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社会符号学视角下圣经词汇的翻译

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摘 要

圣经距今有数千年的历史，在人类文明史上，作为最具影响力的著作之一，它既是一部文化经典，也是一部宗教经典，在西方社会产生了深远的影响。它内容丰富，承载着大量的文化信息和历史元素。

圣经词汇，是这部宗教及文化经典的结构因素，一直被古今中外的翻译家所关注，圣经词汇翻译的优劣是衡量圣经译文质量的基本要素之一。鉴于之前翻译家对圣经词汇的翻译未有过系统的研究，本文试图从社会符号学的角度，探讨在圣经词汇翻译中如何处理其文化负载问题。

社会符号学翻译法将翻译视作两种语言符号之间的转换，是在社会文化的语境中进行的翻译。翻译的过程实际上是一个编码和解码信息的转换过程。由于原语与译语都存在于特定的社会文化背景中，因此存在于原文圣经词汇的意义在移植到译文中时会不可避免地遇到重重阻碍，此时译者应该考虑各种非语言符号体系的因素。翻译就是翻译意义，而意义是由符号体现的，在符号学上包含符号的语义（指称意义）、句法（言内意义）和语用（语用意义）三种特征。社会符号学指导下的圣经词汇翻译，就是指从圣经词汇的意义及功能出发，借助英汉语言差异和不同文化背景之下词汇的三种不同意义，及其在翻译中的不对等现象，指出几种行之有效的策略，使译者能从各个层面上还原圣经词汇的意义和功能，以达到“意义相符”，功能相似的目的。

从社会符号学角度研究圣经词汇的翻译，无疑为圣经翻译研究提供了一个广阔的空间，这将使译者更加有效地解决圣经翻译中遇到的难题，促进中西文化交流。

关键词： 社会符号学，圣经词汇翻译，文化负载

Abstract

The Bible, one of the most influential works in the world, as a cultural and religious classic, has exerted profound and far reaching influence on the Western society. It is a great text of literature with a long history. It is not only abundant in content but also in cultural connotations and historical background. Today *The Bible* has been translated into over 2000 languages in the world in numerous versions.

The words in *The Bible*, as the structural element of the religious and culture classic, have always been widely concerned in various translations by the translators. One of the basic factors of the success in the translation of *The Bible* depends upon the translation of words in *The Bible*. As the biblical words are abundant in cultural connotations, it has become a difficult problem for the translator to transfer the culturally-loaded information. Because of the cultural difference between Chinese and English, cultural connotations involved in them have become a difficult problem. Since there hasn't been any systematic study on the translation of biblical words, this thesis attempts to discuss the biblical words from the perspective of socio-semiotics.

According to socio-semiotics, translation is a kind of transformation between two sign systems, which take place in the different social-cultural contexts. What is correspondent with semiotics are three

types of linguistic semiotic meanings, namely, linguistic meaning, referential meaning and pragmatic meaning. The process of translation includes a double coding and double decoding. Meaning and function should be considered as two indispensable factors in assessing the quality of translation. As the source language text differs from the target language text in the special cultural background, it is very difficult to achieve the complete and absolute equivalence in the three kinds of meanings between them. And furthermore, the translators should take the various non-linguistic sign system into consideration. In all, translation is translating meaning, while the purpose of translating is simultaneously to convey the three kinds of meaning above mentioned. Therefore virtually, translating is the communication between cultures. Socio-semiotic translation method can help the translator reproduce the meanings and functions at various levels, thus achieving correspondence in meaning and similarity in function.

In the view of socio-semiotics, this thesis reviews the history of biblical translation both in the Western countries and China, analyzes the rules and theories of these various translations and attempts to discuss the three kinds of meanings about them due to the vast differences between the Chinese and English cultures, and their non-equivalence in translation, thus summarizing some operational techniques of translation.

In the light of the socio-semiotics, the translation of the biblical

words has undoubtedly provided the translator with a much wider scope, which enables the translators to solve the problem in the translation of *The Bible*, thus promoting the cultural communication between Chinese and English.

Key words: socio-semiotics, biblical words translation, cultural load

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Introduction

0.1 A Socio-semiotic View on Translation

Socio-semiotic translation method is based on the interface of semiotics and sociology. In the light of socio-semiotics, translation is an encoding and decoding process, which provides a new insight into the nature of inter-lingual, intercultural and cross-social activity. From the angle of socio-semiotics, while analyzing the language, scholars base their analyses of the social structure and process on message and meaning, since the linguistic meaning lies in other related meaning systems, all of which make up the whole cultural system. Language is inseparable from the context, the culture and the society. Socio-semiotic translation attaches great importance to the pragmatic, linguistic and referential meanings of signs. Additionally, other signs, whether verbal or non-verbal, also carry meanings and should be considered in translation. Translation means the transference of meaning. From a socio-semiotic view of meaning, the translators can have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the essence of meaning, thus, while doing translation, the translators can get the whole picture of the source language so as to convey the meaning as much as possible in the target language. Especially, dealing with the heavily culturally-loaded biblical words, the socio-semiotic approach to translation can minimize the loss

of meaning because it regards translation as a social activity of transforming from one language sign system into another one. Its main task is to translate the socio-cultural information, which is carried by all kinds of sign systems.

In this thesis, the author would proceed from the socio-semiotic approach to translation and give a full explanation of how to translate the English biblical words into Chinese. In other words, the author tries to illustrate that when the translators have a big picture in their mind and take the linguistic and non-linguistic factors into account in the translation, they can get a more exact reproduction of the original language.

Socio-semiotic approach incorporates other social, cultural and religious factors into translation, which is of great importance for the translators to understand *The Bible* in different cultures.

0.2 Aims of the Thesis

This thesis discusses two main issues: one is the theoretical basis of socio-semiotics; the other is the practical analysis of E-C translation of the biblical words.

As is known to all, *The Bible*, as the main part of the Western traditional culture, is regarded as the key to cultivating the Western civilization. It is safe to say that *The Bible* is the foundation of the

Western culture. As is written, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”¹ *The Bible* is deeply embedded in Western people’s cultural life, including politics, literature, art, economy, religion, etc. A lot of scholars both at home and abroad have made some researches of the translation of *The Bible* from the perspective of linguistics. However, what makes the author amazed is that socio-semiotics has seldom been studied in the biblical word translation. This project is of some significance both theoretically and practically.

The biblical words, carrying the abundant cultural connotations in the Western people, have a simple yet vivid picture and exciting story behind them, also have their unique charm of their own and thus have been expanded and quoted in various types of works by the Chinese people. Not only can we see the biblical words in many Chinese literary works, but also we can see them in the works concerning business, diplomacy, politics and other people’s communicative activities. It is necessary for the translators to seek for the solution to translating the special, unusual words and to help people know more about *The Bible* from the Western cultural background, thus promoting the combination of different cultures.

The biblical words, as a minimal unit, determine the understanding of the whole *Bible*, thus influencing the appreciation of the Western

culture. So each word plays an important role not only in knowing about *The Bible* but also in understanding the Western society activities. Cross-lingual translation, as a cross-cultural activity, is inevitably related to socio-cultural information. So the barriers in translation come into being, whether linguistic barriers or cultural obstacles. Especially, the vacancy in the lexical translation caused by differences of sign models in different cultures sometimes makes great difficulty for the translators. As far as the translators in the Eastern countries are concerned, they are devoid of a Western cultural background. They find it very difficult to translate them in a proper way to realize the “correspondence in meaning and similarity in function.” (Cheng Hongwei, 1998:67)². Some even hold the view that cultural words are untranslatable and should be totally dropped in the translating process. Therefore, the author applies socio-semiotics to the translation of biblical words to achieve the equivalence of translation. And the author hopes the result of this study will shed new light on the heavily culturally- loaded biblical words.

0.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis is composed of the following parts: The introduction gives a general description of this thesis. In the first chapter, the author will make a survey of socio-semiotics and its approach to translation and then look back to the translation of *The Bible*, listing two translation views on

The Bible. In the second chapter, discussion will be focused on the conceptual and cultural differences of meaning about the words between Chinese and English. The difficulties in the translation of words will also be explained in this chapter. Then in the third chapter, based on the former chapter, the author will further make an analysis of the cultural connotation in the biblical words and lay out the theoretical foundations for the next chapter. The fourth chapter will be devoted to illustrating the strength of socio-semiotic translation method in coping with culturally-loaded biblical words through a detailed analysis of different examples. And in the last part, the author will draw a conclusion, stating the effective application of socio-semiotic theory in the translation of biblical words.

0.4 Significance of the Research

As an important cultural heritage in the world, *The Bible*, together with its words, has a permeating influence on the Western world. And the culture of *The Bible* spread to the lives of the people all over the world. It is very usual for the translator to encounter a lot of special words in translating *The Bible*. However, the cultural difference between the Chinese and English is becoming a crucial point in the E-C translation of the biblical words. This thesis starts from the socio-semiotics approach to translation, and attempts to give an illustration on how to keep possession

of the cultural information, while reserving the cultural difference in E-C translation of the biblical words. As there hasn't been any systematic research on this subject, the thesis will, as it is, serve as a bridge to fill the gap.

Chapter 1

Socio-semiotics and Translation

1.1 The Review of Socio-semiotics

Socio-semiotics takes its insights from semiotics. Semiotics, as an independent discipline, only came into being in the late 19th century and early the 20th century. Its present-day formulation has come from F. de Saussure, the founder of modern linguistics in Swiss, and C.S Peirce, the philosopher in America. According to Saussure, the linguistic sign includes the arbitrary nature of the close connection between the signifier (which carries the meaning) and the signified (the actual meaning which is carried). In Saussure's *A Course in General Linguistics*, he defines semiology as follows:

A science that studies the life of signs within the society is conceivable, it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology, I shall call it semiology (from Greek semion "sign"). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be, but it has the right to exist, a place staked out in advance.³

He points out that the sign model consists of three terms, the sign and its constituent signifier and the signified.

A signifier is the thoroughly material aspect of sign. (something physical—sounds, gestures, etc.) Inseparable from the signifier is what Saussure calls the signified. This is a mental concept. Saussure's definition of semiology helps people understand that language is not only a tool of naming everything but also a rather complex sign system. And the relation between them is called signification. Nevertheless, Saussure doesn't conceive of semiology as a general science of a kind of sign; he only takes language into account and excludes the outside world and the thinking agent.

CH.S Pierce (1931) adopts the terminology used by John Lock, the British philosopher, who had a discussion about semiotics, and insists that the sign consists of a triple relation. He thinks that the representamen (the sign itself) has a relation to an object, thus entailing a meaning called the interpretant. Peirce calls the signifier a representamen, a form inheriting in the physical strategy of representing itself (the use of sounds, hand movements, etc. for some referential meanings). Peirce terms the referent the object an entity displayed from its (real world) context of occurrence. He terms the meaning that one gets from a sign the interpretant. Thus he makes a thorough argumentation about semiotics, which has laid a solid foundation for the development of

semiotics. He ushers non-verbal signs into semiotics and makes it a basis for other disciplines. Unlike Saussure, who completely excludes the outside world from signs, Peirce tries to interpret meaning in the outside world apart from the language field.

Another American Scholar Charles Morris, logician and philosopher, developed Pierce's theory of semiotics in a systematic way. Morris's semiotics offers a whole description of signs which are made up of three parts: 1) a sign vehicle; 2) a represent of the sign; 3) an interpreter (one who uses a language) . The correlation among these three elements constitutes three aspects of meaning in semiotics, namely, referential meaning, linguistic meaning and pragmatic meaning which belong to three dimensions of semantics, syntax and pragmatics respectively.

Morris' semiotic point of view is relatively cautious about the connection between semiotics and linguistics, as the three meanings defined in his research could cover all the relationships occurring in language. In this way, we can understand the meaning of verbal signs. His research helps us make clear the literal meaning as well as the connotative meaning such as associative meaning, emotive meaning , social meaning, etc.

However, the research of semiotics up to this point has a lot of limitations. For example, the semiotics put forward by Saussure is only a kind of "formal semiotics" . Accordingly, the meaning interpreted in his

semiotic framework is only a formal meaning, which is quite different from the meaning formed in a genuine social environment. As a branch of semiotics, socio-semiotics treats all systems of signs used by human beings, which is a theory studying the relation between semiotic system and society and mankind . If we make an analysis of the language on the basis of socio -semiotics, we can interpret it in the social-cultural context, and the verbal language can be studied in a context of all sign systems, constituted and treated as social practice.

With the development of the linguistic study, Halliday established the theoretical basis for socio-semiotic approach. In the 1980s, he pointed out :

A social reality(or a “culture”) itself is an edifice of meanings — a semiotic construct. In this perspective, language is one of the semiotic systems that constitute a culture; one that is distinctive in that it also serves as an encoding system for many (though not all) of the other.

It means interpreting language within a social cultural context, in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms- as an information system, if that terminology is preferred.⁴

In brief, Halliday stresses the unity of the text (language), context (linguistic or non-linguistic) and social structure, and advocates that language is a unique system of signs with social function which can express the meaning of all the other systems of signs in a certain social and cultural background.

Later, socio-semiotics associated with human semiotics, developed by Guntler Kress, a student of Halliday, came into being. Kress has elaborated on the essentials of socio-semiotics in his *Social Semiotics* (1998).⁵ He points out that socio-semiotics is mainly concerned about the human signs. He argues that people are not isolated individuals, but live in a place where the complicated networks are interwoven by all kinds of social relations. Thus common comprehensible signs for every man are related to any kind of social meanings formed through any semiotic forms, semiotic texts and semiotic practices. He states that language can be interpreted by considering the text, the language structure, the social structure and social process as well as the message and meaning. In a word, socio-semiotics regards all sign systems as the object of its enquiry, especially studying all kinds of human signs.

People come to realize that language theory itself is not adequate enough to guide their understanding of language. While analyzing the language, We can see that the meaning of any relevant sign can be studied through the social practice in the sign systems of society, such as visual,

audio and behavioral codes. In other words, the verbal language itself as well as the text type, context, register constructed by the verbal signs can carry the meaning. Moreover, non-verbal signs like gestures can carry meaning. If people study only one kind of code, the aim of language study can't be realized. So the language theory should be one that studies all kinds of sign systems that are constructed in the society and that is regarded as social practice, which is called the socio-semiotic theory of language.

Therefore, we can see that socio-semiotics has provided a relatively comprehensive perspective from which people can study language in a much more forceful way. However, through language, regarded as the carrier, container and instrument of culture, the translators carry out translation, transmitting culture and promoting cultural exchange. Admittedly, the translators can apply the socio-semiotic approach to achieving the successful translation.

1.2 Socio-semiotics and Translation of *The Bible*

Socio-semiotics, as a branch of semiotics, draws its insight into translation. *The Bible*, expressed in more than two thousand languages, carries both the special linguistic characters and the cultural meanings. So when doing translation, Nida suggests that the socio-semiotic approach

can be applied to the translation of *The Bible*. Let's discuss it in the following part.

1.2.1 Nida's Socio-semiotics view on Translation

There are various views about the discussion of semiotic approach to translation. For example, Jakobson, the author of *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* (1959)⁶ puts forward his three ways of interpreting a verbal sign: intralingual translation, interlingual translation and intersemiotic translation(1959:233).Povic, in his *Dictionary of Analysis of Literary Translation*(1975)⁷, declares that in literary translation, the most important thing is to bear in mind that a literary text is not only a combination of verbal signs, but also a culturally-loaded linguistic system , which requires a through-going and comprehensive examination before translation is carried out. Gorlee, in her *Semiotics and the Problems of Translation* (1994)⁸, has made some earth-breaking contributions to semiotic translation approach. He says in the "Introduction" of the book that:

This study is primarily concerned with problems within semiotics, translation theory, and the interface between the two disciplines, or better areas of research. It treats of a critical analysis of the concept of translation in, particularly, Peirce's doctrine of signs, and the semiotic implications of the process of translation (Gorlee, 1994:9).

In this book, she has made a great exploration of the “interface” between semiotics and translation , and she thinks a semiotic approach to translation can highlight those communicative, hermeneutic or interpretative and cultural elements in translation, which offers a new approach to translation.

On the basis of discussions of the semiotic approach to translation, Nida has brought this new approach into his translation studies from the 1970s to the 1988s. And in *From One Language to Another*(1988)⁹, Nida holds that it is meaningful that all factors , such as structure of the text, the rhetoric features, are related to the text , which can not be ignored in translation process. He also believes that a) the socio-semiotic approach to translation is the most comprehensive system to analyze signs; b) semiotics observes the meaning(s) of a verbal symbol (sign) as an event, one that takes its social background as the whole communication process. So in Nida’s opinion, the meaning of the linguistic sign shall always be interpreted in a certain communication process in the given social context; that is to say, the text can’t be isolated from the social settings.

Nida remarks that “perhaps the most pervasive and crucial contributions to an understanding of translating is to be found in socio-semiotics, the discipline which treats all the systems of signs used by human societies”. He adopts socio-semiotic theory in his translation

research after having experienced literary approach, linguistic approach, communicative approach, and semiotic approach. The socio-semiotics approach to translation has more advantages than other translation methods because it deals with all types of signs and codes, especially with language regarded as the most complex and comprehensive systems of all signs which people use. No holistic approach to translation can exclude semiotics as a fundamental discipline in the process of translation all kinds of signs.

1.2.2 Criterion of Socio-semiotic Approach to Translation

In light of the semiotic meaning, translation should aim at correspondence in meaning and similarity in function between the source language and the target language. Such a criterion contains two key notions: meaning and function. Now we'll discuss them from the socio-semiotic perspective.

Generally speaking, the idea of meaning of signs is one of the cores of the socio-semiotic approach. The socio-semiotic view of meaning can be suitably applied to translation. Any linguistic sign embodies meaning. For example, “nodding” indicates agreement; “red” signifies “happy, a festival day, revolution” in Chinese. “Meanings originate from relation.”(Li Ming, 2005:67)¹⁰

We know that meaning can derive from two parties or three parties

as are shown by Saussure's two-sided semiotic model (i.e. signified and signifier) and Peirce's tripartite semiotic model (i.e. representamen, object and interpretant) respectively. Morris' semiotic idea about meaning refers to the relationships (i.e. relation between a sign and its referent; relation between sign and sign; relation between sign and its interpreter) generated by the three components of a sign. Meaning, as is defined by Morris, is a three dimensional relation, which involves sign vehicle, referent of a sign and an interpreter. Correspondingly, in linguistic studies, three types of linguistic semiotic meanings have been involved: 1) The referential meaning. This meaning refers to the relation between linguistic sign and the object which it represents or describes both in the subjective and the objective world. Referential meaning involves the micro-structure in linguistic context, such as meaning produced by phonetics, grammar and lexis, which is the basic content of linguistic sign and the proposition message it expresses; 2) Linguistic meaning. It refers to the relationship between one sign and other signs belonging to the same syntactical, lexical and discourse set; 3) Pragmatic meaning. The meaning represents the relation between linguistic signs and their interpreters. It mainly concerns why a certain sentence is used and whether utterance in a given situation is appropriately used. Pragmatic meaning associates verbal signs with the language user in a given social background. It usually refers to the macro-structure in the non-linguistic context, namely,

the meaning generated by society, culture, emotion and register.

When doing translation, the translator should transfer the three kinds of meanings from the source language to the target language. Meanings in these three dimensions are involved in the overall process in a certain social cultural context. In other words, each of the three meanings can't be separated from social context and should be associated with the structure in which the signs lie. And moreover, the three kinds of meanings vary in accordance with the verbal and non- verbal contexts. The purpose of translation is simultaneously to convey the three kinds of meaning, or just two kinds of meaning, or only one kind of meaning .So the translator should transfer the most important meaning at first and try his or her best to transfer the other less important meanings as much as he could.

The classification of these three meanings is quite important in bilingual translation, as a translator is more than often required to offer the formal equivalence as well as the special effects formed by associate meanings caused by some culturally-loaded words and expressions in various languages. As regards the meaning explained from the socio-semiotic perspective, Li Ming (2005:151) states that:

Since the meaning of a text is a complete whole conveyed by all the signs that make up the text, we must take account of all the factors

such as genre, figures of speech, the grammatical constructions on syntactical, lexical and phonological levels, and ever register in translation because all of them contribute to the formation of the meaning.

The reason for his statement is that meaning is nothing but relation (the relation of signs to other signs or factors) and that people can translate one sign with the meaning into another sign with another meaning, and thus translators interpret them in the two interwoven sign systems.

In all, translators should take into account not only word meaning, grammatical meaning but also its social meaning in translation..

The most important in linguistic system is the semantic system, which reflects the functions of language. The functions of language refer to the verbal effects produced in the process of using language. Different languages differ greatly in linguistic form, yet they can show the same or similar function. The classification of the functions of language is various according to different translators and linguists. Halliday has classified the functions of Language into three parts: ideational, interpersonal and textual functions; Christiane Nord (1997:50-51)¹¹ has categorized the functions of language into four types, namely, the referential, expressive, phatic and appellative functions; Peter Newmark has also summarized six

functions of language, suitable for translation: 1) The expressive function, the core of which is the mind of the speaker, the writer, the originator of the utterance; 2) The information function, whose core is external situation, the facts of a topic, reality outside language, including reported ideas or theories; 3) The vocative function, whose core is the readership, the addressee. It refers to the sense of "calling upon" the readership to act, think or feel, and in fact to "react" in the way intended by the text. 4) The aesthetic function, which is designed to please the sense, first through its actual or imagined sound, and secondly through its metaphors; 5) The phatic function, which is used for maintaining friendly contact with the addressee rather than for imparting foreign information; 6) The metalingual function, which "indicates a language's ability to explain, name and criticize its own features" ¹². While the preceding four functions may operate throughout a text, the phatic and the metalingual function are normally involved in one part of the text. So the first four functions are the main functions of language. Furthermore, they can't be separated from each other. A whole text will not always be confined to a single function. Very much like what is required in the transmission of the meanings, a translator should also detect the primary functions in a source text and give priority to the transmission of these functions in order to achieve the same effect in the target language from a macro-perspective.

Translation involves two languages, but interpretations of meaning of verbal signs concerns a whole set of non-verbal signs. From the perspective of semiotics, meanings of signs can't be isolated from the culture background. To some extent, translation is a communicative activity of cross-language and cross-culture. The model of semiotic view of meaning includes both verbal and non-verbal signs that produce meaning, which is so significant for the translation in that a translator should identify the meaning of each sign and translate it in such a way as to achieve equivalent meaning in the target language. The different signs in the target language would then create its own chains of interpretations, which although not the same to those of the source language, should achieve the identical effects as it does in the source language.

According to communication theory, it is the means of signs, verbal or non-verbal, that makes the communication between people possible in the daily life. However, the process of translation is that of double coding and double decoding. So while decoding, the translator should be aware that the source text is a network of various semiotic systems existing in the society and they are interwoven and inseparable. While encoding, the translator should remember that the sign systems of the target text and the meaning, which the sign systems of the source language reflect, have differences and similarities in referential, linguistic and pragmatic meanings and the meaning which reflects the sign systems in the source

language. However, both decoding and encoding can't be set free from the society.

Due to the different social positions, social roles, social experiences, appreciation abilities, people's understanding and judgment of the linguistic function in the source language text and the target language text are quite different from each other. It is very natural for people to have their different evaluation on the same translated text. Anyhow, functional effects should be one of the most important factors in evaluating the target language texts.

All in all, socio-semiotics is the scientific study of signs and symbols, involving the three factors: the sign, its referent and interpreter. Based on the principle of "correspondence in meaning and similarity in function", a translator should fully take into account their relationship between the three elements belonging to both the source language and the target language. With some linguistic or pragmatic adjustment, a translator should seek after the equivalent effect or functional equivalence in different languages and reduce information losses in order to be loyal to the source language in terms of meaning and function.

1.2.3 Characteristics of Socio-semiotic Approach to Translation

Firstly, socio-semiotic approach to translation lays emphasis on the meaning of language. Unlike formal equivalence, which seeks to render

the original text a direct, word-for-word English equivalence, regardless of their apparent linguistic and cultural differences, the translators take into consideration the three meanings (i.e., referential meaning, linguistic meaning and pragmatic meaning), belonging to the linguistic sign systems and adopt techniques such as free or literal translation, transliteration, amplification, etc in translation. Especially, it is important for the translator to pay attention to the kinds of distinction of three meanings and transfer them accurately in accordance with specific requirements in a certain situation.

Secondly, socio-semiotic approach to translation also has a clear distinction of linguistic function. So it can be helpful for achieving a high degree of language-culture correspondence between the source and the target languages. The functional equivalence can be stated primarily in terms of a comparison of the way in which the original receptors understand the text and the way in which receptors of the target text understand the translated text. In the light of socio-semiotics, a translator shall try to transfer meanings at the micro-level and reproduce functions at macro-level with regard to the translation of a text.

Finally, the most outstanding character of socio-semiotic translation approach is that socio-cultural-ideological factors are paid attention to. From the perspective of socio-semiotics, translation, carried out by means of signs, which are verbal or non-verbal, can't be set free from the society.

Such elements as culture, religion, register, context, text type, the author's intention in the society should be taken into consideration as they all carry special meanings in a certain situation.. This method goes beyond the range of pure linguistic research on translation, and provides a comprehensive sign system that describes verbal and nonverbal factors , which other translation approaches have never touched upon.

Generally speaking, the socio-semiotic approach to translation as a holistic method has more advantages than other translation methods because it deals with all kinds of signs, whose distinction of meanings and functions can also render the translator a much more flexible position in the process of translation. In Chapter Four, the author will bring the strength of such an approach into play

1.2.4 The Westerner's Translation of *The Bible*

The Bible, the Christian sacred scripture, is composed of the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. For other religions, such as Judaism, their sacred scriptures are also called *The Bible* (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 1996:110), but here what we are talking about is the Christian *Bible*. *The Bible* in Catholicism is often defined as a book written by holy writers under the revelation of God. When the book was finished, it was the Holy Church that assembled, guarded and explained it to the whole world. More than ten prophets and a few disciples wrote it

from 1300 BC to 100 AD, which was from the time of Moses to the death of the last disciple. All the books in *The Bible* were written in different styles during different times by people of different backgrounds. It contains: (1) *The Old Testament*, a compound of 39 books written primarily in Hebrew, with a few portions in Aramaic. It is the sacred Scripture of Judaism; (2) *The New Testament*, a compound of 27 books which were written in Greek. The *New Testament* mainly contains 4 parts: 4 Gospels which relate the life of Jesus, his actions and teachings; the history of the early Church; the letters from his apostles and the prophetic book of the disciple John — Revelation; (3) “The Apocrypha, 12 books taken over by the early Christian Church from the Greek version of the *Old Testament* but not forming part of the *Hebrew Bible* and not accepted as canonical by orthodox Jews” (Baker, 1998:22)¹³.

In order to spread the Good News all over the world, translations are needed before evangelization begins. Because *The Bible* is a compilation of many books, the translation of *The Bible* here does not necessarily mean translating the whole book. In this thesis, the translation of some chapters (or even verses) of the Book is also considered as the translation of *The Bible*. Nevertheless, not all translations are taken from the original languages. Some translated languages become the source languages for succeeding translations.

