西方翻译研究方法论：
70年代以后

Methodology of Western Translation Studies: since the 1970s

李和庆 黄 皓 薄振杰 编著

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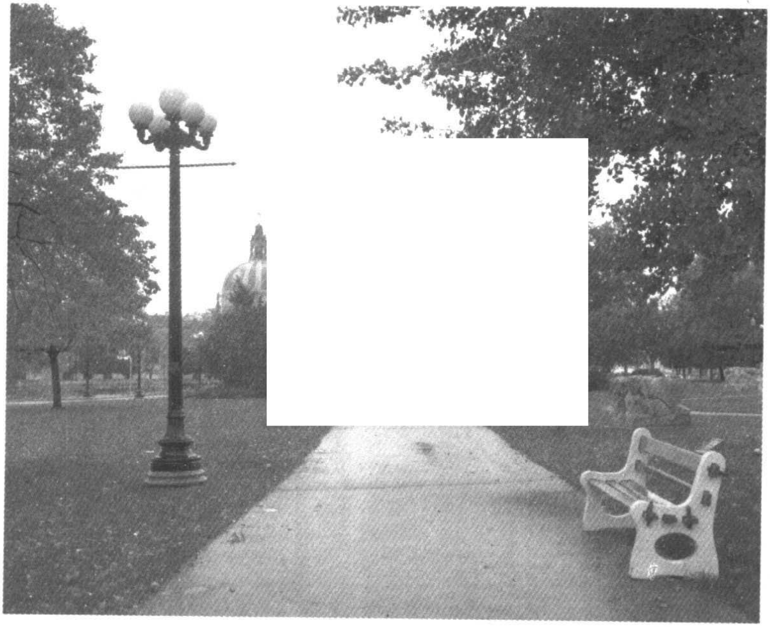

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Preface

It is widely agreed to be the case that translation and translation studies have never had it so good. Over the last three decades, translation has become a more prolific, visible and respectable activity than perhaps ever before. And alongside translation itself, a new field of academic study has come into existence, called *translatology* in German and China or *translation studies* in most Western countries. Yet the historical reasons for the present boom are probably traceable back to two distinct moments across the span of the twentieth century: 1) the movement of translating Russian fiction into English which began in the 1890s and went on until the 1930s, and 2) that from the East European countries lying behind the Iron Curtain in the 1970s and 1980s. The former leads to the Linguistic Turn in translation studies in the first half of the twentieth century and the latter the Cultural Turn in the 1980s.

Since James Holmes' seminal paper was published, efforts are being made in the Western world to find more objective and scientific research methods. However, as translation is such a complex phenomenon, different studies choose to focus on very diverse aspects, for very different reasons and using a wide variety of paradigms. At the same time, translation studies have achieved institutional authority, manifested by an unprecedented proliferation of academic training programs, professional associations, publications, and conferences.

The aim of this book is to supply an overview of Western translation studies since the 1970s, and thus it may be taken as a coursebook for postgraduates majoring in translation and as a resource book for those researchers. Because of the diversity of reference materials, one of the biggest problems in editing and writing this book is the dispersedness of references across such a wide range of books and journals, and the scarcity of research materials in China, although several publishing houses, especially Shanghai Foreign Language Press, is devoted in introducing the must-reads in Western translation studies.

The book includes ten chapters, namely, an overview of Western translation studies before the 1970s; linguistics-oriented approaches; function-oriented approaches; system-based approaches; culture-based approaches; philosophical approaches; historical approaches; studies on machine translation; interpreting studies; and interdisciplinarity, globalization and translation studies. Among the ten chapters, Chapter Eight titled as "Studies on Machine Translation" is authored by Bo Zhenjie, and Chapters Two, Three and Nine titled respectively as "Linguistics-oriented Approaches to Translation Studies" "Function-oriented Approaches to Translation Studies" and "Interpreting Studies" by Huang Hao. The rest of the book is authored by Li Heqing, who is also the organizer and designer of the book.

A remarkable feature of the book is perhaps the countless text-embedded footnotes, placed at the bottom of the page about the information of those Western translation scholars, which seem to be distracting and therefore reduce the book's readability. But we are certain that the footnotes will be definitely helpful for those who need more resources to do further research.

We are sincerely indebted to Professor Feng Qinghua for his detailed comments and suggestions on the draft of the book, and Professor Wang Zhikui and Professor Sun Yingchun for their encouragement and guidance for theory reading. Sincere gratitude also goes to Beijing University Press, who agrees to publish this four-year effort. More importantly, our appreciation goes to those copyright holders for giving permission to reproduce. Although efforts have been made to

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obtain permission, we sincerely apologize to those copyright holders whom we fail to contact for various reasons.

Li Heqing
Huang Hao
Bo Zhenjie

A List of Abbreviations

ST	source text
TT	target text / translated text
SL	source language
TL	target language
SC	source culture
TC	target culture
CAT	computer-aided translation
LSP	language for special purposes
SIL (Gutt)	Summer Institute of Linguistics
TAP	think-aloud protocol
T/I	translation and interpreting
UMIST	University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology
CETRA	the Leuven Research Center for Translation, Communication and Cultures
DTM	dynamic translation model
TOT	linguistics/text-oriented theories
COT	non-linguistics/context-oriented theories
DTS	descriptive translation studies
ESIT	École supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs (Paris School)
AIIC	International Association of Conference Interpreters
SI	simultaneous interpretation
ESIST	European Association for Studies in Screen Translation
AVT	Audio-visual Translation

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Chapter One
An Overview of Western Translation Studies before the 1970s

Before we start to discuss the history of **Western translation studies**①, we have to caution ourselves that the history of translation is so vast that it is impossible to cover it adequately or compress it in a single book, let alone in a single chapter. Therefore, we have to refer to some known "landmarks in the long history of translation." (Steiner, 1975: 236) Even so, we still face problems in making clear-cut divisions of the historical periods. In this chapter, we will follow a loose chronological structure as well as the commonly known historical epochs, namely, Antiquity, Renaissance and Reformation, Romanticism and Modern Times. Meanwhile, we will look at Holmes' seminal paper, which is usually considered as a rough framework and epoch-making landmark of Western translation studies. In addition, we will discuss very briefly the tendency and development of translation studies in the last three decades of the 20th century and at the turn of our new century.

1. Translation in Antiquity

The first traces of translation date from 3000 BC, during the

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① By "**Western translation studies**", we refer to those outside East-Asian countries, especially those from European countries. "Western" here may not be treated as a geographical, economic and political term, but just an academic one.

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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. (Newmark, 1982/2001: 3)

Cicero① is often considered the founder of Western translation theory, and the first to comment on the process of translation and offer advice on how best to undertake the task. In his *On the Orator* (*Deoratore*, 55 BC), Cicero set the terms which were expanded by Horace, Pliny the Younger, Quintillian, Saint Jerome, and Catholics, Reformers and Humanists from the 14th to the 17th centuries. Cicero's approach to translation is 'sense-for-sense' and not 'word-for-word'. That means a translator should bear in mind the intended meaning of the SL author and render it by means of TL words or word-order which does not sound strange to the TL readers. For Cicero, "if I render word for word, the result will sound uncouth, and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in the order or wording, I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator." (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980: 43)

Pliny the Younger② practiced and propagated translating as a literary technique. For him, the most useful thing is to translate Greek into Latin and Latin into Greek. This kind of exercise develops in a

---

① **Marcus Tullius Cicero** (106-143 BC) is probably the most famous Roman rhetor and rhetorician. His formulation of what has come to be known as 'Ciceronian rhetoric' has dominated Western thinking on the subject. For further information about Cicero and *De optimo genere oratorum*, see Robinson, 1997: 6-12.

② **Pliny the Younger** (61/62-113) is largely known for the ten books of private letters he published on a wide variety of subjects. Pliny's *Letter to Fusus Salinator* (85CE?), written almost a century and a half after Cicero's books on the orator, adds two new ingredients to Cicero's theory. The first is the nudging value of translating in both directions, an exercise Cicero never imagined; the second is open competition with the original writer, a kind of one-upmanship whose ultimate aim is the amassing of expressive capital.

precision and richness of vocabulary, a wide range of metaphor and power of exposition, and imitation of the best models leads to a like aptitude for original composition. Though Pliny emphasizes the importance of translation, he, unlike Cicero, prefers "word-for-word" translation to "sense-for-sense" translation.

Horace① argues for the revitalization of well-known texts through a style that would "neither linger in the one hackneyed and easy round; neither trouble to render word by word with the faithfulness of a translator [*sic*]", not treat the original writer's beliefs with too easy a trust, and would avoid stylistic over-sensationalism "so that the middle never strikes a different note from the beginning, nor the end from the middle." (Robinson, 1997: 15) His criticism of the faithful translator is often turned on its head to support translational fidelity to the original.

Saint Jerome②, a Christian ascetic and Biblical scholar, translated the New Testament from Hebrew into the popular, non-literary Latin. His *Letter to Pammachius* (395 AD) on the best kind of translator is the founding document of Christian translation theory. St Jerome points out that "in translating from the Greek, — I render not word for word, but sense for sense." (Robinson, 1997: 25) He criticizes the word-for-word approach because, by following so closely the form of the ST, it produces an 'absurd' translation, concealing the sense of the original. The sense-for-sense approach, on the other hand, allows the sense or content of the ST to be translated. In these poles can be seen the origin of both the 'literal vs. free' and 'form vs. content'

---

① **Horace** (**Quintus Horatius Flaccus**, 65-8 BC) was one the greatest of all Roman lyric poets and satirists.

② **St. Jerome** (**Eusebius Hieronymus**, 347-419/420), born to a wealthy Christian family in Yugoslavia, was revered throughout the Middle Ages and well into the modern era as the 'official' translator of the Bible, the author of the Vulgate Latin translation that in matters of doctrinal dispute took precedence over all Hebrew and Greek texts until the 16th century and beyond.

debate that has continued until modern times. (Munday, 2001: 20)

2. Translation in Renaissance and Reformation

At the time of the Renaissance, there was a flood of translations largely from Greek. The spirit of Renaissance inspired and gave rise to numerous translations of scientific and religious texts in England and elsewhere (Nida, 1964: 14). A major force behind these translations was aristocratic interest and patronage. These translations into vernaculars legitimized vernacular writings because they promised access to Latin culture. However, the translations from Latin to vernaculars reproduced the systems of containment and control that sustain the Latin academic tradition (Copeland, 1991: 224-8).

The 16th century witnessed an ideological movement known as ' Protestantism '. Though this movement spread itself throughout Europe, its overwhelming presence was felt in Germany. In the field of religion, church authorities forbade the lay people to read the Bible in their native languages.

Martin Luther①, the dominant figure in the field of translation and "father of the modern German language", translated the Bible into High German and used it as an ideological weapon of the Protestant movement against the Roman church. Luther's Bible translations reveal to us how translation is used by conflicting social classes as an ideological weapon. In 1530, Luther wrote the self-promoting and nationalistic *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* (*Circular Letter on Translation*),

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① **Martin Luther** (1483-1546) was the founder of the sixteen-century Reformation. He was born and raised in the linguistic area of East Middle Germany where a normative language, a literary language of some sophistication, had already developed. His use of this East Middle German variant of literary German for his translation of the Bible encourages the further establishment and standardization of this form. (Delisle, 1995: 46-7) in which he criticized Latin, Hebrew and other languages for being full of "stones and stumps", in contrast to his smooth German writing. As a poet, writer and translator, Luther reformed the German language in ways that can still be felt today. He carefully and systematically worked out his principles of meaning-oriented translation: 1) shift of word-order; 2) employment of model auxiliaries; 3) introduction of conatives, whenever required; 4) use of phrases, where necessary to translate single words in the original text; 5) shifts of metaphors to non-metaphors and vice versa; and 6) careful attention paid to explanatory accuracy and textual variants (Nida, 1964: 15).

