

国外翻译研究丛书之三十

# BASICS OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

# 翻译研究基础

CAY DOLLERUP



上海外语教育出版社

外教社 SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

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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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秘书 孙 玉

## 借鉴和创造 (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调部。因为其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这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

同其他学科一样,翻译研究的发展也每每得益于主体批评意识的张扬。在本书中,作者就传统翻译研究模式乃至整个译学研究所进行的全方位反思即体现了一种颇富于建构意义的批评精神。

作者首先详细描述了基于信息论的交际翻译模式,其基本框架为“(信息)发送者→信息→译者→信息→(信息)接受者”或“源语文本→翻译过程→目标语文本”。根据翻译交际活动的特征,该模式还可描述为“编码→解码→传递→编码→解码”,结合一般的翻译概念,该过程又可进一步概括如下:在源语文化中,信息发送者对源语中的信息进行编码,该信息经翻译过程被译者接受(解码)、传递(编码)并发送到目标语,最后,目标语文化中的信息接受者或受众对信息(译文或翻译产品)进行解码。作者指出,翻译的实施一般是为了完成某一特定的目的,该目的与原作的意图或许等同,或与之不同,但通常存在着某种相似性。在翻译过程中,译者要处理两种不同的产品,即源语发送者针对源语文化受众的信息以及译者针对目标语文化受众的信息,两者之间尽管存在着不对称现象,但必须具有一种可识别的因果关系,它反映了原文先于译文而存在的既定事实,这也是翻译活动的本质特征所在。

作者对上述模式不厌其烦地进行描述并非是多余的。事实上,在本书中,基于信息论的交际翻译观几乎贯穿了整个论述过程的始终。以翻译涉及到的语言类型为例,作者指出,中世纪以降,有关翻译的思考大都基于印欧语系中各语言之间的转换现象。众所周知,同一语系的语言在词汇、句法、修辞等方面均存在着明显的相似性,于是信息“对等”之类的观念遂成为译者长期



恪守的原则。然而另一方面,鉴于印欧语系的庞杂性,各语言之间又存在着大量不可忽视的细微差异,这一点尤其表现在词汇层面上,比如词义的对应或近义问题、搭配问题、习惯用法问题等等,所有这些差异均会导致翻译中的“假朋友”现象,从而致使信息在转换过程中一再失真或失落,这样一来,对等翻译一说也就难以自圆其说了。

基于上述思考,作者对传统的“对等”观点进行了全面的反思,指出 20 世纪后半叶以前,翻译研究几乎均以宗教和文学两类高雅文本为诠释对象,如此取道的主要问题在于它将译者置于万能的地位,从而导致了“完美”翻译这一普遍认同的观念。尽管“完美”翻译理应成为教学过程中追求的理念或理想,但由于该观点以宗教和经典文学文本为操作对象,并将原文设定为至高无上的目标,因而难以令人信服。事实上,万能译者、“完美”翻译以及原文至上诸说之间存在着难以调和的矛盾,同理,由奈达、纽马克等人提出的“对等”观点也一样是站不住脚的。尤其在当下语境中,“对等”概念更显得模糊不清而无法有效地运用于翻译实践。鉴于上述问题,作者运用了“近似性”一语,并根据译文能否为读者接受而提出了“得体性”翻译标准。

在作者看来,翻译就是为了获得一种相对的近似性,译文是否得体,主要取决于交际环境和参与交际的方方面面,而不受制于原文与译文之间的主从关系。就性质而论,一旦翻译过程结束,译文便完全脱离原文而成为一个自主的实体。然而在大多数翻译研究模式中,不少学者均模糊了翻译活动交际链中的各种构成成分。以威尔斯的模式为例,就只涉及到了单一的信息发送者与接受者,从而忽略了其他众多因素。奈达的信息“转换机制”一说也存在着一定的问题。通常情况下,译者的编码与解码过程一般是自动而连续的,奈达则将参与翻译活动的各种成分分解开来,尽管这种演绎方式能够解释特定的翻译事件(如佛经、圣经集体翻译活动、林纾的翻译活动等),却无法对普遍的翻译现象进行以理服人的诠释。总体观之,在多数翻译研究模式中,研究者大都过分强调原文的权威性,以为译文总是基于可轻易识别的原文

信息,因此译者在任何情况均应重视原文与译文之间不可动摇的逻辑关系。对此作者认为,同原文一样,译文本身也具有独立的自主性,在翻译研究中,我们不必总是将原文作为裁定一切的僵硬标准。与线性的综合模式相比,视译文与原文具有同等地位的研究模式显然更为可取。这种模式认为翻译是动态的,并指出正是翻译过程本身才赋予文本以原文的身份。总之,这种模式的主体精神是:与译文相比,原文并不具有更大的优越性或权威性。

如上所述,本书自始至终体现了一种富于建构意义的批评精神,这一精神主要针对的是原文至上的传统观念,其理据是:翻译是动态的,翻译过程的动态性决定了各因素之间的密切关系;换言之,作为一种信息传递现象,翻译过程并非线性或单向的,从原文文本的制作(编码)到译者对原文信息的理解与阐释(解码),乃至翻译所涉及到的种种内部及外部动因,所有这些因素相互影响和制约,无不对原文绝对的权威性以及译者不可动摇的万能地位提出了强有力的挑战。

最后需要附上一言的是,尽管作者将本书定位为**基础读物**,但从目录中可以看出,本书所探讨的问题却是相当广泛而深刻的,且不乏一定的前沿性。此外,本书在体例上也颇有特色,比如每一章均安排有“**导读**”和“**总结**”两部分内容,帮助读者更有效地梳理思路、接受知识。

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# Dedication

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This first edition of *Basics of Translation Studies* is dedicated to **China**, in admiration of its peaceful and spectacular progress that I have followed at close quarters for more than fifteen years.

And to all Chinese (including those unmentioned) who have welcomed me, from my first contacts with Professor Wang Ning of Tsinghua University, to the new contacts I establish every time I go to China.

And to all my friends spanning from Luo Xuanmin, Lu Zhongshe and Xu Yanhong of Tsinghua University, Liu Shicong and Ju Miao of Nankai University, Li Yunxing of Tianjin Normal University, Zhang Chunbai and Wu Bo of East China Normal University, Zheng Jimin and his colleagues, and Chou Chung-tien, to students, including Huang Jing, Liu Fang, Lu Liena, and Cheng Yunan who have all received me with hospitality and, in different ways, provided me with insights into Chinese ways and life.

This is also the place to give special thanks to Xu Gao, of Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, who has supervised this book with unflinching care.

I wish to express my gratitude to the persons that released me of other duties, so that I could devote my time entirely to the completion of this book.

This book is my personal present to Chinese readers and beyond them, with admiration, the country they represent: China.

C. D.

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# Foreword

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This book is meant to be as an introduction to Translation Studies for junior teachers and advanced students in China who are interested in this new field. It is not concerned with any particular language pair although it focuses on Indo-European languages. This is partly because my native mother tongue, Danish, belongs to this cluster of languages, and because most Translation Studies has, so far, been based on Indo-European tongues. This is sure to change possibly in the very near future – but at the time of writing it is a fact beyond dispute.

I feel that much contemporary academic theory has little to do with the practicalities of translation work. The balance in this book is not necessarily superior to that of others, but I have done my best to avoid making it excessively theoretical by using exemplification that covers the facts from the angle presented in this book.

This implies that some of the relatively few examples that I cite from others are not always discussed the same way these authors did; I “modify” them. The explanation is usually that the same phenomenon may be approached in different ways – this is a characteristic of Translation Studies.

It will also be noted that I do not provide precise information about where exactly I found specific examples (e.g. page numbers): firstly, speculative exemplification is a thing of the past in Translation Studies; secondly, in this age where we have access to the Internet and are also otherwise inundated with information (and in scholarship with journals, conference proceedings, and “revised editions”) – it is superfluous to spend time on convincing others that we did indeed find this or that example in a tourist brochure that was used only for one year or one occasion. Since it is impossible to check all exemplification, serious scholars must take one another’s examples on trust. Thirdly, much translation work, especially in international contexts, is sensitive and confidential. In these cases, citing sources is a breach of confidence.

The book will not cover all “theories of translation”. It is a fact of life and of scholarship that, provided you look long and far enough, you will find “authority” for any view, in the sense that somebody has found time to write and publish it. However, this is no guarantee that the views are worth exploring. This book will not cover everything in Translation Studies, not even all aspects that are worth further study. It will only focus on that which I consider pertinent in the context of this book.

The overall emphasis is to make you, as a reader, aware of the dynamic and highly complex character of translation and Translation Studies and to provide you with insights that can be used for practical as well as theoretical work. A heightened awareness of translation is an immaterial good but hopefully it enables you better to cope with translation and Translation Studies in your future work, irrespective of the specific language pair that you operate with.

This book is an elaboration of a distance course which I originally made for New York University. Most examples derive from my own collections and most background information is from interviews, from informal talks with language professionals, as well as from my own experience as a user, a producer, and a teacher of translation.

