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文学硕士学位论文

从符号学角度探索英汉翻译

硕士研究生: 王丹宇

指导教师: 孙守奎 教授

学科、专业: 英语语言文学

哈尔滨工程大学

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摘要

翻译是一种实践性很强的活动，它需要理论的指导。国内外许多学者经过多年的研究，仍未提出一套人人都接受，满意的翻译方法。近年来人们立足于不同的学科，从不同的角度对它进行研究，符号学翻译方法正是在这种背景下提出来的。

翻译不只是二种语言之间的转换，而是一种跨文化的交际活动，英汉二种语言分别属于印欧语系和汉藏语系，这二种语系在文字系统，语音，词汇，语法，各方面均有很大差异。这源于它们不同的文化背景：生态环境，物质文化，社会制度，思维方式等。因此单纯从语言学角度解释翻译不能得到满意的答案。

符号学，源于瑞士语言学家索绪尔，他指出：语言是一种表达概念的符号系统。当时，符号学主要用于语言研究。后来，语义学家莫尔斯提出了符号的意义观，即符号具有指称意义，言内意义，和语用意义。这成为符号学翻译理论的基石。将符号学正式导入翻译研究的是美国语言学家和圣经翻译专家奈达。奈达在其深厚的语言造诣和丰富的翻译实践基础上，创造性引用符号学来指导翻译活动。其符号学翻译观的核心是符号意义观，即符号意义的三维关系。同时符号学翻译理论借鉴了语言功能理论。符号是传递信息的，因

此它总是体现一定交际功能的。英国翻译家纽马克将语言功能分为六类，较适用于翻译。翻译活动是一种符号转换活动，具体说是解码和编码过程。对原文的理解是翻译的第一步，即解码，译者在解码时应将原文视为语言符号系统的集合。对这些符号的理解不能脱离具体社会，不能脱离它们之间的关系，也不能脱离符号使用者的个体特征。这反映在译文中便是指称意义，言内意义，语用意义的再现，也就是编码。

用符号学指导翻译研究，可以在宏观上把握原文的功能和意义，通过微观的理解和表达，实现宏观上的整体效果，从而提高翻译水平。

本文用近一半的篇幅系统地介绍了符号学翻译法的历史渊源和发展沿革，及符号学翻译法的翻译过程，标准。第三章是在符号学翻译理论指导下的实践。通过引用大量生动的例子来分析解说。从而巩固加深了对这一理论的认识。

本文作者试图以符号学为基础，为翻译研究提供一个较全面的理论框架。也许这种尝试是不成功的，但如果通过这番努力能够使人们对这一理论提出更多更全面的意见和建议。从而使翻译研究更科学化，更具指导性。心愿足矣！

关键词：符号学，翻译，文化，指称意义，言内意义，语用意义

Abstract

Translation is an activity with great practicality. It needs theory as a guide. Though a large number of scholars at home and abroad study in this field for many years, there is never a set of theory, which could explain translating activity thoroughly and satisfactorily. Recently more and more people study translation from different angles in their own fields. Semiotics-oriented translation theory is put forth under such background.

Translation is never just the transference between two languages. It is an intercultural communication. English and Chinese belong to the different language families, Indo-European family and Sino-Tibetan family, as a result they differ in writing system, phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, etc. In essence it results from the differences between these two cultures, that is, ecological, material life, social system and ideology, etc. So to study and explore translation just from the linguistic perspective couldn't get a satisfied answer.

Semiotics originated from Swiss linguist Saussure. He confirmed language is a sign system which expresses thoughts. At that time semiotics is mainly for linguistics research. Later semanticist Morris put forth the meaning theory of

semiotics. Every sign has referential meaning, linguistic meaning, and pragmatic meaning, which later became the basis for the semiotic translation approach. It was Eugene Nida who applied semiotic theories to translation. He was a linguist and an expert in Bible translation with high attainments in language and rich experiences in translation. He applied semiotic theories to translation as a guide and mainly focused on the meaning theory of semiotics, that is, the three-dimension meanings of signs. At the same time semiotic translation approach absorbed language function theory from linguistics. Sign always conveys message, so it has a communicative function. The six language functions, which were put forwarded by Peter Newmark, are suitable for translation study. Translation means transference from one set of sign system to another set, that is, decoding and encoding. The first step in translation is to understand the source language properly, decoding. At this stage the translator should consider the source language as a sign system. To understand this sign system must involve the concrete social background, the relation between signs and its user. These factors result in the reproduction of the referential meaning, linguistic meaning and pragmatic meaning of the source language, that is, encoding.

To apply semiotics to translation could grasp the function and meaning of the source language macroscopically, understand and reproduce them microcosmically. Thus it is helpful to improve translating skills.

In this dissertation half of the pages are employed for the history and development of semiotics, and translation process and criteria. The third chapter puts the theory into practice and employs a great group of examples to explain and analyze this theory, hoping to understand it better and deeply.

The author tries to supply a thorough theory framework for translation, based on semiotics. Perhaps her efforts are not successful, but if more and more people could put forth more advice and improve translation study in the near future, and make it more scientific and directive. That will be enough!

Key words: semiotics, translation, culture, referential meaning, linguistic meaning, pragmatic meaning

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Introduction

Translation doesn't just involve the transfer of meaning contained in one set of language system into another set of language system through the use of dictionary and grammar. The translating process always takes place within a culture. It is quite clear that no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture, and no culture can exist which does not have, at its center, the structure of natural language. *Language then is at the heart within the body of culture.* (Susan Bassnett) Thus the translation can never be done well without the full consideration of cultural aspects. Then a problem arises when a text created in one culture has to be translated for use in another culture. It does not merely imply matching linguistic equivalents in the target language. A social framework of reference has to be recreated in another culture. The problem is further complicated, when the translation takes place between the countries where the cultural difference is far. Such a problem exists in the translation between English and Chinese, because their cultures share little similarities, due to their own histories and development.

An approach must be found to deal with cultural aspects, and cultural phenomenon could be studied under a solid framework. Semiotics is such a

science whose theory system may be applied to solve translation problems from different prospective, which show great advantage compared with other translation theories.

Semiotics is the science that studies sign system or structure, sign processes and sign functions. It studies the production, transmission, exchange, and interpretation of messages consisting one or more signs. (Gorlee) Hawkes is of the opinion that the first step towards an examination of the processes of translation must be accepted that although translation has a central core of linguistic activity, it belongs most properly to semiotics. Translation should be done and analysed on the basis of semiotics.

In this dissertation a brief introduction is made of the semiotic approach to translation by citing a large number of examples. Chapter one, just an introduction, with the title of Historical View of Semiotics, gives a chronological introduction of history of semiotics, and lists several scholars and their works, which can sketch a comparatively comprehensive framework of this science. Since semiotics can be used widely in many other fields, it is impossible to deal with every and all phases of semiotics, in this part, only the concepts and theories concerning with the matter of translation are mentioned. Chapter two entitled Translation and Relative Theory, deals primarily with some basic concepts and theories of

semiotics concerned with translation in more detail. Meanwhile many fundamental concepts such as what is the nature of translation, what is the translating process and what are the criteria of translation, etc, are answered from the angel of semiotics-oriented translation. And in this part we also discuss the cultural aspects and its relevant influence in summary. Chapter three, will apply semiotic theories into translating practice, and focus on the analysis of meaning from the three dimensions, linguistic meaning, referential meaning and pragmatic meaning.

Chapter One Historical View of Semiotics

The following pages describe the development of modern semiotics in the translation study, since the principle didn't suddenly appear overnight, a brief description of early semioticians' views of translation is needed in order to sketch the situation from which the recent translation theories and approaches emerged. This part will be designed to give a chronological overview of authors and their works.

1.1 Saussure. F. De Founder of Semiotics

Throughout history we find many scholars wrote about semiotics, such as the famous philosophers Plato and Aristotle in Greece. Semiotics is a principle with a long history. In the twentieth century, the research on semiotics is pushed forward. Swiss linguist Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics*, written in 1916, proposed: *It is possible to conceive of a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life. It would form part of social psychology, and hence of general psychology, we shall call it semiology. I would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Since it does not yet exist, one can not say for certain that it will exist. But it has a right to exist, a place ready for it in advance. Linguistics is only one branch of this general science.*

Saussure referred to language is a sign system which expresses thoughts. Every sign is the combination of signified and signifier, and the relation between them is arbitrary. He confirmed the purpose of linguistic research is to study the relation between signs. He also pointed out that language is the most important of all of the systems of signs, which is considered as his greatest contribution to linguistics.

1.2 Peirce. C. Sander

Although Saussure was thought of as the founder of semiotics, he didn't make any further research on semiotics. Even in his famous *Course in General Linguistics* the comment on semiotics was not more than three pages. At around the same time, across the Atlantic Ocean, American philosopher Peirce gave his own framework of semiotics.

He gave the definition of sign as *something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity*. He held that every semiosis (the process of semiotics or sign-processing) is the interaction between the representamen (the form which the sign takes), the object (to which the sign refers), and the interpretant (the sense made of the sign). He divided signs into three modes:

1. icon

This type of sign resembles its object in some way: it looks or sounds like it. Such

as a photograph, map and diagram, in the case of language onomatopoeia (verbal) is iconic.

2.index

This sign is directly connected in some way (existentially or causally) to its object, e.g. weathercock.

3.symbol

For this sign there is no resemblance or connection between it and the object. A symbol's connection with its object is a matter of convention, rule or agreement between the users, e.g. language in general, (plus specific languages, alphabetical letters, punctuation marks, words phrases and sentences), numbers, Morse codes, traffic lights, etc. Thus Peirce intended the scope of semiotics to extend beyond the linguistic signs. It included verbal and non-verbal signs.

Peirce is of the opinion that communication process is indeed a transcoding process. For instance, in order to explain what a telephone is, one could use iconic signs, a picture with a telephone; indexical signs, an action of pointing to a telephone; symbolic signs, using language to describe a telephone. Therefore the acquisition of knowledge is considered as an infinite proliferation of relative signs, which finally results in a sign network. The more complex one's sign network is,

the better one understands the relation between signs, at last the more knowledge he or she acquires.

Later based on the classification of the signs, Roman Jakobson distinguishes three types of translation, intralingual translation, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language. For instance, translate *Beowulf* in old English into modern English or translate the works of Confucius into modern Chinese; interlingual translation, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of some other language, such as the translation between English and Chinese; intersemiotic translation, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal signs systems, e.g. photographs, gestures, body movements. mathematic signs, musical signs, etc.

1.3 Morris Charles

Later Morris developed Peirce's theory in detail. In his work *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, he proposed his threefold division of signs as consisting of a sign vehicle (the form which the sign takes), a represent of a sign (to which the sign refers), and an interpretant (sense made of the sign), which is indeed inherited from Peirce. The relation between them results in the meaning of sign, which is also threefold, linguistic meaning, the formal or structural relation between signs; referential meaning, the relation of signs to what they stand for; pragmatic

meaning, the relation of signs to interpreters. The meaning of a sign is the totality of the three types of meaning. He based his linguistic research on the semiotic meaning theory, and corresponding to the three types of meaning, he held that semiotics embraced three branches: syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. Morris's theory on meaning provided a solid foundation for the translation study.

1.4 Nida Eugene

It is American linguist Nida who applies semiotic theories to translation. In *Translating Meaning*, Nida illustrates the semiotic approach to translation and confirms that it is an integral approach comparatively.

In *Sign, Sense, Translation*, he emphasizes again that the world is a world of signs, the most important activity of people in his life is to understand and find the meaning of signs. The thorough understanding of sign systems is the premise of analysis of meaning of signs. Translation is a transcoding activity in essence.

