strong and influential they may be in the West, cannot be understood well by Chinese readers unless they are expressed idiomatically and understandably in the target languages. In translating these cultural values and aesthetic ideas idiomatically, it has always been necessary to apply some kind of "diverging". Foreign concepts become part of the target culture. The process works for both sides. Take Chinese as an example, words of Western origin such as "sofa", "coffee", and "taxi" (pronounced "dishi" in Cantonese but now widely used in mainland China) have now become part of the Chinese vocabulary whereas Chinese words such as "mahjong", "tofu", and "kung fu" are widely used in the English-speaking world. Translation of Western culture into Chinese is no longer merely an act of "converging" of Chinese language and culture.

As already pointed out, globalization will bring about cultural convergence and divergence, which is found in translation. The future orientation of world culture thus comprises two juxtaposed trends. In this cultural version of "think globally-act locally", the result will be a mixture of cultural convergence and divergence.

1.3 Relationship Between Culture and Language

In dealing with the relationship between language and culture, Kramsch, professor of University of California at Berkeley, writes as follows:

Language is not a culture-free code, distinct from the way people think and behave, but, rather, it plays a major role in the perpetuation of culture, particularly in its printed form. . . Language is intimately linked not only to the culture that is and the culture that was, but also to the culture of the imagination that governs people's decisions and actions far more than we may think.

This view can account for the fact that language and culture have evolved together and have been mutually dependent throughout history. The rise of civilization and the development of writing exhibit the same kind of mutual interdependence. Neither of them can exist nor develop without the other.

It is well accepted that language is not only a scientific system of linguistic symbols, but also a socio-cultural activity. Language and its cultural influence are exemplified in the theoretical formulations of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which in essence states that language is a guide to "social reality". This hypothesis implies that language is not simply a means of reporting experience but, more important, it is a way of defining experience. Sapir writes:

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society . . . The real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.

Although complete acceptance of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis may be controversial, its application to culture and language is clear: language is a reflection of culture and culture is a reflection of language. It can be seen that culture influences language by way of symbols and rules as well as perceptions of the universe. Equally important is the fact that meaning shifts from culture to culture. In fact, no two words in any two languages ever match completely in designative (denotative) and associative (connotative) meanings. Fur-

thermore, the context plays such a large part in specifying meaning.

Words only have meaning in terms of the culture of which they are a part. And accordingly, they have no meaning apart from some context, either the context of other words or of a particular setting. For example, such phrases can be found in Chinese as “虎门无犬子” and “虎落平阳被犬欺.” The tiger is often compared to a brave general. The words “龙” and “虎” used together invariably stand for a very dignified, energetic and powerful image, such as “龙腾虎跃”, “龙争虎斗”, “虎踞龙盘”, “生龙活虎”, “卧虎藏龙”, etc. The English translation of such phrases does not contain the word “dragon”, nor does it necessarily to use the word “tiger”. As “虎” the tiger is considered the “king of animals” and thus stands for dignity in Chinese, in a sense, it has the image of the lion in English. This can be seen in the sentence “他结婚了,太太是个母老虎”, in which, the English would say “He was married and had a lioness at home.” It is no doubt that Chinese people and people of English-speaking countries would have different cultural or emotional associations of the two words. Just as Nida (奈达) points out, “the role of language within a culture and the influence of the culture on the meanings of words and idioms are so pervasive that scarcely any text can be adequately understood without careful consideration of its cultural background.”

Language is a part of culture and plays a very important role in it. Some sociologists consider it the keystone of culture. Without language, they maintain, culture would not be possible. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture; it reflects culture. In the broadest sense, language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking.

Cultures differ from one another and each culture is unique. As cultures are diverse, languages are diverse. It is only natural then that with cultural differences and linguistic differences, difficulties often arise in communicating between cultures and across cultures. Understanding is not always easy. In dealing with the relationship between translation and culture, Christiane Nord, German functionalist translation theorist, writes as follows: “Translating means comparing cultures. Translators interpret source-culture phenomena in the light of their own culture-specific knowledge of that culture, from either the inside or the outside, depending on whether the translation is from or into the translator’s native language-and-culture.”