The field now termed Translation Studies has been central to me all through my life where I have, sometimes unawares – and occasionally for money – mediated between languages and cultures from infancy in Argentina via a childhood as a refugee in chaos in Denmark after World War II, to an academic career that has taken me to many parts of the world. At this place, I wish to thank everybody who has provided me with information about translation. I owe many insights into the translation scene worldwide to my volunteer editorial work for the now defunct *Language International : journal for language professionals*. It was issued by John Benjamins Publishing Company (the Netherlands), supervised by Ms Bertie Kaal (the Netherlands), and edited by Mr Geoffrey Kingscott (the United Kingdom).

The list of “works cited” in this book does not claim to provide exhaustive coverage of Translation Studies.

Comments and criticism are welcome.

January 2007  
Cay Dollerup,  
Copenhagen,  
Denmark  
Editor-in-Chief

[www.language-international.net](http://www.language-international.net)

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# Introductory Remarks

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### Outline

The present chapter sets out in detail some of the major parameters for the principles and theory of translation. It explains the point of departure and describes how, in recent years, language professionals have become much more aware that translation is a dynamic process with a changeable product. This leads to the presentation of some preliminary models of translation that allow for the introduction and definition of key concepts in Translation Studies. This is followed by a brief discussion of the academic field of Translation Studies, and some of the factors that make the uninitiated assume that translation is simple. The chapter turns to concepts that approach translation from a higher level, such as proactive vs. retrospective angles, societal (and cultural) imposition and requisition, the pervasive and disputed question of directionality in translation work, the enormous difference between prescription and description, finally to take up the relationship between Translation Studies and foreign-language acquisition.

### Learning objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- understand the character and level of the book;
- handle the essential key concepts in translation theory;
- have a better overview of components in translational communication;
- approach guidelines critically;
- be cognizant of views on directionality for translation work.

### Attitudes to translation

Until quite recently (a word which is sufficiently vague to allow

for considerable national differences), it was taken for granted that translation was an easy operation. It merely required somebody with a reasonably good foreign-language command for translation and interpreting. This person could, perhaps with the help of a dictionary, easily mediate in communication between speakers – or writers and their audiences – in different languages. Most of you – hopefully all – are aware that translation (which in this book involves all modes of transfers of linguistic messages from one language to another) requires more from those who go in for it in a serious way.

Translation is not a direct and uncritical transfer of words from one language to another. It is a craft, a trade, or an art that demands personal competence in professionals. It demands linguistic skills and language command. It requires the ability to make distinctions, not only in texts to be translated, but also of the contexts, including the situation in which the translation takes place.

One of the main outcomes of this is that it is rare that there is one – and **only one** – easy solution to a translation problem. Usually there is a multiplicity of acceptable renditions of a text. They depend on circumstances in space and time as well as the language pair involved in the actual translation process. They will differ from translator to translator and even with the same translator over the years. Deadlines may affect the product in so far as there is not time enough for revision. One may have off-days, and one may learn something new, or hit upon better phrasings.

Translation is, then, a dynamic activity and the product of translation is – if not dynamic in itself – then at least the outcome of a dynamic process. This implies that it is relativistic and not easy to study objectively.

### **Preliminary models of translation**

It can be argued that each mode of linguistic transfer (from face-to-face conversation to international communication between nations distant from one another) calls for a theory of its own. However, in the context of the introductory chapter of this book and its discussion of usage, it is more important that we highlight the common features of these modes, such as reference to (a) a message and (b) specific language pairs (in this book we shall mostly use English as the common core, but there will be references to other languages as well).



Within this framework, we may start by viewing translation as an ordinary act of communication. Accordingly, a simple model of communication is an appropriate basis for a discussion of why translation is a uniquely complicated phenomenon and why beginners (as well as professionals) are confronted with a bewildering array of approaches, attitudes, views, and suggestions.

A simple model of communication looks as follows:

***Sender > message > receiver.***

When we apply this model to interlingual transfers, we introduce a translator, a mediator.

If we refer to the “physical elements”, we have the following simple series:

***A sender > a message > a translator > a message > a recipient.***

If we look at the message alone, we can identify:

***A source text > a translation process > a translation.***

If we refer to the activities involved, they look as follows:

**Encoding** (that is, “uttering”, “writing”) > **Decoding** (that is, “reading”, “understanding”) + **Mediation** (that is, “transfer to another language in some (indeterminate) form”) + **Encoding** (that is, “expressing the message in specific phrases”) > **Decoding** (that is, “reading” or “understanding” by somebody in the target culture of the message encoded in the target language).

Combining some of the key concepts of Translation Studies (in bold), we can describe translation in the following fashion:

1. A **sender** in the **source culture** >
2. encodes a message (“**source text**”) uttered in the **source language** >
3. which is, (near)-simultaneously  
received (= decoded)  
mediated (= encoded), and  
“sent”  
(in the **translation process**) >
4. as a message (“**the translation**” or the **product of trans-**