In *From One Language to Another Language*, he summarizes the advantages of semiotic approach to translation, and confirms the approach is quite useful to understand and analyze designative meaning and associative meaning with vivid examples. The core of Nida's semiotic approach to translation is just the semiotic meaning theory.

And he arrives at the conclusion that semiotics is the holistic theory of translation.

In Language, Culture and Translation, Nida concludes perhaps the most pervasive and crucial contribution to an understanding of translating is to be found in sociosemiotics, the discipline which treats all the systems of signs used by human societies. The great advantage of semiotics over other approaches to interlingual communication is that it deals with all types of signs and codes, and especially with language as the most comprehensive and complex of all the systems of signs which human employ. No holistic approach to translating can exclude semiotics as a fundamental discipline in encoding and decoding signs.

Chapter Two Translation and Relative Theory

There are many factors affecting the effects of translation, among them, the translator's attitude towards translation and the essence of translation is an important one.

In West, translator as an occupation is almost as old as history. And the study of translation emerged and developed with the appearance and growth of the translation activity. People's understanding of the essence of translation has undergone a developing process from the surface phenomenon to the nature.

In the beginning people considered translating just as an interlingual activity. In *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* published in 1960, the word *translation* means to turn into one's own language or another language. It didn't mention any about the role of translation and the essence of translation.

Gradually people began to realize that the change in language form was just a surface phenomenon, the more important is to transfer the content of the original works, that is, to translate the meaning of the source language. Thus people started to look at translation from different aspects. The most distinguishing one, English

translation theorist Catford in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* written in 1965, confirmed that *Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language — a general linguistic theory.* He linked translation with linguistics. It pushed translation research forward at a stride.

2.1 Translation as an Interlingual Communicative Action

With the development of modern linguistics, more and more scholars and experts view the translating activity under the linguistic framework. But there are still some who desire to break with linguistic translation theory, such as Vermeer, as one of the representatives. He stated: *Linguistic alone won't help us. First because translating is not merely and not even primarily a linguistic process, secondly because linguistics has not yet formulated the right question to tackle our problems, so let's look somewhere else.* (Vermeer 1987:29)

Vermeer viewed translation as a communicative action being carried out by means of signs, which are verbal or non-verbal, associated with a concept or meaning by the producer, the receiver, or both. *The meaning associated with the sign need not be the same for both the producer and the receiver. A sign, verbal or non-verbal, may be intended to have meaning X by the producer, and interpreted as having*

meaning Y by the receiver. (Vermeer 1986:102)

The use of signs is teleological in the sense that it aims at a particular goal. In order to obtain the intended goal, the producer and the receiver must have some kind of agreement about the meaning of the sign: signs are conventional and thus culture-specific. Members of the same social groups or within the same culture share the commonness of signs.

In translation, the translator produces signs for the target audience, in order to be understood, the meaning of the signs must be known, in other words, he should use signs whose meaning are familiar to the target readers. If the translator uses signs taken from a source culture inventory that might be misinterpreted from a target culture point of view, it is advisable to mark the translation accordingly.

2.1.1 Language and Its Function

Language is the most complex and universal semiotic system, and it possesses many features: phonetic, graphic (in the case of written languages), syntactic, lexical and semantic, etc. Language use is made possible by selecting from these sets of features in order to create texts, which act as adequate vehicles for the communication of meaning.

According to the semiotic theory, language is a unique system of signs with characteristics and functions.

The characteristics of language have a very direct bearing on translation. First a linguistic sign always possesses meaning components and meaning components are packaged into linguistic signs differently in one language than in another. For example, *head* means 头, *map* corresponds to 地图, *zoo* 动物园, *helicopter* 直升飞机, *heteronym* 同形异音异义词. Many times a single word in the source language will need to be translated by several words in another language. Vice versa. Secondly a linguistic sign usually consists of a bundle of meaning components. Thus we often meet a dozen of words, which differ slightly due to some similar meaning components. e.g. lamb, ram, and ewe. Thirdly the same linguistic sign usually has more than one meaning, that is, polysemy. Then there will be primary meaning and secondary meanings, which depend on the relation between sign, collocation.

Language is capable of expressing the meaning of all the other sign systems, because it has the unique communicative function which could be subdivided into the following six functions: informative function, expressive function, vocative function, aesthetic function, phatic function and metalingual function.

The informative function is the most important, since in most cases language may be used to expound knowledge and pass information. The core of the informative function of language is the external situation, the facts of a topic, reality outside language including reported ideas or theories. One of the features of this function is that the originator commits himself to the truth that something is or is not the case, therefore declarative sentences are often used. e.g. *It is raining heavily.* For the purpose of translation, informative text-type comprises textbooks, technical reports, articles in a newspaper or periodical scientific papers, theses, minutes or agenda of a meeting, etc. The informative texts can be concerned with any topic of knowledge.

The expressive function of language can be used to express its originator's feeling and attitudes. This function largely involves spontaneous expressions reflecting various emotional state of the source. *What a nice day today!* Usually exclamations, literature, authoritative statements, autobiography, essays and personal correspondence are the obvious instances of this.

The vocative function of language, which can be also called directive function, operative function or instrumental function, is used to influence the behavior or attitudes of others. *Sit down please!* The core of the vocative function of language is the readership between the addresser and the addressee. The most

straightforward instances of this function are notices, instructions, publicity, propaganda, persuasive writings (such as requests, cases, theses), and possibly popular fiction, whose purpose is to sell the book or entertain the readers.

The above three functions of language are usually considered as the dominant functions of language, because most texts include all three functions, just with an emphasis on one of the three. Rarely is a piece of language purely informative, purely expressive, etc. Reiss classified texts types into three: informative, expressive and operative, and confirmed *text typologies help the translator specify the appropriate hierarchy of equivalence needed for a particular translation purpose*. (Reiss and Vermeer 1984:156) The other three functions of language are the aesthetic, the phatic and the metalingual function.

The aesthetic function is designed to please the senses, through its actual or imagined sound, its metaphors, the rhythm, the balance, the contrasts etc. In poetry, prose, essays etc, they can be seen everywhere.

The phatic function refers to language used to keep communication lines open, to keep social relationships in good repair. Greeting, farewell, talking about the weather (in British culture) are well-known examples of this.

Lastly, the metalingual function of language indicates the ability of a language to explain its own features or to name its own terms.

In translating, the translator, depending partly on the proportion of universal and cultural components of a specific text, conveys the message appropriately, makes the similar function between the source language and the target language.

2.1.2 Model of Communication

Translation is a communicative action. During the communication process, a message will be sent by the sender to the receiver.

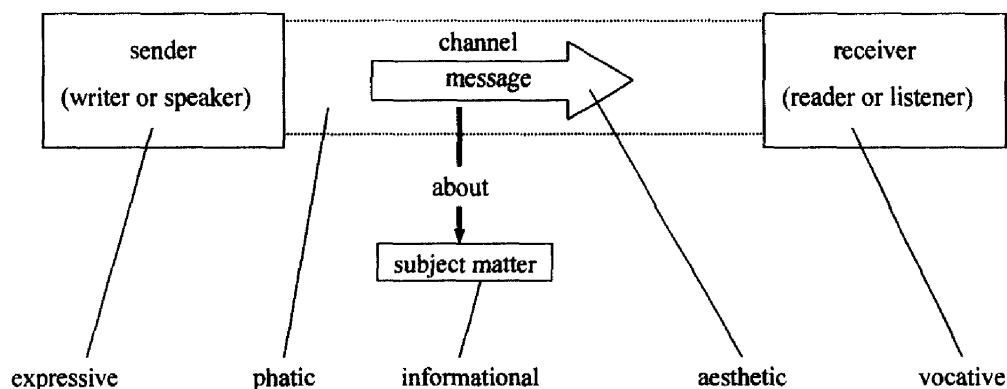
Communication is derived from the Latin word *Communis* which means common. Communication is the process of commonness of thoughts between a sender and a receiver of a message. Meaning can thus be achieved when the sender and the receiver share a thought or idea.

In order to understand the communication in detail, one should look at the communication model and its relative elements. One of the classical models of the communication process is that of Roman Jakobson. According to Jakobson, in every concrete situation, a sender sends a message to the receiver, the message uses a code, usually a language that is known to both participants. The message

has a subject and is transmitted through a channel. Each one of these aspects has a linguistic function in the communication process.

If the emphasis is on the sender's role in the process, an emotive (expressive) function would be apparent (which would for example emphasize the role of the narrator); if the emphasis is on the receiver, a vocative function would be involved; if the subject is of importance, the informative function would be at work; emphasizing the used code involves a metalingual function; while emphasizing the channel gives preference to the phatic function of language; if the orientation is towards the message itself, the aesthetic function will be at work.

Diagrammatically the communication process looks like this: Figure 1



Nida suggests five important phases of communication that have to be considered when translating. They are:

- 1.the subject matter, in other words, the referents that are talked about,
- 2.the participants who take part in the communication,

- 3.the speech act or the process of writing,
- 4.the code used, that is the language including all its symbols and arrangements,
- 5.the message, that is the particular way in which the subject matter is encoded into specific symbols and arrangement.

2.2 Translation as an Intercultural Action

2.2.1 Definition of Culture

Culture is an ambiguous and intriguing concept. There are at least 200 different kinds of definitions of culture in history, among them, the most famous one, also the most ancient was provided by Edward Burnett Tylor in the 16th century. In his *Primitive Culture*, culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals law customs and any other capabilities, and habits acquired by man as a member of society. This concept was given in the narrower sense of man's advanced intellectual development.

With the increasing maturity of anthropological science further thinking and research on the nature of culture led to a multiplication and diversification of cultures. Meanwhile, more and more scholars and experts in other research fields, such as linguistics, literature, and information theory approached the culture problem from their points of view, according to the need of their own disciplines,

which, of course, contributed to the deep understanding and more investigation on the nature of culture. And people began to probe culture problems in a much broader sense.

The American ethnologist Ward H Goodenough is of the opinion that culture refers to all social conditioned aspects of human life. He once defined culture as follows: *As I see it, a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term. By this definition we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving relating, and otherwise interpreting them. As such the things people say and do, their social arrangements and events, are products or by-products of their culture as they apply it to the task of perceiving and dealing with their circumstances. To one who knows their culture, these things and events are also signs signifying the cultural forms or models of which they are material representations.* (1964:36)

In Germany within the recently developed, cultural-contrastive discipline called cross-cultural communication, Heinz Gohring had adapted Goodenough's definition as follows: *Culture is everything one needs to know, master and feel in order to judge where people's behavior conform to or deviate from what is expected from them in their social roles, and in order to make one's own behavior conform to the expectations of the society concerned unless one is prepared to take the consequences of deviant behavior.* (1977:10) This new definition correlates with the concept of culture now prevalent in translation study.

From the two definitions cited above, we could see there are at least two points common to them. First, both Goodenough and Gohring focus on the comprehensiveness of culture, that is, conceive culture as a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception. Secondly they connect culture with human behavior or events. These views are of great importance to translation study. The concept of culture as a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception is fundamental to translation. If language is an integral part of culture, the translator needs not only be proficient in two languages, he must also be at home in two cultures. In other words, *he must be bilingual and bicultural.* (Vermeer1986) The extent of his knowledge, proficiency and perception determines not only his ability to produce the target text, but also his understanding of the source text.

The focus on the link between culture and human behavior also pushes translation study forward at a stride. Translation is viewed as an intercultural communication action, whose aim is to exchange culture. Therefore translation process is a dynamic action.

2.2.2 Category of Culture

Culture is normally considered as comprising, with some slight variations, the following six subsystems:

1 ecological

Mainly refers to natural environment, including flora, fauna, hills and mountains, rivers and seas, climate, and weather etc.

2 material aspect of culture

Material achievement of a social group belongs to the material aspect of culture, e.g. economy, science, technology, food, clothing, shelters and houses, transportation, production tools and other artifacts that characterize a group of people.

3.intellectual aspect of culture

The intellectual aspect of culture means knowledge, which can provide

nourishment for the mind and can be shared by all the people in the world under certain conditions. Philosophy, literature, art, music and education are some of the main elements of culture in this respect.

4. communicative aspect of culture

The communicative aspect of culture includes verbal language and non-verbal behavior (body language), which distinguish one group from another.

5. institutional aspect of culture

Human behavior systems and their products—social institutions, which comprise political and economic activities, law, manners, customs and habits (such as food and eating habits, dress and appearance, etc), economic system, political system, educational system, religious system, kinship system and technical system, etc.

6. conceptual aspect of culture

Conceptual aspect of culture, which is the deepest layer of culture, refers to ideational system, including cosmology, worldview, religious beliefs, values (moral, philosophic, aesthetic, etc), cognitive focus and thinking patterns, ideology, psychological structure, national spirit and national disposition.

The above six aspects of culture affect each other and the conceptual aspect of

culture should be considered as the most important one, because the other aspects of culture can also reflect the conceptual aspect of culture.

2.2.3 Cultural Differences and Cultural Similarities

Cultural similarities exist not only between different peoples but also between different times. There are even some cultural universals. Such as the recognition of reciprocity, and equity in interpersonal relation, response to human kindness and love, peace, beauty, the desire for meaning in life, etc.

It is such cultural similarities and cultural universals that provide a basis for mutual understanding, which can make translation possible.

However, though cultural similarities that unite different peoples and races in a common humanity are much greater than cultural differences that separate them into distinct groups, there are no absolute cultural similarities. Cultural differences do exist everywhere between any two peoples or races.

Sometimes the cultural difference may be striking and obvious, which can be noticed at first sight, on other situations, cultural differences may be not that striking and that obvious, but they are still quite important and should be treated carefully while we are translating.

The degree of culture differences is dependent upon the cultural distance between two peoples. The larger the cultural distance is, the vaster and more striking the cultural difference will be. In turn the translation between these two languages will be more difficult. The cultural distance exists not only between different peoples. But also between different groups and subgroups of the same culture.

Figure 2 sketches the cultural distance varying along a crude maximum-minimum dimension,

Western/Asian	maximum
Italian/Saudi Arabian	↓
U.S. American/Greek	↓
U.S. American German	↓
U.S. American / French-Canadian	↓
White Anglo-American /Reservation Indian	↓
White Anglo-American/ Black American, Oriental	↓
American, Mexican American /British	↓
U.S. American /English-Canadian	↓
Urban American /Rural American baptist	↓
American male dominance/American female equality	↓
American heterosexual/American homosexual	↓
American environmentalist/American developer	minimum

from *Translation and Cultural Exchange*

From it we could see the cultural distance lying between Asian and Western culture, as a result there will be a greatest number of cultural factors or elements subject to variation between the Chinese culture and the English culture, therefore the translation between Chinese and English is the most difficult.

2.2.4 Cultural Influence on Translation

A language, as the bearer of culture, is greatly influenced by its culture. Cultural differences must be more or less reflected through the use of language. It is obvious that cultural differences will exert great influence on the effect of translation. While what determines the point on the scale? In other words, how we examine the scale of translatability when we face the cultural barriers during the translating process.

To answer this question, we should first look at some statements on translatability in history, which could offer a clue to the problem.

There was a dichotomy on the matter, which indeed derived from two opposite linguistic theories, linguistic relativism and linguistic determinism.

The principle of linguistic relativism has far-reaching implication for translation. It is also called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis because it is named after two American

ethnolinguists Edward Sapir and his student Benjamin Lee Whorf. They confirmed that thought does not precede language, but on the contrary, it is conditioned by language. The conclusions were based on detailed study of barely accessible exotic language such as those of the American Indians. One example is in Hopi, the verb system directly affected the speaker's conception of time. Taken to its extreme, the notion that language conditions thought and that both are inextricably bound up with the individual culture of the community that speaks the language concerned would mean that ultimately translation is impossible, due to different cultures.

While the opposite principle, language universals, propagated by Chomsky and the school of generative grammar. Chomsky's concept of deep structure and surface structure is a development of Humboldt's theory of inner and outer form in language. In this view translation is a recoding or change of surface structure in representation of the non-linguistic and ultimately universal deep structure underlying it. Taken to its extreme, this principle means that everything is translatable no matter in what culture it is embedded.

It seems a little simple to have the dichotomy as a guiding theory for the translation practice. More and more scholars and experts try to put up new explanation on the matter based on their translation practice. Snell Hornby, in her

Translation Study suggested the extent to which a text is translatable varies with the degree to which it is embedded in its own specific culture, also with the distance that separates the cultural background of source text and target audience in terms of time and place. She also gave a vivid example to show it: *While a report on atomic reactors is fully translatable among languages of societies that participate in modern technology, but an internal squabble among the Greens in Hesse is not easy to make intelligible to a typical reader of the conservative British Daily Mail* (1995:42)

We could understand what Snell Hornby said better, if we look at Vermeer's statement on *culturemes*. He in fact gave a clear definition of culture specificity. Culture features have been termed *culturemes*. *A cultureme is a social phenomenon of a culture X that is regarded as relevant by the members of this culture, and when compared with a corresponding social phenomenon in a culture Y, is found to be specific to culture X.* (1990:37)

So a culture-specific phenomenon is one that is found to exist in a particular form or function in only one of the two cultures being compared. This does not mean that the phenomenon exists only in that particular culture. The same phenomenon might be observable in cultures other than the two in question.

Translation always takes place in concrete, definable situation that involves members of different culture. Culture is defined as a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception, therefore language is an intrinsic part of a culture. In intercultural communication, the individual is free either to conform to the behavior pattern accepted in the other culture or to bear the consequences of behavior that is contrary to cultural expectation.

Culture is a complex system. It can be subdivided into six subsystems: ecological, material, intellectual, communicative, institutional, conceptual. However the borderlines between the cultural systems or subsystems are difficult to define. A culture cannot simply be equated with a language area. It can often be noticed that members sharing similar culture differ in linguistic behavior in some situation, e.g. the Englishmen and the Americans. And also there are cases where members under different cultural community have similar linguistic behavior. Based on this phenomenon, Michael Agar presented that culture focuses on differences, differences that can vary from task to task and group to group.

According to his statements, the culture boundary is marked by *rich points*, which are differences in behavior causing culture conflicts or communication breakdown between two communities in contact. When you encounter a new language, something is easy to learn. You just patch on some new lexical items and

grammatical forms and continue listening and talking. Other things are more difficult, but with a little effort the differences from one language to another can be bridged. But something that comes up strikes you with their difficulty, their complexity, their inability to fit into the resources you use to make sense out of the world. These things from lexical items through speech acts to fundamental notions of how the world works are called *rich points*. (Agar 1991:168)

This means that a translator has to be very aware of the *rich points* relevant to a particular translation task between the groups or subgroups on either side of the language-culture barrier.

2.3 Translation as a Semiotic Transformation

Translation is a semiotic transformation. According to Ludskanov, *translation is the replacement of signs encoding a message by signs of another code, preserving (as far as possible in the face of entropy) invariant information with respect to a given system of reference.*

Here Ludskanov has used such terms as *sign, encode, code, entropy, invariant information*. It shows he views the translation on the basis of semiotics. The phrase *with respect to a given system of reference* points to the target knowledge. Therefore in translation not only must the signs of the source language be

replaced by the signs of another code, the replaced signs must also encode the message of the source language. Meanwhile the signs of another code must preserve invariant information with respect to a given system of reference.

It is proper to consider translation as a semiotic transformation because though on the surface, translation involves the transfer of meaning contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar, beyond this notion, the process involves a whole set of extralingual criteria also. That is non-linguistic sign such as the sociolcultural aspects between the source language and the target language,

Lawendowshi, A Polish-born scholar, also advocates that translation must be approached semiotically, because it is a semiotic-linguistic process combining verbal signs with non-verbal signs.

In translation, there is no doubt that verbal signs are to be translated, but other things such as style, register, coherence, prominence, cohesion, organization, etc, of the text also contribute to the meaning of the whole source language. These things may be considered as non-linguistic signs. They should be given equal status.

2.3.1 Code

The term *code* was first used in information theory, where it designates an inventory of arbitrarily chosen symbols, accompanied by a group of rules for the composition of coded words and often compared to a dictionary or lexicon of the natural language, (e.g. the Morse code)

The concept of the code is fundamental in semiotics. Saussure dealt with the overall code of language. He stressed that signs are not meaningful in isolation, but only when they are interpreted in relation to each other. Jakobson emphasized that the production and interpretation of text depends upon the existence of codes or conventions for communication.

The meaning of a sign depends on the code within which it is situated. Codes provide a framework within which signs make sense. Reading a text involves relating it to relevant codes.

Usually there are different taxonomies for codes. According to the role of social positioning in the interpretation of texts, Stuart Hall suggested three hypothetical interpretative codes:

1 dominant (or hegemonic), the reader fully shares the text's code and accepts and

reproduces the preferred reading (a reading which may not have been the result of any conscious intention on the part of the author, in such stance, the code seems natural and transparent.

2 negotiated, the reader partly shares the text's code and broadly accepts the preferred reading, but sometimes resists and modifies it in a way which reflects their own position, experiences and interests.

3 oppositioned, reader doesn't share the text's code and rejects this reading, bringing to bear an alternative frame of reference.

Code represents a social dimension, which is agreed upon by all the members of the community. Members of a specific culture will understand the codes that operate within that culture. A text whose latent meaning is encoded in the dominant code or the popular code will be share by most readers.

Codes change over time. Even within the same culture, over historical time, particular codes become increasingly less familiar, and as we look back at texts produced centuries ago, we are struck by the strangeness of their codes. Their maintenance systems have long since been superseded. The history of literature can be viewed as a hierarchical system in which at any point certain codes were

dominant and others were subordinate, when dominant codes became stale, subcodes took over their function.

Codes are also variable between different cultures and social groups. A code, which is appropriate in one culture, may be unfamiliar in another culture.

The translator must be very sensitive to the code operating in the target culture so that it can reflect the culture at that point in time correctly.

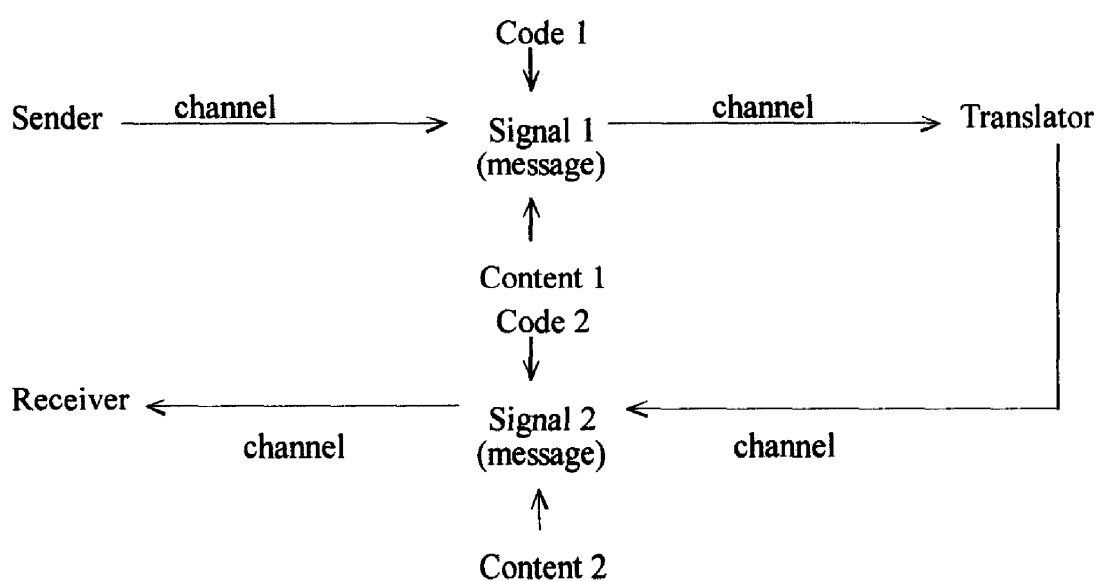
Usually text codes relate to genres. Traditional definitions of genres tend to be based on the notion that they constitute particular conventions of content (such as themes or settings) and /or form (including structure and style) which are shared by the texts which are regarded as belonging to them. A text often exhibits more than one genre, but among them, one is the dominant.

2.3.2 Decode and Encode

Decoding and encoding are two terms employed in information theory. Decoding designates the operation or rather the program of operations, which involves recognizing, with the help of a code, the symbolic elements constituting the message and identifying them with the discrete units of the natural language on the basis of which the code has been elaborated. Encoding designates the set of

operations that, by the use of a given code, permit the construction of a message. Decoding and encoding constitute an organic whole of the translation process. In the decoding stage, first, we must have a source text because it is what is to be decoded. Then a detailed analysis of the source text is needed. And then comes the time for transferring the source text message. Transferring the source text message paves the way for the next stage, the encoding stage of the translation process. When it comes to restructuring of the source text message, we are in the prime stage of encoding. And the product that is restructured is the translation proper.

We could see the translating process of decoding and encoding clearly with the help of the diagram, which is, with some changes, based on the communicative model in nature. Figure 3



This model could be divided into nine steps according to what the translator does in the translating process:

- 1 translator receives signal 1 containing message;
- 2 recognizes code 1;
- 3 decodes signal 1;
- 4 retrieves message;
- 5 comprehends message;
- 6 translator selects code 2;
- 7 encodes message by means of code 2;
- 8 selects channel;
- 9 transmits signal 2 containing the original message;

Among them the former five steps could be seen belonging to decoding process, the latter four steps then fall into encoding process. In the decoding process, the translator should read and analyze the source text and three kinds of analyses should be done, syntactic analysis, semantic analysis and pragmatic analysis. The translator should be fully aware of the linguistic meaning, referential meaning and pragmatic meaning of the text. Meanwhile he/she must keep in mind that not only discrete signs and entire messages are to be transferred, but also extralinguistic signs such as the organization or structure, the prominence, the register, and the style, etc, of the source text should be transferred because they all contribute to

the conveyance of meaning of the source text.

After the translator dig out all the meanings conceived in the source text, he/she is preparing to translate, at this time he/she should make decision about how to encode the message contained by the original text. The alternatives and strategies could be summarized as follows:

1 to reproduce either the forms (syntactics and lexis) or the content (the semantic content) of the original text;

2 to retain the style of the original or adopt a different style, to retain or abandon the source language text-form (e.g. to translate a poem as a poem or as a prose);

3 to retain the historical stylistic dimension of the original or to render it in contemporary form (e.g. to translate Shakespeare's works into classical or into modern Chinese);

4 to produce a text which reads like the original one or one which reads like a translation (but as far as possible neither adds nor deletes content);

5 to add or omit words, phrases, clauses, etc, or to attempt to transfer everything from the source text to the target text.

Having made the decision to translate, the translator is to take the methodological approaches, which may include literal or free translation, borrowing or transliteration, etc.

2.4 Translation is Translating Meaning

Translation involves the transfer of meaning contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar. The process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria, also, there are two points in the above definition about translation: one is that translation must involve the conveyance of verbal meaning; the other is that translation must involve the conveyance of extra-linguistic meaning at the same time. *It is true that verbal meanings always appear with other meanings such as paralinguistic meaning and extra-linguistic meaning. Purely verbal messages simply do not exist because they always occur as part of a bundle of simultaneous codes: paralinguistic, extra-linguistic and competing or enhancing.* (Nida 1995:5)

In written language, paralinguistic features include the type face, the format, etc. and the quality of paper, the printing, the binding, etc will belong to extra-linguistic features. While we will mainly focus on verbal signs, which are embedded in a certain culture.

Meaning is nothing but relation, the relation of signs to other signs or factors. Usually a sign has three dimensions, and correspondingly it possesses three types of meaning: linguistic meaning, referential meaning and pragmatic meaning. The three types of meaning are inseparably combined with each other, but any linguistic sign can't have just all the three types of meaning meantime.

Translation means translating meaning. It is ideal for a translator to transfer all the meanings from the source text into the target text, but this depends on the extent and number that the three types meanings coexist in the source text. If most linguistic signs of the source text just referential meaning, accompanied by few other two linguistic meanings, it is not quite difficult to turn into a successfully translated text. If in a text the three types of meaning coexist quite a lot, it is out of the question to achieve the ideal goal.

When a translator faces such situation, he/she should make a decision, which kind of meanings could be retained, and which had to be put aside. The degree to which different types of meaning can be retained in the target text relies on the nature of the three types of meaning. In translation, what can be retained most in the target text or is the most translatable is the referential meaning, because referential meaning reflects the relation between signs and their referents in the real world, so it is objective and cognitive. Since there are more similarities of the natural and social realities than the differences between peoples of different cultures, the referential meanings of linguistic signs in one language tend, in most cases, to find their equivalents easily in another language. But it doesn't mean that all the linguistic signs in one language can find their counterparts on the level of referential meaning in another language. Sometimes the referential meanings of linguistic signs in a certain source text couldn't completely correspond to those in

the target text. In fact, in translation there are three cases of correspondence. They are complete correspondence, partial correspondence or intersection, and non-correspondence or semantic zero. Complete correspondence takes up a very small proportion. Partial correspondence occurs mostly, due to the fact that language is open to change and people observe the world in different ways. Non-correspondence is culture-bound, therefore the far the cultural distance between two languages, the more the non-correspondent phenomena occur.

When there is variation in meaning in linguistic signs despite constancy of reference, there arises pragmatic meaning. The motivation for the emergence of pragmatic meaning lies in that in linguistic signs, sometimes there is a split between extension and intension, with the latter fixing the former.(Frawley1992:21) Extension is a process of semantic change in which a word gains further senses figuratively.

Pragmatic meaning can be analyzed according to the two different-range contexts. One is the context of situation, which mainly depends on the linguistic context, the other is context of culture. And we are concerned with the latter.

Pragmatic meaning cannot be as easily transferred into another language as referential meaning, since it is always linked with a certain culture. Pragmatic

meaning shows the relation between the signs and their interpreters, and the sign-user is always embedded into a certain culture. So pragmatic meaning is subjective and expressive. The signs are always greatly influenced by the attitudes, the feelings, the emotions, and all kinds of thoughts, even the world-view of the interpreters. And all of these factors will be under the effect of culture. So we often have the same concept which takes quite different pragmatic meanings in different cultures. Thus in translating process, pragmatic meaning will to some extent lose the original information.

Compared with the above two types of meaning, linguistic meaning is more abstract and difficult. It is built on the relation of the signs to each other within a sign system, and the relation between the linguistic units is meaningful only within the same language system. And as is known to all, in translation, one set of language signs will be replaced by another set of language signs, since each language system is peculiar only in itself, thus the original signs system and the relation between signs inevitably disappear at the same time. To put it more concretely, both the form and the content of a text have meaning. The form of a text is how linguistic signs are related to each other. And the linguistic signs of a text contribute to the whole meaning of the text. Translation conveys not only the messages of the content but also all the meanings of both the form and the content that become an organic part. Linguistic meaning is heavily culture-bound, since

language is just the mirror of culture. Transference of languages inevitably result in partly or fully the loss of linguistic meaning. In order to achieve the similar effect, some compensation must be made.

Now we could reach a conclusion that in translation referential meaning can be retained to the maximum usually, pragmatic meaning follows as the secondly most retained, and linguistic meaning to some extent has losses. That is of the case in principle. In the translating practice, the order of conveying the three types of meaning may vary according to different types of texts and its language function. For instance, to translate scientific articles, in which informative function is usually dominant, the translator should focus more on referential meaning; to translate literary works, essays, political statements, speeches, advertisements, notices, where expressive function and vocative function and so on coexist, the translator should lay more attention to pragmatic meaning; if the literary works show aesthetic function, such as poetry, prose, etc, the translator should take linguistic meaning more into consideration. In a word, he should get the balance between the meaning and the function.

2.5 Criteria of Translation

We have discussed the essence of translation just now, It is the communicative action of decoding the linguistic signs of the source language and encoding them

in the target language by way of semantic structure with the optional meaning of the source text retained or held constant in the target text.

Based on semiotic theories, the criteria of translation will be correspondence in meaning and similarities in language function. That means the target language should try to convey the meaning contained in the source language properly, in order to achieve the equivalence on the level of linguistic meaning, referential meaning and pragmatic meaning. At the same time, the translator ought to make the target text function similarly to the source text. That is, the language function of the source text, informative function, expressive function, vocative function, aesthetic function, phatic function, and metalingual function should be retained to the maximum.

Chapter Three Application of Semiotic Theories in Translation

3.1 Linguistic Meaning

All signs, including linguistic signs, are never isolated or suspended in a vacuum. They form an integral part of a certain language system that they are in. Any sign is related to the sign system it is in. The relation of signs to each other within the same sign system produces linguistic meaning. Linguistic signs have linguistic meaning on the different levels, such as phonetic, graphic, lexical, grammatical, syntactic, etc. We will discuss linguistic meaning on the above different levels one by one.

3.1.1 Phonetic Level

Linguistic meaning in phonetics exists in many linguistic instances. In English, uncommon arrangement of long or short vowels, and of voiced or voiceless consonants, alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhythm, rhyme and meters (such as iambic pentameters). Since these factors are closely linked with the language, they are one of the characteristics of the English language and are unique and unknown to the people in another culture. They will pose a problem during the translating activity, sometimes even untranslatability. For instance,

Splinter

The voice of the last cricket

across the first frost

is one kind of good-bye.

It is so thin a splinter of singing.

By Carl Sandburg

The poem is not quite abstract. Its beauty lies in the specific sound effect. In the whole poem the sound *s* appears frequently and in the last line the short vowel *i* occurs again and again. Through imitating the sound made by a cricket precisely the poet portrays a perfect picture: a weak cricket chirps indistinctly in late autumn. Another example:

An individual human existence should be like a river — small at first, narrowly contained within its banks, and rushing passionately past boulders and over waterfalls. Gradually the river grows wide, the banks recede, the waters flow more quietly, and in the end, without any visible break, they become merged in the sea, and painlessly lose their individual being.

In *How to Grow Old* by Bertrand Russell

When reading this paragraph, we could feel the obvious sound features, the former part employs several short vowels, such as /ɔ/, /æ/, /ʌ/, which creates a pressing and limited background, gradually some long vowels are employed, and they sound relaxed and wide. The special arrangements coincide

with the content of the text perfectly.

人生应像条河，开头河身狭窄，夹在两岸之间，河水奔腾咆哮，流过巨石，飞下悬崖。后来河面逐渐展宽，两岸离得越来越远，河水也流得较为平缓，最后融入大海，与海水浑然一体，看不出任何界线，从而结束其单独存在的那一段历程。

The Chinese version achieves great success both in the phonetic level and in the semantic level. It uses short sentences in the beginning, terse and strong, the latter part has more terms with long vowels and the sentences grow longer and longer, they read slow and comfortable.

Alliteration, assonance, and consonance are often employed to achieve sound effect. *After death the doctor* 死后求医，为时太晚。 *Live and let live*. 自己生活，也让别人生活。 *Fortune favors fools* 傻子总有运气。

- The *fair* breeze blew, the white *foam* flew; The *furrow* followed *free*.

好风不断吹，浪花不绝飞，舟行到处留痕。

- *We are marching backwards to the glorious age of the 16th century when bigots lighted faggots to burn the men who dared to bring any intelligence and enlightenment and culture to the human mind.*

我们正在大步倒退到光荣的十六世纪时代，那时候有偏执狂的人点燃树枝去烧死任何敢于给人类带来智慧，启示和文明的人。

From the examples above, we could notice the sound features are hard to retain when translated, if the target version tries to reproduce the linguistic meaning of the source language, it should make some compensations. Look at the sentence below:

•To Pledger, after three years of walking and waiting, it felt good to be back at his trade again.

对于普莱杰尔，经过三年的东西奔走，朝夕盼望，现在又回来干自己的本行，真是好极了。

The original sentence forms alliteration and consonance, while into Chinese two four-word phrases are used to act as parallelism. Similarly.

• Welling water's winsome word, wind in warm wan weather.

泉水嘻笑声叮叮，闷热天气风不鸣。(alliteration —end rhyme)

• *There is the clear mellow clang of the trolley gongs, the musical thrill of fast wagon wheels running along the trolley rails, and rattle of hoofs on the cobbled strip between the metals.*

清脆的电车铃声叮当叮当响，沿着车轨疾驰的马车轮吱呀吱呀唱，马蹄踏在铁轨间光溜溜的石子上，嗒嗒嗒嗒的声音传向远方。(consonance —onomatopoeia)

There are also many doublets in English, created on the basis of a certain musical

quality, such as, *weal and woe, odds and ends, part and parcel, thick and thin, by hook or by crook, etc.*

In Chinese 连绵词, also called 双声叠韵词, achieves a special sound effect by the use of a certain same sounds, e.g. 彷徨, 逍遥, 澎湃, 汹涌, 窈窕。

- 问苍茫大地, 谁主沉浮?

I ask the great earth and the boundless blue,

Who are the masters of all nature? (叠韵—alliteration)

In Chinese poetry, 七律, 五律, 七绝, 五绝, are popular patterns which usually have a strong musicality. When they are translated into English, most of the sound effects will be lost. While in English sonnet and other poetry will similarly lose some or even the whole musicality.

3.1.2 Graphic Level

Linguistic meaning can be shown through the use of coining words, division of words, repetition, typographic distortion, unusual punctuation, capital letter and small letter, etc.

For example:

- *M'mmmm. this is soooo good.* (Letters repeated to show: speak drawlingly)
- *Stop repeating me! Stop repeating me! I said STOP! I said STOP! STOP IT!*

STOP IT! (Words in capital letter for emphasis)

• *Marge says “Isn’t he the best-looking thing, aunt Eunice?” Eunice eyes me u-p and d-o-w-n and says, “tell him to turn around.”* (Hyphens used to show the eye movement is very slow.)

• *There is no retreat, but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable — — and let it come!! I repeat it, sir, let it come!!!* (Punctuations for strengthen of emotion)

Usually the linguistic meaning exists both in the graphic level and in the phonetic level. They couldn’t be separated from each other completely.

There is an example from Mark Twain,

• *It was a splendid population-for all the slow, sleepy, sluggish-brained slothes stayed at home.*

这是一批卓越能干的人，一因为所有那些行动迟缓，头脑愚钝，睡眼惺忪，呆若树懒的人都呆在家里了。

The four words, which begin with *sl* may be viewed as alliteration from the phonetic level and as repetition from the graphic level, reveal that the author is absolutely disgusted.

• *Father is rather vulgar, my dear. The word “Papa”, besides, gives a pretty*

form to the lips. Papa, potatoes, poultry, prunes and prisms, are all very good words for the lips, especially prunes and prisms.

Little Dorrit by Charles Dickens

In the third sentence of this paragraph, there are five words beginning with the sound *p*. It is alliteration and also repetition. They are used to achieve a sound effect as well as a visual effect.

Sometimes the write uses unorthodox spellings of words and the contractive forms of frequent combination on purpose in order to show: the language belongs to a certain dialect.

“Mis’Haskins, set right up to the table an’take a good swig o’ tea whilst I make y’s’m toast. It’s green tea, an’it’s good. I tell Council as I git older I don’t seem to enjoy Yound n’r gunpowder, I want the reel green tea, jest as it comes off’n the vines. Seems t’have more heart in it, some way. Don’t s’pose it has. Council says it’s all in m’eye.”

Here Mis’=Mrs, an’=and, o’=of, git=get, n’r=nor, just=just, reel=real. Off’n=off on, t’=to, s’pose=suppose, m’=my.

E.E.Cumming's poems usually make use of the graphic features to increase the power of meaning of his poetry, such as in one poem.

Portrait.

Buffalo Bill's

defunct

who used to

ride a watersmooth-silver

stallion

and break onetwothreefourfive pignonsjustlike that

Jesus

he was a handsome man

and what i want to know is

how do like your blueeyed boy

Mister Death

This kind of poem is also called the strangely-shape poem or the open form, which in most cases employs the graphic features to produce linguistic meaning. And the form of poem is of great importance to understand its meaning, its form is just the meaning. Take the example of this poem, what can you image from the form of the poem? Doesn't it look like the head of a buffalo? There is another poem, which is the extreme example of the use of graphic features.

Old Newspaper

insu nli ght
o
verand
o
vering

A

onc
eup
ona
tim

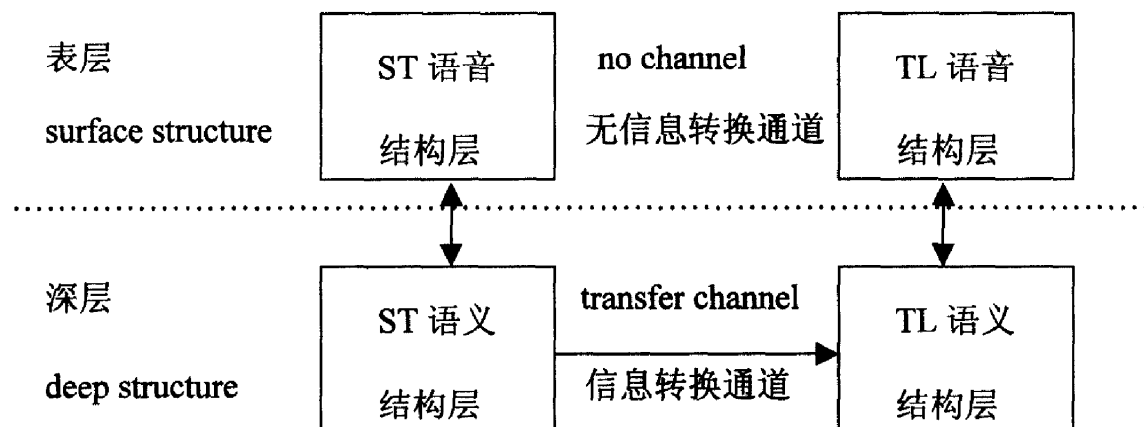
e ne wsp aper

It is just one sentence: in sunlight over and overing a once upon a time newspaper.

Because English and Chinese belong to different language families, one is the Indo-European language family, the other is the Sino-Tibetan language family.

Both share little commonness in phonetic and graphic levels. According to the semantic motivation, there will be no cognate equivalence between these two languages. Therefore it is impossible to achieve equivalence on the surface level

of language. Figure 4



In other words the interlingual transference can be achieved only on the semantic level, or the deep structure of the language, thus the surface characteristics will be lost partly or fully when translated.

3.1.3 Lexical Level

On the lexical level of language, the linguistic meaning can be shown through the use of repetition, reduplication, pun, antithesis, and other rhetoric approaches.

Repetition

Repetition is a common linguistic phenomenon in Chinese. It is used to emphasize a theme and to reinforce emotion by repeating some words, phrases or sentences. Comparatively the English people don't quite often employ repetition, in order to be succinct. Thus when translating Chinese repetition into English, proper adjustment should be made so as to conform to the use of the target language. e.g.

- *沉默啊！沉默啊！不在沉默中爆发，就在沉默中死亡。*

——鲁迅

In this sentence, *沉默* is repeated four times, the former two are continuous, the latter two are with intervals. They together reveal the firm determination to fight for freedom. They are translated as follows:

- *Silence. Silence. Unless we burst out, we shall perish in this silence.*

by yangyixian

The two exclamatory sentences reflect the urgent situation and the strong feeling, and the word “this” is used to make emphasis, thus although the translated version doesn’t conform to the original form, to use four silences, we can still feel the linguistic effect underlying the sentence. But if the translator translated it as follows:

- *Silence. Silence. Unless we burst out in silence, we shall perish in silence.*

The two phrases *in silence* will produce a burdensome and imbrief impression, though it is consistent with the original sentence on the level of language form. It loses the vocative function of the original sentence, which is used to call for all the people to devote his life to revolutionary career. When translated into English it turns into a common statement. Another example:

- 于是，暮色中匆匆的人群里，总有我赶路的身影，雨里，雾里，风里，雪里，只盼着早些回家。 云飞扬：恋家《英语沙龙》1995/7

Thus the gathering dusk often find me hastening home in a hurrying crowd, whether it rains or snows, windy or foggy, it is the longing to be home that quickens my steps.

In the original sentence, 雨里，雾里，风里，雪里 form a repetition which produces a linguistic meaning with a musical effect, at the same time, reinforces the theme: the hero loves home. In English it is rendered into *whether it rains or snows, windy or foggy*. Here *rains or snows* are both verbs, *windy or foggy* are

both adjectives. They form rhyme, which also has a linguistic meaning of beautiful musicality and strong emphasis. So the linguistic meaning of the original one is shown properly.

Reduplication

Reduplication is an extreme instance of repetition. It employs two same words to create a strong rhythm and emotion. In English, this method is often used to describe sounds, such as *tom-tom*, *bubble-bubble*, *talkee-talkee*, *chow chow*, etc. While in Chinese literature reduplication can be seen everywhere, e.g. 大大方方, 丝丝文文, 干干净净, 淅淅沥沥, 彬彬有礼, 姗姗来迟, 等。In Chinese classical poetry, reduplication is widely used, 离离原上草, 一岁一枯荣。春眠不觉晓, 处处闻啼鸟。怒发冲冠, 凭栏处, 萧萧雨歇。帘外雨潺潺, 春意阑珊。The most famous example is 声声慢 written by Liqingzhao.

寻寻觅觅, 冷冷清清, 凄凄惨惨戚戚,

梧桐更兼细雨, 到黄昏, 点点滴滴

I look for what I miss, I know not what it is.

I feel so sad, so drear, so lonely, without cheer.

on parasol-trees a fine rain drizzles as twilight grizzles.

许渊冲译

The role of the reduplication is to convey message. It offers such a setting: on a rainy dusk, the heroine felt quite lonely and sad. Meanwhile the reduplication strengthens the sad feeling and shows a special musicality.

The English version sends the message correctly and it used rhyme *miss/is*, *drear/cheer*, *drizzles/grizzles*, and three so-adjective phrases strengthen the emotion, so it partly conveys the linguistic meaning. And it takes aesthetic function of language also.

Pun

Pun is common in both Chinese and English. It usually employs a word that has two different meaning or two different words that sound the same to achieve a double meaning on the semantic level.