Both language and culture are intrinsically bound together. A culture cannot function without language, nor can a culture be passed on from one generation to the next without language. Furthermore, the referents of all the words of a language are a part of the culture. Accordingly, in order to understand a culture, one must do so by means of its language, and in order to comprehend the meanings of words, a person must look to the culture. Although language is a part of culture, it is also the most important and relevant set

of symbols by which a culture reveals and expresses its underlying traditions and values.

In a world in which people must learn to understand one another, nothing can be more crucial than a proper appreciation of the roles of languages to help us understand one another and live relevantly in a world community speaking more than a thousand languages.

Chapter 2 Main Differences Between the Two Cultures

Different cultures may have many differences manifested in value conception, esthetic standards, ways of thinking, etc.

2.1 National and Cultural Psychology

National and cultural psychology refers to psychological modes and characteristics of feelings, values and religion, etc., that form under national cultural background in the long course of a people. Different national cultures result in different national psychology, out of which translating difficulties arise. “谋事在人,成事在天”, an idiom used by Granny Liu in Chapter 3 of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, is translated into “Man proposes, Heaven disposes” by Yang Xianyi and Dai Naidie and “Man proposes, God disposes” by Hawkes. Yang and Dai preserve the image of “天” (Heaven), which conveys the conception of Daoism (Heaven governs nature) as well as a country woman’s belief in feudal China. Hawkes changes the image “Heaven” into “God”, thinking that the Western readers who believe in Christianity may accept it easily. But this change of image should not be regarded as appropriate, because it distorts the religious belief of a country-woman in feudal China when it fits the mental culture of the West.

Value concept is one of the most important components of national mentality, which is deeply rooted in people’s ideology. It has its own evident nationality (民族性) due to the culture it bases on. This, when reflected on the language, may cause the differences in word meaning in different languages. The word of “individualism” is a good case in point.

1. (卢嘉川)“但是,你这些想法和做法,恐怕还是为了你个人吧?”

道静蓦地站了起来:“你说我是个人主义者?”

(Lu Jiachuan) “Are you sure your thoughts and wishes aren’t determined by personal considerations?” he asked.

Daojing sprang to her feet. “Do you mean that I’m an individualist?”

In Chinese, “个人主义者” is not the same in meaning as “individualist” in English, so in the above case, “individualist” should be changed into “egoist”.

There are many other examples showing vocabulary conflict, such as “working class”, which does not equal to Chinese “工人阶级”. In China, “工人阶级” is quite highly respected with quite high political status; while “working class”, in capitalist countries, is the

lowest class.

In thousands of years of feudalist society, the patriarchal clan system based on kin has gradually come into being. “子孙满堂” or “多子多福” is what people commonly desire. It is everyone's first important duty to raise children and thus multiply his later generations, so there is “不孝有三, 无后为大” in Chinese people's traditional ideology. To curse someone “断子绝孙” is considered the most vicious insult. The following are two cases in point:

2. “这断子绝孙的阿 Q!” 远远地听到小尼姑的带哭的声音。(鲁迅:《阿 Q 正传》)。

“Ah Q, may you die sonless!” sounded the little nun's voice tearfully in the distance.

3. 张寡妇一路上还是啼哭, 咒骂打杀了她丈夫的强盗兵, 咒骂断子绝孙的林老板, 又咒骂那个恶狗似的警察。

Widow Zhang was crying as she walked, and cursing the wicked soldiers who had killed her husband, and praying that Mr. Lin should die without sons or grandsons (a curse intolerable to ear in China), and reviling that dirty dog of a policeman.

According to Confucianism, which was the orthodox ethic guides for the Chinese society during nearly two thousand years, “of the three cardinal offenses against filial piety, having no male heir is the greatest.” The traditional conception is still deeply rooted in China today. While in the West, people have no such conception. Therefore the Western readers may not have a full understanding of “sonless” in Chinese. An annotation in English is needed — a curse intolerable to ear in China, to make the version readers understand it.

4. 一见面是寒暄, 寒暄之后说我“胖了”, 说我“胖了”之后即大骂其新党。

When we met, after exchanging a few polite remarks he said I was fatter, and after saying that immediately started a violent attack on the revolutionaries.

“胖了” in the Chinese is translated as “fatter”, which is easily misunderstood by the Western readers. “To say one is fatter” is easily accepted by the Chinese, which is one of the examples of phatic communion in Chinese, but in contrast the Westerns would regard it as a piece of advice or a warning given by a doctor, so the sentence above should be translated as: