

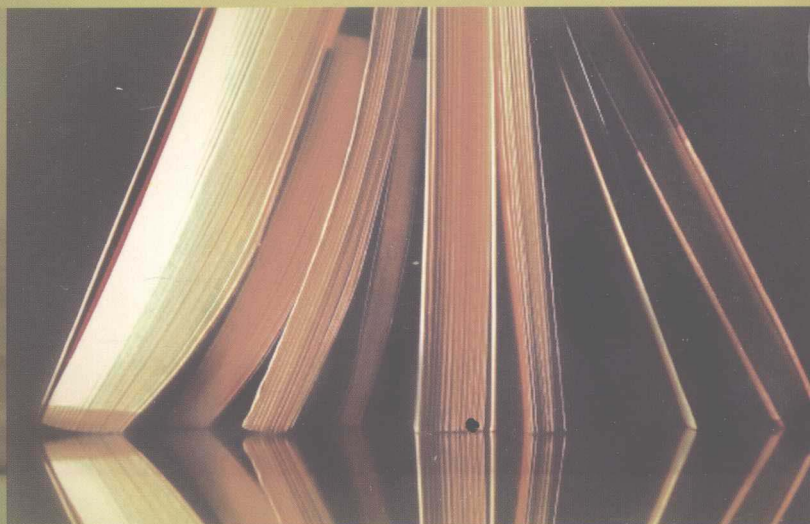


高等学校英语专业系列教材

当代西方翻译理论选读

Selected Readings of
Contemporary Western Translation Theories

马会娟 苗 莉 编著



外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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序言

美籍荷兰学者詹姆斯·霍姆斯 (James Holmes) 在其 1972 年发表的论文《翻译研究的名与实》(“The Name and Nature of Translation Studies”) 一文中详尽地论述了翻译研究作为一门学科应具有的名称、性质、范围等内容, 这篇论文被翻译界普遍认为是“翻译学科的创建宣言”(Gentzler 1993:92)。在国内外翻译界同仁的共同努力下, 近三十年来, 翻译研究无论是在西方还是在中国都逐渐发展成为一门独立的学科。与时俱进, 我国许多高等院校纷纷设立翻译系或翻译学院, 以适应社会对翻译人才的需要。至 2007 年, 我国设立翻译系或翻译学院的一类院校有十余所; 目前更多的学校正在筹备建立翻译系和翻译本科专业。为进一步推动翻译研究作为一门独立学科的发展, 我们的翻译系或翻译学院以培养社会发展所需要的职业译员为基本目标, 力求提高学生的理论水平, 为社会输送具备一定理论基础的翻译人才。

《当代西方翻译理论选读》一书正是为了适应目前高校翻译理论教学的需要而撰写的。作者根据对相关课题的调研发现, 目前国内外市场上适合我国学生的翻译理论选读教材并不多见。在我国市场上, 介绍西方各家翻译流派的理论入门书有的用中文撰写, 对于中国读者来说, 虽然方便易读, 但缺点也显而易见, 因为读翻译的内容, 总有“雾里看花”的感觉, 正如意大利谚语所谓“翻译者即叛逆者”也。

对于翻译系/翻译学院的学生, 最好是读“原汁原味”的英文材料, 从而准确理解西方翻译理论的概念、术语。有的教材虽用英文撰写, 但主要是对西方各家翻译理论流派的评述, 对于学生来说, 也是隔靴搔痒, 难以窥见“庐山真面目”, 不利于学生对西方翻译理论的深刻了解。有的略显陈旧, 节选多为 20 世纪 70 年代以前的翻译理论流派, 对 20 世纪 70 年代以后兴起的西方诸多流派, 如目的论、描写学派、后殖民主义、女权主义、翻译实证研究等都很少涉及。尽管目前西方翻译理论方面的书在国内市场上可以说是汗牛充栋, 但缺乏一部集中介绍西方主要翻译流派的代表性的论文选编。

本书主要选取自 20 世纪 60 年代以来有代表性、有影响的当代西方翻译理论流派的论文或理论著作, 共计十六篇, 分七个单元, 依次是语言学派、功能学派、描写学派、文化学派、翻译的哲学取向派、认知学派以及翻译实证研究。语言学派包括奈达 (Nida) 的动态对等翻译理论, 纽马克 (Newmark) 的语义翻译与交际翻译, 纽伯特 (Neubert) 的语篇翻译。功能学派选取了弗米尔 (Vermeer) 的翻译目的论, 以及诺德 (Nord) 的功

能加忠诚翻译观。描写学派选用了佐哈尔 (Even-Zohar) 的多元系统论、图里 (Toury) 的描写翻译研究以及勒菲弗尔 (Lefevere) 的翻译改写理论。文化学派选取了韦努蒂 (Venuti) 的异化翻译策略、弗罗托 (Flotow) 的女性主义翻译研究、罗宾逊 (Robinson) 的后殖民翻译研究。翻译的哲学取向派选取了斯坦纳 (Steiner) 的翻译阐释观和德里达 (Derrida) 的解构主义翻译观。认知学派选取了格特 (Gutt) 的关联翻译理论。为了更全面地展示整个西方翻译研究的全景, 第七单元介绍了翻译实证研究。翻译实证研究侧重于研究方法论建设, 分别为翻译作品的实证研究和翻译过程的实证研究, 在当代西方翻译研究中占据了重要地位, 选读部分选取了贝克 (Baker) 的语料库翻译研究和劳舍 (Lörscher) 的有声思维翻译过程研究。

本书内容编排基本上遵循了翻译学发展的时间顺序, 以流派统照代表人物, 兼顾学生对理论难易度的接受。每一单元前有对该流派的概述, 内容包括该流派兴起的理论背景、主要代表人物的观点以及该流派在翻译研究中的地位 and 影响等。所选论文也配以简明扼要的导读, 主要介绍该理论家提出其理论观点的背景、主要观点以及该观点的意义、价值和局限性, 以帮助学生更好地了解所节选的内容。文末附有针对所选论文的思考题, 使学生在阅读该篇论文时, 能够带着问题去思考相关主题, 同时通过问题的形式, 引导学生学会对文章进行批判性阅读。另外, 每个章节的最后附有相关的参考书目, 使对该课题感兴趣的同学按照所提供的书目继续阅读相关的内容, 进一步扩大学术视野。通过课下阅读、课上讨论这些基本的翻译理论, 学生不仅能加深对翻译实践、翻译现象的认识, 而且可以了解、掌握翻译研究领域的代表性翻译理论流派及其主要观点, 提高翻译理论意识, 为今后撰写毕业论文和进一步深造奠定理论基础。

总之, 编者希望通过本选读所介绍的内容, 使学生对当代西方翻译理论的各个流派有所了解, 逐渐引导他们进入翻译理论研究的殿堂, 为国家培养既有坚实的理论基础又有过硬的翻译能力的高级翻译人才。

本书属于北京外国语大学英语学院“十一五”“211工程”标志性项目“英语专业核心教材系列”之一。本书的编写得到了英语学院各位领导的大力支持, 尤其是在该项目总负责人张剑教授的殷切希望下才得以顺利完稿。北外英语学院翻译系的同事对所选材料的内容以及外语教学与研究出版社的编辑都帮森对本书的撰写也提出了很好的建议。另外, 王颖冲负责撰写了第五单元的概述, 刘明帮助整理、校对了部分书稿, 在此作者表示真挚的感谢! 最后, 感谢我们的家人, 他们不仅理解我们的工作, 从精神上给予鼓励, 还承担了部分材料的搜集和校对, 促成了书稿的早日完成。

编者

2008年9月1日

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Unit One

Linguistic Approaches to Translation

- Chapter 1** Eugene Nida
Dynamic Equivalence and Formal Equivalence
- Chapter 2** Peter Newmark
Semantic and Communicative Translation
- Chapter 3** Albrecht Neubert
Translation as Text
-



Introduction

Translation was not investigated scientifically until the 1960s in the Western history of translation as a great number of scholars and translators believed that translation was an art or a skill. When the American linguist and translation theorist E. A. Nida was working on his *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964), he argued that the process of translation could be described in an objective and scientific manner, “for just as linguistics may be classified as a descriptive science, so the transference of a message from one language to another is likewise a valid subject for scientific description” (1964:3). Hence Nida in his work makes full use of the new development of linguistics, semantics, information theory, communication theory and sociosemiotics in an attempt to explore the various linguistic and cultural factors involved in the process of translating. For instance, when discussing the process of translation, Nida adopts the useful elements of the transformational generative grammar put forward by the American linguist Noam Chomsky, suggesting that it is more effective to transfer the meaning from the source language to the receptor language on the kernel level, a key concept in Chomsky’s theory. Nida’s theory of dynamic equivalence, which is introduced in this unit, also approaches translation from a sociolinguistic perspective. It describes “the way translators can adapt texts to the needs of a different audience in the same way we all adjust our language to suit the people we are talking to” (Fawcett 1997:2). In the same period, the British linguist and translation theorist J. C. Catford tried to build a linguistic theory of translation by using Halliday’s case grammar in his objective analysis of translation. In his work of 1965, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, he argues that any theory of translation needs to draw upon a theory of language because translation is “an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another” (1965:1).

Linguistically-oriented translation theories focus their studies on “translation equivalence”. The term “equivalence” first appeared in J. R. Firth’s writing (1957) when he stated that “the so-called translation equivalents between two languages are never really equivalent” (Snell-Hornby 1988:37). In 1959, the Russian-born American linguist Roman Jakobson in his seminal paper “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation”, which approaches translation from a linguistic and semiotic angle, discusses “equivalence” in translation in great detail. In this paper, he states that “equivalence in difference is the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal

concern of linguistics". Since then linguistically-oriented translation theorists have privileged "equivalence" in their writings. Catford claims that one of the central tasks of translation theory is "defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence" (1965:21). In his translation model, he distinguishes two types of equivalence: formal correspondence and textual equivalence (1965:27).

Nida's model of translation is closely related to dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence. The German translation theorist Werner Koller classifies equivalence into denotative equivalence, connotative equivalence, text-normative equivalence and pragmatic equivalence.

The study of "translation equivalence," however, is heavily criticized in recent translation studies. For instance, Snell-Hornby thinks that "equivalence is unsuitable as a basic concept in translation theory" because it is "imprecise and ill-defined (even after a heated debate of over twenty years)" (1988:22). Nevertheless, the notion of equivalence should not be dismissed as useless and outdated in translation studies. As the British linguist and translation theorist Peter Fawcett points out, translation equivalence "continues to be used in the everyday language of translation because they represent translation reality" (2007:62). In other words, the active role of linguistics in the development of translation studies should not be denied despite the limitations of linguistic approaches. Linguistics did and will continue to offer something insightful to the study of translation, helping people understand better the translation phenomenon, which is claimed to be "the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos" (Richards 1953:250). Just as Fawcett states in the foreword of his work *Translation and Language: Linguistic Theories Explained*, "There are many things in translation which can only be described and explained by linguistics. Further, a translator who lacks at least a basic knowledge of linguistics is somebody who is working with an incomplete toolkit." (1997)

In this unit, three classic texts written by linguistically-based translation theorists are selected. Chapter 1 presents Nida's dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence. Chapter 2 focuses on the British translation theorist Peter Newmark's semantic and communicative translation, which is a refinement of Nida's two types of equivalence. Chapter 3 is the German translation theorist Albrecht Neubert's discussion of translation from the perspective of text linguistics.

Chapter 1

Eugene Nida

Dynamic Equivalence and Formal Equivalence

Guided Reading

Eugene A. Nida (1914–) is a distinguished American translation theorist as well as a linguist. His translation theory has exerted a great influence on translation studies in Western countries. His works on translation set off the study of modern translation as an academic field, and he is regarded as “the patriarch of translation study and a founder of the discipline” (Snell-Hornby 1988:1; Baker 1998:277).

After receiving his PhD in linguistics in 1943, Nida was employed by the American Bible Society (ABS) to check and evaluate the publications of Bibles, and later was appointed as Associate Secretary for Versions and Executive Secretary for Translation, providing practical service for missionary Bible translators, including counseling them how to translate better and, sometimes, providing them with a model of translation, etc. In order to carry on his work on more solid basis, he began touring different countries where missionary translators were working, examining various aspects of languages and cultures, and helping missionary translators with different linguistic and translation problems. In 1970, Nida was appointed Translations Research Coordinator in the United Bible Society (UBS), coordinating various activities in connection with Bible translating, such as writing translators handbooks, preparing teaching materials for translators and testing translations, etc.

Before Nida advanced his translation theory in the 1960s, there was

a tendency in translating, i.e. the emphasis on technical accuracy and literalism, which had a very negative effect on Bible translations in the 19th century. For instance, the English Revised Version of the Bible (1881, 1885) and the American Standard Version of the Bible (1901) were very literal and only popular with theological “ponies”; but never popular with the Christian community of English-speaking people, for “they simply do not communicate effectively, owing to their 16th century forms (in some cases more archaic than those of the King James Version) and the literal, awkward syntax” (Nida 1964:20). This general background explains why Nida in his theory gives priority to “dynamic equivalence” over “formal correspondence” in translation.

Nida’s theory of dynamic equivalence is his major contribution to translation studies. The concept is first mentioned in his article “Principles of Translation as Exemplified by Bible Translating” (1959) as he attempts to define translating. In his influential work *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964), he postulates dynamic equivalent translation as follows:

In such a translation (dynamic equivalent translation) one is not so concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source-language message, but with the dynamic relationship, that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message (1964:159).

However, he does not give a clear definition of dynamic equivalence until 1969. In his 1969 textbook *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, dynamic equivalence is defined “in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language” (1969:24).

The expression “dynamic equivalence” is superseded by “functional equivalence” in his work *From One Language to Another* (1986, with De Waard). However, there is essentially not much difference between the two concepts. The substitution of “functional equivalence” is just to stress the concept of function and to avoid misunderstandings of the term “dynamic”, which is mistaken by some persons for something in the sense of impact (Nida 1993:124). In *Language, Culture and Translating* (1993), “functional

equivalence” is further divided into categories on two levels: the minimal level and the maximal level. The minimal level of “functional equivalence” is defined as “The readers of a translated text should be able to comprehend it to the point that they can conceive of how the original readers of the text must have understood and appreciated it”. The maximal level is stated as “The readers of a translated text should be able to understand and appreciate it in essentially the same manner as the original readers did” (Nida 1993:118; 1995:224). The two definitions of equivalence reveal that the minimal level is realistic, whereas the maximal level is ideal. For Nida, good translations always lie somewhere between the two levels (Nida 1995:224). It can be noted that “functional equivalence” is a flexible concept with different degrees of adequacy.

In Nida’s theory, dynamic equivalence is defined with “receptors’ response” as its nature. Unlike traditional translation theories, which focus on verbal comparison between the original text and its translation, Nida’s concept of translating shifts from “the form of the message” to “the response of the receptor”. Thus, the importance of receptors’ role in translating is emphasized. In his view, when determining whether a translation is faithful to the original text or not, the critic should not compare the formal structures between the source text and its translation, but compare “receptors’ response”. If the reader in the receptor language understands and appreciates the translated text in essentially the same manner and to the same degree as the reader in the source language did, such a translation can be evaluated as a dynamic equivalent translation. That is to say, the critic should judge a translation not by verbal correspondence between the two texts in question, but by seeing how the receptor, for whom the translated text is intended, reacts to it. Nida likens his theory of “readers’ response” to market research. When judging a product, one should test how consumers react to the product, for “regardless of how theoretically good a product might be or how seemingly well it is displayed, if people do not respond favorably to it, then it is not going to be accepted” (Nida and Taber 1969:162). Similarly, in evaluating a translation, when a high percentage of people misunderstand a rendering, or find it difficult to understand, the critic cannot regard it as a legitimate translation (Nida & Taber 1969:2). Nida’s theory emphasizes the importance of the acceptance of a translated text by the intended reader in the receptor language, and avoids the subjective evaluation of the critic.

Dynamic equivalence has been widely adopted by Bible translators since the 1950s and has been successful. For instance, the revision of The Reina-Valera Spanish Bible, the new translations of the New Testament, including The Spanish Version Popular New Testament (1966) and Good News for Modern Man (Today's English Version) (1966), and the new Chinese version of the Bible (Today's Chinese Version) all follow the principle of dynamic equivalence put forward by Nida.

However, there are divided opinions about the scope of its applicability into general translation practice. Some scholars hold that the value of dynamic equivalence is not merely restricted to Bible translation, and it can be used to guide general translation practice. Newmark considers the principle of "equivalent effect" an important concept in translating with reservation. He states that "'equivalent effect' is the desirable result, rather than the aim of any translation... it is an important concept which has a degree of application to any type of text, but not the same degree of importance... in the communicative translation of vocative texts, equivalent effect is not only desirable, it is essential" (1988:48). But some scholars express their doubts about the application of dynamic equivalence to general translation practice, especially literary translation. Gentzler questions Nida's theory from the perspective of "reception theory" in literary criticism. He does not believe that the message of the original text could be determined and reproduced in the receptor text, nor does he believe that the reception of the translated text would be the same as that perceived by the original receptors as Nida has assumed (1993:54-60). In Gentzler's view, Nida's theory is only useful for translations of propaganda, advertisement or certain religious materials; but it could not provide the basis for a general translation theory (1993:60).

Although Nida's translation theory has been questioned and challenged since the 1980s, it has attracted and will continue to attract attention with its theoretical and practical value in translation studies. The following excerpt is taken from Chapter Six of Nida's seminal work *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964). In this chapter, Nida postulates two different types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence, and describe their features respectively in great detail. He also tries to define what a good translation is, though he argues that it is difficult to define it without taking into consideration a myriad of factors.

Principles of Correspondence

By Eugene Nida

Since no two languages are identical, either in the meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages. Hence there can be no fully exact translations. The total impact of a translation may be reasonably close to the original, but there can be no identity in detail. Constance B. West (1932, p.344) clearly states the problem: “Whoever takes upon himself to translate contracts a debt; to discharge it, he must pay not with the same money, but the same sum.” One must not imagine that the process of translation can avoid a certain degree of interpretation by the translator. In fact, as D. G. Rossetti stated in 1874 (Fang, 1953), “A translation remains perhaps the most direct form of commentary.”

Different Types of Translations

No statement of the principles of correspondence in translating can be complete without recognizing the many different types of translations (Herbert P. Phillips, 1959). Traditionally, we have tended to think in terms of free or paraphrastic translations as contrasted with close or literal ones. Actually, there are many more grades of translating than these extremes imply. There are, for example, such ultraliteral translations as interlinears; while others involve highly concordant relationships, e.g. the same source-language word is always translated by one—and only one—receptor-language word. Still others may be quite devoid of artificial restrictions in form, but nevertheless may be overtraditional and even archaizing. Some translations aim at very close formal and semantic correspondence, but are generously supplied with notes and commentary. Many are not so much concerned with giving information as with creating in the reader something of the same mood as was conveyed by the original.

Differences in translations can generally be accounted for by three basic factors in translating: (1) the nature of the message, (2) the purpose or purposes of the author and, by proxy, of the translator, and (3) the type of audience.

Messages differ primarily in the degree to which content or form is the dominant consideration. Of course, the content of a message can never be completely abstracted from the form, and form is nothing apart from content; but in some messages the content is of primary consideration, and in others the form must be given a higher priority. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, despite certain important stylistic qualities, the importance of the message far exceeds considerations of form. On the other hand, some of the acrostic poems of the Old Testament are obviously designed to fit a very strict formal “strait jacket.” But even the contents of a message may differ widely in applicability to the receptor-language audience. For example, the folk tale of the Bauré Indians of Bolivia, about a giant who led the animals in a symbolic dance, is interesting to an English-speaking audience, but to them it has not the same relevance as the Sermon on the Mount. And even the Bauré Indians themselves recognize the Sermon on the Mount as more significant than their favorite “how-it-happened” story. At the same time, of course, the Sermon on the Mount has greater relevance to these Indians than have some passages in Leviticus.

In poetry there is obviously a greater focus of attention upon formal elements than one normally finds in prose. Not that content is necessarily sacrificed in translation of a poem, but the content is necessarily constricted into certain formal molds. Only rarely can one reproduce both content and form in a translation, and hence in general the form is usually sacrificed for the sake of the content. On the other hand, a lyric poem translated as prose is not an adequate equivalent of the original. Though it may reproduce the conceptual content, it falls far short of reproducing the emotional intensity and flavor. However, the translating of some types of poetry by prose may be dictated by important cultural considerations. For example, Homer’s epic poetry reproduced in English poetic form usually seems to us antique and queer—with nothing of the liveliness and spontaneity characteristic of Homer’s style. One reason is that we are not accustomed to having stories told to us in poetic form. In our Western European tradition such epics are related in prose. For this reason E.V.Rieu chose prose rather than poetry as the more appropriate medium by which to render *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

The particular purposes of the translator are also important factors in dictating the type of translation. Of course, it is assumed that the

translator has purposes generally similar to, or at least compatible with, those of the original author, but this is not necessarily so. For example, a San Blas story-teller is interested only in amusing his audience, but an ethnographer who sets about translating such stories may be much more concerned in giving his audience an insight into San Blas personality structure. Since, however, the purposes of the translator are the primary ones to be considered in studying the types of translation which result, the principal purposes that underlie the choice of one or another way to render a particular message are important.

The primary purpose of the translator may be information as to both content and form. One intended type of response to such an informative type of translation is largely cognitive, e.g. an ethnographer's translation of texts from informants, or a philosopher's translation of Heidegger. A largely informative translation may, on the other hand, be designed to elicit an emotional response of pleasure from the reader or listener.

A translator's purposes may involve much more than information. He may, for example, want to suggest a particular type of behaviour by means of a translation. Under such circumstances he is likely to aim at full intelligibility, and to make certain minor adjustments in detail so that the reader may understand the full implications of the message for his own circumstances. In such a situation a translator is not content to have receptors say, "This is intelligible to us." Rather, he is looking for some such response as, "This is meaningful for us." In terms of Bible translating, the people might understand a phrase such as "to change one's mind about sin" as meaning "repentance." But if the indigenous way of talking about repentance is "spit on the ground in front of," as in Shilluk,¹ spoken in the Sudan, the translator will obviously aim at the more meaningful idiom. On a similar basis, "white as snow" may be rendered as "white as egret feathers," if the people of the receptor language are not acquainted with snow but speak of anything very white by this phrase.

A still greater adaptation is likely to occur in a translation which has an imperative purpose. Here the translator feels constrained not merely to suggest a possible line of behavior, but to make such an action explicit and

1. This idiom is based upon the requirement that plaintiffs and defendants spit on the ground in front of each other when a case has been finally tried and punishment meted out. The spitting indicates that all is forgiven and that the accusations can never be brought into court again.