For example,

- *She is too low for a high praise, she is too brown for a fair praise.*

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare

她太矮，经不起高度的赞扬，她皮肤太黑，说她白皙未免太过奖了。

Here *low* has two meanings, short in height, and low in status. And *fair* has a double meaning too, one refers to the color of skin or hair, pale, light in color; the other means just impartial, when translated into Chinese, the words *low* and *fair* are translated separately, though the referential meaning has achieved equivalence,

the usage of pun has already lost. Similarly,

- *Two ghost, walked into a bar and asked the bar tender, "Do you serve **spirits**?"*.

两个鬼走进酒吧问招待员，你们卖酒给鬼吗？

- *Soccer **kicks off** with violence.*

足球开踢，拳打脚踢。

- *春蚕到死丝方尽，蜡烛成灰泪始干。*

The silkworm till its death spins silk from love-sick heart,

The candle burned to ashes has no tears to shed.

From the examples above, we could see usually pun is translated separately in order to achieve the equivalence on the referential level.

3.1.4 Other Rhetoric Approaches

There are also many other rhetoric approaches such as antithesis, zeugma, palindrome, chiasmus, parallelism, catchword repetition, etc, which translator should be noticed. Their linguistic form is hardly completely retained, but the linguistic meaning can be achieved by proper adjustment or compensation.

Antithesis

Fundamentally, antithesis means contrasting ideas sharpened by the use of opposite or noticeably different meaning.

• *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven we were all going direct the other way.*

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

这是最美好的时期，又是最恶劣的时期；这是智慧的年代，又是愚蠢的年代；这是有信仰的时代，有时抱怀疑的时代；这是光明的季节，又是黑暗的季节；这是富有希望的春天，有时充满绝望的寒冬；我们拥有一切，而又一无所有。人们笔直地走向天堂，也会笔直地走向地狱。

Both the source language and the target language achieve linguistic meaning successfully.

Zeugma

It is a figure of speech by which one word refers to two others in the same sentence. Literally a yoking zeugma may be achieved by a very or preposition with two objects. When translating zeugma, the translator should supply words in order to make the target language natural and coherent.

- *weeping eyes and hearts* 一双双流泪的眼睛和一颗颗哭泣的心灵
- *To wage war and peace* 发动战争和谋求和平。

In both examples the source sentences take zeugma, while the target sentences lose it, therefore, they didn't reveal the strong sadness and satire retained in the original ones.

• 蜜蜂是在酿蜜，又是在酿造生活，不是为自己，而是为人类酿造最甜蜜的生活。

Making honey is also creating life, a most sweet life, not for themselves, but for others.

In this one, the translated version makes proper adjustment, zeugma is turned into metaphor, though the rhetoric device doesn't conform with the original, the target sentence still achieves the ideal goal.

Palindrome

Palindrome comes from Greece, *Palindeomosit*, means *running back again*. A palindrome is a line, word, poem or longer item which reads the same backwards as it does forwards. We have many palindrome words, e.g .bob, dad, deed, did, level, etc.

Palindrome sentence has a special visual effect.

• *Ma is as selfless as I am.*

• *Was it a rat I saw?*

• *Ten animals I slam in a net.*

• “*Do nine men interpret?*” “*Nine men.*” *I nod.*

Usually it is difficult to retain the linguistic meaning of palindrome sentence.

• *Able was I ere I saw Elba.* 不到俄岛我不倒。

There is another kind of palindrome, which is on the basis of word and so is not a strict palindrome. But it also carries linguistic meaning. They can achieve correspondence sometimes

• *One for all, all for one.*

我为人人， 人人为我。

• *Beauty is truth, truth is beauty.* (John Keats)

美就是真， 真就是美。

For the two examples above, the target sentence is consistent with the original one properly.

• 雾锁山头山锁雾， 天连水尾水连天。

Fog hangs over the mountain and the sky ends in the waters.

The original one is a sentence of a poem, with the aesthetic function of language; when translated into English, the beauty of the original poem in sound and in form both die, it just changes into a sentence with the informative function. We even couldn't feel the taste of the poem.

Parallelism

It is the arrangement of similarly constructed words, clauses, sentences or verse lines in a pairing or other sequence suggesting some correspondence between them. The effect of parallelism is usually one balanced arrangement achieved through repetition of the same syntactic forms. Mostly parallelism can be reproduced in different language.

• 中国的外交人员，应立场坚定，目光远大，头脑敏捷，业务熟练，才华出众，风格高尚。

A Chinese diplomat should be firm in stand, broad in vision, swift in wit, qualified in profession, outstanding in talent, noble in character.

The original sentence has six four-word phrases, which is widely used in Chinese daily life, and the translated one also six phrases, adjective –in – noun, which takes a brief form and reflects the linguistic characteristics properly, so it is a perfect translation.

• 我们中华民族有同自己的敌人血战到底的气概，有在自力更生基础上光复旧物的决心，有自立于世界民族之林的能力。 毛泽东

We the Chinese nation have the spirit to fight the enemy to the last drop of our blood, the determination to recover our lost territory by our own efforts, and the ability to stand on our own feet in the family of nations.

The English version conforms with the original one not only in semantic meaning, but also in linguistic form.

3.2 Referential Meaning

Referential meaning is the basic meaning and the main information carried by linguistic signs. So it can be also called conceptual meaning or cognitive meaning. Its kernel content lies in its distinctive features. e.g. father means male, one generation of one's senior, a directly related member of one's family. But it never refers to any specific or individual one. It always refers to the class in general. The referential meaning mostly realizes the information function of language.

3.2.1 Meaning Components Analysis and Correspondence

To analyze the referential meaning of a given linguistic sign is the first step of decoding, also the first step in translation process. So it is of great importance. The analysis of referential meaning couldn't be done without discriminating the meaning components.

All linguistic signs have meaning components, which can be classified as **THING**, **EVENT**, **ATTRIBUTE** or **RELATION**. Any message carried by a linguistic sign will refer to either a **THING**, an **EVENT**, an **ATTRIBUTE** or a **RELATION**. Usually **THINGS** include all animate beings, natural and supernatural, and all

inanimate entities (boy, ghost, angel, stone, galaxy. idea, blood), EVENTS include all actions, changes of state or process, and experiences (eat, run, think, melt, stretch, smile). ATTRIBUTES include all those attributes of quality and quantity ascribed to any THING or EVENT (long, thick, soft, rough, slowly, suddenly, few, all). Finally, RELATIONS include all those relations posited between any two of the above semantic units (with, by, because, since, and therefore, after, or).

Meaning component is the smallest unit of semantic analysis. Meaning components unite into concepts, concepts into complex concepts, then proposition, propositions into proposition cluster, then paragraph, finally discourse appears. Thus a semantic hierarchy forms. Correspondingly meaning components can be made up of the smallest unit of linguistic sign, morpheme, which include roots and affixes, or a word; a word carries a meaning component or a concept; combination of words or phrases transfer complex concept; then clause forms a proposition; after that sentences come into being, then paragraph, and finally text.

We could show the relation between them as follows: Figure 5:

Meaning component-----morpheme or word
Concept-----word
Complex concept-----combination of words or phrase
Proposition -----clause
(semantic) paragraph----- paragraph
discourse----- text

A word has referential meaning because it refers to a certain thing, event, attribute, or relation which a person can perceive or imagine; a sentence has referential meaning because it refers to something that happened, or may happen, or is imagined as happening; a text has referential meaning because it is just what the communication is about.

In seeking the counterpart in the target language on the level of referential meaning, the translator may face three cases of correspondence, which have been mentioned before, complete correspondence, partial correspondence and non-correspondence. When the translator is confronted with an unfamiliar word in the source language, his first responsibility will be to understand clearly the meaning of the word and the use of that word in the text in which it occurs. He will try to make clear whether the word refers to a THING, an EVENT, an ATTRIBUTE, or a RELATION. In English, you may notice usually nouns and pronouns are used to illustrate THINGS; verbs to illustrate EVENTS; modifiers such as adjectives and adverbs to illustrate ATTRIBUTES and RELATIONS are illustrated by prepositions or conjunctions.

After that, he should try to unpack the meaning components of that word. We know a word is usually a bundle of meaning components, for example,

ram = (+sheep)(-adult)(0male) (0female)

Lamb=(+sheep)(+adult)(+male)(-female)

Ewe=(+sheep)(+adult)(+female)(-male)

“+” means with, “-” without, “0” with or without.

They all share the same meaning component /sheep/, but they differ in the other aspects. The generic meaning component they share is called the central meaning component, which often shows the semantic set or class that this word belongs to. The additional meaning components are termed as the contrastive meaning components, which often distinguish this word from others. Components analysis is quite important. Peter Newmark once remarks: *Componential analysis in translation is not the same as componential analysis in linguistics; in linguistics it means analyzing or splitting up the various senses of a word into sense-components which may or may not be universals; in translation, the basic process is to compare a source word with a target word which has a similar meaning, but is not obvious one-to-one equivalent, by demonstrating first their common and then their differing sense components.* (Peter Newmark 1987:14)

If what the translator meets is a THING, it can be looked at from the perspective of the form or from the perspective of its function. Here form has to do with the physical aspects of a particular THING, such as size, shape, color, material, etc. The function concerns the significance, the reason for, the purpose of the THING. This distinction is quite important. Mostly it is not quite difficult to identify the

semantic set or class to which a word belongs to (a generic term), while it is not easy to find the unique characteristics in which it differs from others having some similarities. Only by comparing the form and function of the word with others could we find its contrastive meaning components, which is helpful to seek the equivalent lexical item in the target language.

There will be four possibilities. First the form and function correspond completely. At this situation, we have complete correspondence. For example, *eye*, with the function of *seeing* is the same in all cultures and languages. Second the form may be the same but the function may be different. *Cake* could be found in two cultures and a word for it in both languages. However, in one culture it may be the main food, the staple that is eaten at every meal. Whereas in another culture it may be a special treat and served only for parties. Third the form differs, but the function remain the same. 褡裢 can be seen only in China, a long, rectangular bag sewn up at both ends with an opening in the middle (usually, worn round the waist or across the shoulder). But it acts as a bag, a sack. The last possibility is the non-correspondence of form and function. If the term in the source text may refer to something which does not exist in the target culture, and there is no other item having the same function as it. The translator should have to paraphrase or borrow it. e.g. *sonnet* is a unique writing form in English, which is unknown to people in other cultures. Thus it has to be paraphrased as 十六行诗. 风水, location of a

house or tomb, supposed to have an influence on the fortune of a family, geomantic omen, it is transliterated as *fengshui*.

If it is an EVENT, it may be studied from the perspective of action or from the perspective of function. For instance, the word *run* refers to the action of moving oneself from one place to another by rapid movement of the legs, the function is to get from one place to another in a hurry. For this word action and function are the same in all languages. The rest steps are similar to what we have discussed above.

Just now we discuss the referential meaning under the condition that it is used alone. In fact, linguistic signs always appear in a cluster, so their meaning couldn't be out of control of the context, to be exact, collocation. Thus the same word may have different meanings when with different collocation. This phenomenon is called polysemy.

It is characteristic of words that a single lexical item may have several meanings other than that which most readily comes to mind. These meanings are often called secondary meanings. The primary meaning is the meaning suggested by the word when it is used alone. It is the first meaning or usage which a word will suggest to most people when the word is said in isolation. It is the meaning

learned early in life and is likely to have reference to a physical situation. But the same word may have a different meaning when used in context with other words. For example, the word *run* in isolation will mean something like move rapidly by moving the leg rapidly. But if the same word is used in the context of river as in *the river runs*, *run* has nothing to do with legs or rapidity. *Run* in the context of river means to flow. So secondary meanings are dependent on the context in which a word is used. Therefore, we could see only the primary meaning of the word *run* is equal to the primary meaning of the Chinese term 跑. We couldn't say the word *run* corresponds to the Chinese term 跑, because each has different secondary meanings. Thus intersection occurs. We can understand the polysemy better with the help of the diagram below:

Figure 6:

pull the door →	拉门
pull the draw →	拉抽屉

Pull a tooth	拔牙
Pull a fowl	拔毛
Pull the oar	摇桨
Pull a knife	抽出刀子
Pull tricks	耍花招
Pull a large crowd	吸引众人
Drag net	拉网
Tout trade	拉生意
Hold back	拉后腿
Shake hands with	拉手

For the word *pull*, which belongs to polysemy, it is equivalent to 拉 on the primary meaning. But both have several non-primary meanings, which don't match at all.