In his 1540 manuscript *la maniere de bien traduire d'une langue en aultre* (*The way of translating well from one language into another*), **Etienne Dolet**① postulates five principles of good translation: 1) the translator must understand perfectly the content and intention of the author whom he is translating; 2) the translator should have a perfect knowledge of the language from which he is translating and an equally excellent knowledge of the language into which he is translating; 3) the translator should avoid the tendency to translate word to word, for to do so is to destroy the meaning of the original and to ruin the beauty of the expression; 4) the translator should employ the forms of speech in common usage; and 5) through his choice and order of words, the translator should be able to produce the total overall effect with an 'appropriate tone'.

Abraham Cowley② advocates freedom in translation and treats word-for-word translation as one mad man translating another. His

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① **Etienne Dolet** (1509-1546), a French humanist printer, translator and scholar, is often considered as the first martyr of the Renaissance, and specifically as the first martyred translator.

② **Abraham Cowley** (1618-1667) is an English poet hugely admired in his own day as an adapter of the Pindaric ode to English poetry. See Robinson, 1997: 161-2.

defense of free imitation provides Dryden with his primary foil.

John Dryden① is often seen as the first systematic translation theorist in the West. Like his contemporaries Abraham Cowley, **John Denham**②, and the **Earl of Roscommon**③, Dryden is engaged in the gentlemanly search for secular principles of translation. For him, ‘gentlemanly’ largely means ‘amateurish’, means refusing to put on scholarly airs and means resisting the temptation to write lengthy knit-browed treatises on the subject. In the preface to his translation of Ovid's *Epistles* in 1680, Dryden reduced all translation to three categories: **metaphrase**, "turning an author word by word, and line by line, from one language into another", which corresponds to literal translation; **paraphrase**, "translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense", which corresponds to sense-for-sense translation; and **imitation**, "where the translator assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both occasions; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the groundwork, as he please" (Munday, 2001: 25), which corresponds to Cowley's very free translation and is more or less adaptation.

Dryden criticizes translators who adopt **metaphrase** as being a "verbal copier." (Robinson, 1997: 172) Similarly, Dryden rejects **imitation**, for "the imitation of an author is the most advantageous way

---

① **John Dryden** (1631-1700) is the predominant English literary figure of his day: poet, dramatist, translator, and critic. Dryden's reputation today as the first translation theorist reflects a movement in his remarks toward system. See Schulte and Biguenet, 1992: 17-32.

② **Sir John Denham** (1615-1669) is one of the most popular English poets of the mid-17th century. See Robinson, 1997: 155-6.

③ **Wentworth Dillon, the fourth earl of Roscommon** (1633? -1685), is an English translator and poet of whom Sammuel Johnson wrote that "he improved taste, if he did not enlarge knowledge", and may be numbered among the benefactors to English literature. See Robinson, 1997: 175-80.

for a translator to show himself, but the greatest wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead." (ibid.) "Imitation and verbal [literal] version are, in my opinion, the two extremes which ought to be avoided" (ibid.) and therefore, he proposes "the mean betwixt them", i. e. **paraphrase**. The triadic model proposed by Dryden exerts considerable influence on later writings on translation. (Munday, 2001: 25) Although his three 'new' terms for translation are far from new, Dryden remains an attractive and accessible popularizer of this long tradition.

An important work relating to translation studies in the 18th century was **Alexander Fraser Tytler's** *The Essay on the Principles of Translation*① (1791). Rather than Dryden's author-oriented description, Tytler defines a good translation in TL reader-oriented terms to be that "in which the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language as to be as distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by a native of the country to which that language belongs as it is by those who speak the language of the original work."②

According to Tytler, there are three general principles: 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; and 3) the translation should have all the ease of the original composition.

Tytler's first principle refers to the translator having a perfect knowledge of the original, being competent in the subject and giving a faithful transfusion of the sense and meaning of the author. His second

---

① **Alexander Fraser Tytler** (1747-1813) is a Scottish historian best known for his accessible syntheses of other people's work. His *Essay on the Principles of Translation* is bland, inoffensive, unoriginal, but extremely accessible, and is often cited as the last expression of the Enlightenment spirit in the theory of translation. See Robinson, 1997: 208-12.

② Cited from Robinson, 1997: 209.

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