Any word used in a non-primary sense will probably not be translated by the word in the target language, which is equivalent to its primary sense. In other words, the secondary meanings of the source language can probably not be translated literally.

3.2.2 Special Combination of Words

In translation practice, there are certain combinations of words in any language, which are fixed combination. They always occur in a certain order, or they always occur together. e.g. spick and span, hale and hearty, to and fro, neat and tidy. They are often idiomatic. So to translate such special combination is quite different from the translation of common combinations as *an English-Chinese dictionary*, 一本英汉词典. For the common combination, we could get the referential meaning for each word, then put them together, so it can be done literally. While, *Adam's apple*, if you handle it in the same way, it sounds nonsense.

The translator needs to learn to recognize such special combinations of words at first, most of which are usually idioms, including set phrases, proverbs, saying,

slang, etc. so their meanings have been sanctioned by usage. The referential meanings of such combinations show the special relation between the linguistic signs and their referents in the world. He should consider the whole combination as a relatively independently communicative unit, associate this unit in the source language with its referent, then find the equivalent in the target language that signifies the same things. For example, *it rains cats and dogs*. The combination *cats and dogs* acts as an ATTRIBUTE, heavily. 大雨滂沱. This example is obvious, because it sounds nonsense if translated literally. But in many cases, we have combinations whose translated versions seem natural. *It is just children's play*. 这是儿戏. In fact 这是轻而易举的事. Thus we have false friends. They seem achieve the correspondence correctly, but it is just the literal meaning, not the referential meaning. And they are not the same thing, though sometimes they coincide with each other. Referential meaning shows the relation between linguistic signs and their referents in the world. While literal meaning is the image or the surface meaning of each individual unit invoked by the first glance.

Usually referential meaning can be realized by different approaches according to the different text and translation purpose. Among them literal translation, free translation, and transliteration are used widely.

3.2.3 Literal Translation Free Translation Loan

Literal translation is a method of translations, which aims at preserving the most possible cultural message of the source text at the sacrifice of the formal elements of the target language and sometimes even the intelligibility. Literal translation is the most effective way of conveying the cultural message, therefore it is also the most effective way of enriching the target language and target culture.

Literal translation is widely used to achieve a high degree of cultural exchange, usually when the referents of the source language culture are identical with the referents of the target language culture, and the relations between the signs and the referents they signify are same, under this situation, literal translation will be employed.

It can be further subdivided into two cases. 1. monosemy, a word which exists in both cultures and has only one referent to signify in the world. At this time the relation between this sign and its referent is one-to-one correspondence. January 一月 Monday 星期一 breakfast 早餐 violin 小提琴 oxygen 氧 leukemia 白血病 volcano 火山.2. for the words with more than one meanings, only the primary meaning could be literally translated, since the primary meaning is the sense which will come to the minds of most speakers of the language when the word is cited in isolation. It is independent of context, only under this situation,

the relation between sign and its referent will be no skewing. e.g. *a pool of stagnant water*, 一潭死水; *they do not dare to touch a tiger's backside*, 他们不敢摸老虎屁股; *Sit on the mountain and watch the tigers fight*, 坐山观虎斗; *the friendship will last for 10,000 years and still be forever green*, 友谊万古长青; *strike while the iron is hot*, 趁热打铁. Cultural symbols, especially important cultural symbols, should be translated literally to maintain the original images. Although sometimes literal translation may create something exotic or even eccentric for the target language readers, it will gradually be accepted by the target readers and its culture, otherwise any change at will results in misunderstanding, also blocking the cultural exchange.

But literal translation doesn't mean trying to reproduce the syntactic classes of the source language, (e.g. translating nouns by nouns and verbs by verbs); trying to match all the syntactic constructions, actives, passives, relative clauses, conditions contrary to fact; trying to follow a strict concordance of lexical items (that is, always translating one word in the source language by one and the same corresponding word in a target language). It is just rigid literalism. When the translated text does not make sense. We should turn to free translation.

Free translation

Free translation, referred to as communicative translation by Newmark, is a

translation method which aims at maintaining the elegance and intelligibility in the target language at the sacrifice of the form of source language, but without changing the cultural message of the original text.

When literal translation will cause misunderstanding of the cultural message or create unintelligible target language text, then free translation should be used.

When the referents of both source language and target language are identical, but the relation between sign and its referent is different. For a word used in a non-primary sense, the relation between this sign and the referent it signifies under the situation is seldom equivalent to the relation between the counter-part of this sign in another language, based on the equivalent primary sense, and the referents the counter-part designates. Because in most cases the secondary senses of the two words that share same primary meaning will probably not match at all.

So under such situation, free translation must be used. For instance, *brown bread* 黑面包, *brown sugar* 红糖, *white coffee* 加奶的咖啡, *black coffee* 不加奶的咖啡, *wall clock* 挂钟,

Compared with the definition of literal translation, here we emphasize the relation of sign and its referent is different, thus in case we just find “the false friends” in translation. 新闻照片, *press photo*, but not *news photo*; 慢车, *local train*, but not *slow train*; 街道妇女, *housewives of residential areas*, but not *street women*.

Cultural specific terms or phenomena, which would be misunderstood when translated literally, should be translated freely, though literal translation could enrich the target language and its culture. Some terms or expressions related to a nation's history, customs and habits, religion, and other cultural specific aspects, and its form and meaning are strange or intelligible to the foreigners, under such situation, we have to employ free translation in order to convey the message, for examples, It rains *cats and dogs*. 大雨滂沱.

Not only idioms can't make sense by literal translation, syntax will pose a problem for it. In many instances unnaturalness arises from awkwardness of syntax. Note the manner in which the following English sentence was translated first into Chinese.

A writer needs to be a Walt Whitman if his faults of technique are to be rated unimportant beside the vigor of his personality.

Version 1 一个作家得要成为像沃尔特·惠特曼那样的人物，如果他想让他人格的力量弥补其技术上的不足的话。

Version 2 一个作家必须有沃尔特·惠特曼那样的天才，方能以其磅礴的气概，使人感到他在技巧方面的缺陷是无关紧要的。

Version1 is the result of the rigid literal translation, which reads awkward, and the phrase “vigor of personality” is lost in the process, the translator doesn't convey the referential meaning of the phrase, let alone the hiding emotive feeling of it, it

is indeed praise to Whitman.

Version 2 selects the closest and most natural equivalent, it not only conveys the original message precisely but also expresses the strong feeling of appreciation.

Although free translation could make some adjustment in arrangement of lexicon, phrase and syntax, it shouldn't employ complete freedom in restructuring the grammar, syntax, or other aspects.

In translating practice, there is not a clear demarcation between literal and free translation. Any successful translated work is just the result of proper intersection of both approaches.

Transliteration

Transliteration is a method of translation, which is in fact a loan. It is based on the phonetic correspondences between the source language and the target language.

Though it looks exotic, it can convey the cultural taste to the maximum.

Some proper names (person name, place name, etc) terminologies, culture-specific objects or phenomena, will be transliterated. e.g.

Coca-cola 可口可乐, pie 派, whisky 威士忌, pudding 布丁, salad 色拉,

hamburger 汉堡, sandwich 三明治, brandy 白兰地, toast 土司, jeep 吉普, carnation 康乃馨, tange 探戈, model 模特, gene 基因, aspirin 阿司匹林, lymph 淋巴, Hollywood 好莱坞, Broadway 百老汇, Hippie 嬉皮士, Yuppie 雅皮士.

Meanwhile many Chinese words import into the English language through transliteration. Typhoon 台风, kowtow 叩头, qigong 气功, yinyang 阴阳, jiaozi 饺子, chop-suey 中国菜的炒杂碎。

Loan words are not part of the target language diction. They are words of another language, which have no meaning to speakers of the target language. So in the beginning, it should be modified in some way to build the meaning into the context and so into the text. e.g. Vodka 伏特加酒 Cigar 雪茄烟. after the loan word has been introduced with a modifying phrase, it may be possible to use the loan word in later references. Thus the meaning of the loan word is not lost or distorted.

3.3 Pragmatic Meaning

Pragmatic meaning reflects the sign user's subjective attitudes or emotive feeling towards the signs they use. It is closely linked with context. At the same time since the sign user is always associated with a certain culture, pragmatic meaning

is to a great extent culture-bound. Thus expressions involved with the feeling, attitude, purpose, etc will cause a cultural clash, as a result, an obstacle to translation. We will discuss pragmatic meaning from the following three aspects: cultural background, style, emotive feeling.

3.3.1 Cultural Background

In the long history, different nations have gradually evolved their own customs and cultures, which is reflected through the use of their languages.

The same pragmatic meaning will be expressed by the different expressions in different nations. e.g. In Chinese, *tiger* is considered as the king of animals, and thus stands for dignity, which can be seen from many idioms 龙腾虎跃, 龙争虎斗, 虎踞龙盘. In English, *lion* is thought of as the king of animals, which is the symbol the United Kingdom, so you can see it on the British national emblem. Thus *lion heart*, 勇士; *to see the lions* 参观英国名胜; *to beard the lion in its den*, 太岁头上动土. Even the United Kingdom is called the British Lion. Our Chinese people say 拦路虎, which will be turned into a lion in the way in English.

Here are some other examples of different expressions in Chinese and English containing the same pragmatic meaning.

落汤鸡	a drowned rat
瓮中之鳖	rat in the hole
胆小如鼠	chicken-hearted
蠢得像猪	as stupid as a goose
像蜜蜂一样勤劳	as industrious as an ant
热锅上的蚂蚁	a cat on a hot tin roof
狐假虎威	donkey in a lion's hide
非驴非马	neither fish nor fowl
吹牛	talk horse

Sometimes a certain word or expression will have quite different pragmatic meanings in different nations. This can be shown from many aspects in daily life.

For instance, in Chinese, vinegar is often another name for jealousy in love affairs, so, *chichu*, eat vinegar, means jealous. While in English the word is connotative of ill-tempered speech, character, etc. One may say that someone's remarks are made with a strong note of vinegar. Sour is similar to vinegar, means in English bad-tempered, peevish, ill-disposed or bitter, but in Chinese, sourness or being sour is often connected with pedantry, so a pedantic scholar is often said to a sour one, *suanxiucai*.

The color terms though share some commonness on the connotative level between different countries. There are still ambiguities arising, when translated some words or phrases with color terms. e.g. 红榜, honor roll; 红娘, match maker; 红

人, a favorite with somebody in power; 红眼, jealousy; 红白喜事, wedding and funerals. In English, red rag, 激怒因素; see red, 火冒三丈, due to the fact that in bullfight a piece of red cloth will be used to arouse the bull's attention.

Yellow, in English, is often connected with cowardice, e.g. *You are yellow*, 你是胆小鬼; *yellow-belly*, 懦夫; *yellow-dog*, 孬种 *yellow streak*, 性格懦弱. It is said that the meaning of yellow associated with cowardice derived from jaundice, people who suffered from the disease would look pale, lackadaisical, short of courage. In Chinese the color yellow enjoys a high prestige because it is the symbol of yellow-skin nation. E.g. *a propitious/ lucky day*, 黄道吉日; *golden age*, 黄金时代; *be acclaimed emperor*, 黄袍加身. The Chinese feudal emperors usually wore yellow costume, so yellow also means dignity.

Animals often have different connotative meanings between different countries. Most Chinese think the *magpie* stand for auspices and the *crow* stand for evil omen and death, but to many English people the former stands for gossips, the latter for destruction. To most English people the *owl* stands for wisdom, but very few Chinese like *owl* and most of them think it stands for evil omen and darkness. In Chinese people's eyes, *dragon* is something sacred and has been referred to as the ancestor of the Chinese nation, that's why the Chinese call themselves *descendants of the dragon*. And Chinese feudal emperors were often referred to as

incarnation of a dragon(真龙天子), *wearing* 龙袍 and living in palaces decorated with the dragon. *The dragon king* (龙王) is a powerful god in Chinese legendary which rules the seas and other water bodies and is in charge of raining. Many Chinese parents would 望子成龙, but which would sound ridiculous to the English people, to expect one's son to become a dragon is unacceptable, since in their mind, dragon is some evil master which can spit fire and sometimes possesses three to nine heads. In English legends and fair tales, it always brought disaster to people. Out of such consideration, 亚洲四小龙 would be translated into *the four tigers of Asia*.

There is another case which is quite common in intercultural communication. A certain word or expression conceive the pragmatic meaning in one culture, but in another culture, it doesn't. We can see many such examples in Chinese and English daily life. In Chinese,

Lexical items	Pragmatic meaning	Literal meaning
醋坛子	Green-eyed monster	A jug of vinegar
老油条	Foxy old hand	Deep-fried dough strips
半瓶醋	Person of superficial knowledge	A half bottle of vinegar
滚刀肉	Unreasonable trouble maker	Tough meat
饭桶	Big eater or good for nothing	Rice basket
桃李	Students	Peach and plum
苗子	Young successor	Young plants
铁公鸡	Stingy person or miser	Iron cock
铁算盘	Astute businessman	Iron abacus

All these expressions are culture-specific, their connotative meanings couldn't be understood by just translating the liberal meaning, the same referent doesn't bear any pragmatic meaning in English, in order to achieve mutual understanding, translator should find the similar equivalent on the level of pragmatic meaning at the sacrifice of referential meaning.

In English there are also many expressions whose pragmatic meanings are culture-bound. e.g.

Lexical items	Literal meaning	Pragmatic meaning
Pignoli	松子	心胸狭小的人
Small potato	小土豆	小人物
Pea soup	肉汤	饭桶
Screw	螺丝	守财奴
Cold fish	冷的鱼	无热情的人
Rabbit	兔子	蹩脚的运动员
Big cheese	大块奶酪	东家和重要的人物
She is a cup cake.	她是一个小糕饼.	漂亮姑娘
He threw me a curve.	他给我一个弧圈球.	他给我一个难题.
He is an odd ball.	他是一个怪球.	他有怪癖或行为古怪.

3.3.2 style

Style reveals pragmatic meaning, because it reflects the author's feeling and attitudes. Style usually can be shown by stylistic markers, which will be discussed in details one by one.

Phonetic Markers

Phonetic feature of language system is the basic feature of style. It includes the special use vowels and consonants; tone; rhythm; and other devices. It not only takes linguistic meaning, but also pragmatic meaning. The writer just makes use of the uncommon arrangement of the phonetic elements to reveal a special feeling or attitude. As to the examples you can take 3.1.1 as a reference.

Lexical Markers

Lexical markers are closely connected with the individual's idiolect. For example, in favor of elegant words or expressions, common words, quite a lot of adjectives, etc. The use of idiolect is usually related to the text genre. Compared with political essays, literary works usually employ more adjectives and adverbs, and official documents and legal papers use more abstract words or archaic words, e. g. constitutionality, liability, whereby, hitherto, etc.

Register Markers

There is a relationship exists between a given situation and the language used in it. According to Halliday, register is the term employed for the kind of variety which is distinguished in this way. He said: the category of register is postulated to account for what people do with their language.

Register could be distinguished into three dimensions: field of discourse, mode of discourse and tenor of discourse.

Field or the reference to “what is going on” is the kind of language use which reflects what Gregory and Carroll call “the purposive role” or the social function of the text. Military, literature, finance, sports and games, law, technology, female literature, etc, all employ the vocabulary different from the common core vocabulary, thus the text presents a different feature from others.

Mode of discourse refers to the medium of the language activity. It is the manifestation of the nature of the language code being used. The basic distinction here is that between speech and writing and the various permutations on such a distinction.

Tenor relays the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. This may be analysed in terms of basic distinctions such as polite-colloquial-intimate, on a scale of categories which range from formal to informal.

Register markers can be shown by comparing the vocabulary of a given register with the core vocabulary. For example in female literature, the words “adorable, charming, gorgeous, lovely, divine, etc ”are usually used instead of the neutral

word “great”. Meanwhile technical documents will make use of a large number of terminologies, so as to reveal its apparent technical style.

Sentence Structure Markers

This kind of marker can be shown by the frequent use of some sentence structures in a given text. Usually the feature of sentence structure can be summarized as follows: coordination, subordination, parallelism, antithesis, omission, repetition, etc. Some of them convey linguistic meaning at the same time. For example,

An elegant handwriting, like the elegant hand that wrote it. I pushed it to one side and had another drink, I began to feel a little less savage. I pushed things around the desk. My hands felt thick and hot and awkward. I ran a finger across the corner of the desk and looked at the streak made by the wiping off of the dust. I looked at the dust on my finger and wiped that off. I looked at my watch. I looked at the wall. I looked at nothing.

I put the liquor bottle away and went over the wash-bowl to rinse the glass out. When I had done that I washed my hands and bathed my face in cold water and looked at it.

The Lady in The Lake by Raymond Chandler

In this paragraph, the writer used two sentence structures again and again:

(1). subject (I) plus verb phrase

(2). subject (I) plus verb phrase and verb phrase

Which make the whole text reads monotonous, but the special arrangement of the sentence structure just coincides with the content: the heroine is aimless.

In broad sense, any sentence structure or syntax frequently used in a given text in order to achieve an uncommon effect can be considered as sentence structure marker. Thus the imperative sentence, interrogative sentence, sentence with dash, distortion syntax, ambiguous sentences, etc, fall into the range of study.

Textual Markers

Textual markers include many aspects: the length of sentence, coherence and cohesion, temporal sequence in narration, spatial sequence in narration, direct and indirect speech, explicitness an implicitness, etc. Text analysis is of great importance to evaluate the style of a writer. For instance, Hemingway is a master of the short sentence, of terse dialogue, of implicitness, and of impersonal tone. While James Joyce is famous for disorder in temporary and spatial sequence in narration, which can be seen from the two examples:

They did not say anything. George reached down for a towel and wiped the counter.

"I wonder what he did?" Nick said.

"Double-crossed somebody. That's what they kill them for."

"I 'm going to get out of this town," Nick said.

"Yes, "said George, "That's a good thing to do."

"I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful."

"Well, "said George, "you better not think about it."

The Killers by Hemingway

In this paragraph the writer used many direct speeches, short sentences, quite common words. At the same time implicitness appears between the lines. For instance, between "That's what they kill them for." and "I'm going to get out of this town." there hides a message "I can't stand to see the killing." Which reappears later, thus explicitness and implicitness weave together in this paragraph.

A quarter after what an unearthly hour I suppose they're just getting up in China now combing out their pigtails for the day well soon have the nuns ringing the angelus they've nobody coming in the spoil their sleep except an odd priest or two for his night office the alarm clock next door at cock stout clattering the brains out of itself let me see if I can doze off 1 2 3 4 5 what kind of flowers are those they invented like the stars the wall paper in Lombard street was much nicer the apron he gave me was like that.

Ulysses by James Joyce

This paragraph is characteristic of the disorder of spatial and temporal sequences in narration.

Markers of Figures of Speech

Figures are also important devices to achieve a special style, the English is rich in figures, e.g. simile, metaphor, analogy, personification, hyperbole, pun, allusion, understatement, euphemism, metonymy, synecdoche, antonomasia, zeugma, irony, chiasmus, innuendo, sarcasm, parallelism, paradox, parody, oxymoron, antithesis, epigram, climax, anti-climax or bathos, apostrophe, etc.

Many well-known writers are in favor of the use of figures, among them the English writer, Bernard Shaw is famous for his satire. For example,

Magnus: Frankly I have been accustomed to regard your president as a statesman whose mouth was the most efficient part of his head. He cannot have thought of it himself. Who suggested it to him?

The Apple Cart

Here the writer used “whose mouth was the most efficient part of his head” instead of common adjectives to reveal “talk tall”, thus it brings a rather special impression.

3.3.3 Emotive Feeling

Emotive feeling can directly reflect the pragmatic meaning of words, because it reveals the attitude of speaker, that is, ameliorate, pejorative, or neutral. Ameliorate words means praise, approval, agreement, etc. pejorative terms show disapproval, criticism, denial, etc. Therefore in every language we could see pairs or groups of words identical in referential meaning, but quite different in emotive meaning. e. g. statesman and politician; policeman and cop; slender and thin; inexpensive and cheap. In Chinese, 面庞, 面孔, 嘴脸; 聪明, 狡猾.

The translator should discriminate the emotive feeling of source language carefully, in order to render it into the target language properly.

Look at the following sentence, which is translated into two slightly different versions.

I know he would take an interest in this kind of business and throw in the fancy touches. Nobody could spread himself like Tom Sawyer in such a thing as that.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

我非常希望汤姆莎耶当时在场, 我知道他对这类的事很感兴趣, 他会另外想出一些很精彩的花样, 遇到这样的事情谁也不如汤姆莎耶会逞能。

张万里译 上海译文出版社

我真愿意有汤姆索亚在场，我知道他对这类事情一定有兴趣，他还会出些主意，添些新鲜花样儿，干这类事情，谁也赶不上汤姆索亚在行。

张友松译 人民文学出版社

Both of them understand the main idea, there is just one difference between them on the phrase “spread oneself”. It means to exert oneself to an unusual extent to produce a good effect or find impression. So it is an ameliorate word. It is used here to show the hero's appraisal to Tom. Thus the latter one coincides with the original feeling correctly.

Conclusion

Recently, more and more scholars and experts study the translation principles from different angles, they try to hold a framework under which translating activity could be handled thoroughly and perfectly. The semiotic approach to translation is put forward under such situation.

Compared with other translation theories, it has some unique advantages. Translation activity is viewed as an interlingual, intercultural communication action. Languages differ in the way they perceive and partition reality, it is dynamic, and it couldn't be studied just within the scope of linguistics. It should be viewed as a sign system, since any sign is the union of signifier and signified, we couldn't discuss the language sign without these two concepts. Thus referents draw much more attention. Referential meaning is one of the key points in translation, because it shows the relation between the sign and its referent. In this paper the author doesn't give a rough demarcation between equivalence and nonequivalence, but try to analyze referents in the order from complete correspondence to non-correspondence. Taking nouns as examples, we could see the referential meaning between the source language and target language seldom correspond completely. Linguistic meaning is also one branch of semiotics. It

concerns the form of linguistic sign. Since any sign is the combination of form and meaning, so form can't be separated from meaning. It conveys meaning as well. Thus it is an indispensable element in translation. The most distinguishing part of semiotics lies in that it tries to probe cultural clash from the perspective of pragmatics and reaches the conclusion: expressions involved with the feeling, attitude, purpose of addresser will cause a cultural clash.

Now we can see semiotics-oriented translation approach could analyse the meaning of source language more thoroughly and more carefully, therefore it conveys the message of the source language properly and in detail.

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