Christ says that the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached

throughout the world (*Mathew* 24:14). David says, “The voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the world”. (*Psalms*, 19:4). And after that, David says, “The lord shall tell in the scriptures of the peoples, and of these princes that were in it” (*Psalms* 87:6). Grosseteste says that it is God’s will that diversifies men to translate it, and that diversifies translations done in the church, for where one says darkly, one either more says openly¹⁶. The modern times see many different versions such as *Good News Bible*(1976),*Revised Standard Bible*(1952),*New International Version*(1978)and *New Revised Standard Bible*(1989).The two other major undertakings in English were the *New American Bible*(1970)and the *New English Bible* (1970).

To some extent, when a sacred scripture is translated, the translator must take into consideration both aesthetic and evangelistic criteria. The history of the translation of *The Bible* is a history of the Western culture in microcosm. Because of the importance of *The Bible* for Christian evangelization, it is essential to translate *The Bible* from Hebrew and Greek into Latin, even more than one thousand languages till now. In the process of translation history, it experiences the following several phases: the first phase was around the year 250 B.C when *The Book* was completed; the second phase lasted from the 4th century to the 6th century when many different versions appeared; the third translation phase was between the 11th and the 12th centuries when *The Bible* was

translated into Syrian; the fourth phase referred to the modern period of the translation of *The Bible*, especially during the second period, when many translations were made by missionaries into the languages of the “Third World”, which indicates translation work done for China, India and other third world countries.

A variety of approaches to translation have been used, including formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence, meaning-based and idiomatic translation, etc. A great deal of debate occurs over which the approach most accurately transmits the biblical message from the source language to the target language. However, many versions still have their faithful readers throughout the world. *The King James Version* (or Authorized Version) was originally published in 1611 at the request of King James 1 of England. The translators accurately translated *The Bible* languages from Hebrew and Greek into English. So many people have used the KJV over the centuries, and thus it has become solely the most important book in sharpening the modern English language.

Nida’s translation theory did play a very significant role in the Western translation of *The Bible*. We may even say that it was his dynamic equivalence principle that brought so many new versions to people in the past decades. The translation of *The Bible* in Western countries is the basis for the Chinese translation of *The Bible*. Based on the existing Bible versions and their understanding of translation, the

missionaries, some of whom were scholars, translated *The Bible* into Chinese, thus causing the Gospel to be spread all over the world.

1.2.5 The Chinese Translation of *The Bible*

As the missionaries came to China, a lot of churches in China began with the translation of *The Bible*. The Chinese translation of *The Bible* has a very long history, which can be divided into five phases. It is fully recorded that *The Bible* was partly translated into Chinese in the Tang Dynasty, which is the first phase. During this period, the translators unwisely adopted adaption as their chief translating method. They borrowed a lot of Buddhist terms which not only confused the readers but also made *Christianity* lose its identity. The second phase is in the Yuan Dynasty. At that time, Catholicism was introduced to China. The third phase was in the late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties. The translation of *The Bible* was not impressive. The Jesuits (耶稣会士) brought the Catholicism into China again, adopting accommodation as their missionary method. The translation of *The Bible* is categorized as the follows: (1) the explanation of *the Bible*; (2) history recorded in *The Bible*; (3) some fragments of *The Bible*. At the same time, a Franciscan brother, John Mengwino (蒙高味诺) translated Psalms and the *New Testament* into “the language of Dada” . The fourth phase is in the late Qing Dynasty. The missionaries came to China and they did a lot of translation

work of *The Bible*. The first Chinese translation of the protestant *Bible* is usually credited to Robert Morrison in 1824. The last phase lasted the period of CUV(in 1919). With the growth of the Chinese church and Christian, more and more people thought it necessary to publish a union version. For each linguistic group, used by all the Protestants, they combined three union versions of the Chinese *Bible*, Wen li (文理), Easy Wenli (浅文理) and official Chinese (官话) into the Mandarin Version, which is referred to as CUV.

The Chinese translation of *The Bible* is letter-oriented. All translators have some training in linguistics, biblical research and cultural anthropology. It came from the existing translated texts of *The Bible*. So the translators were influenced by translation theories which were popular at that time. For example, the translation of Morrison is similar to Yan Fu's translation principles, which are said to be "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance" and which Morrison believed to be "faithful, sensible and simple". Just as what is made a survey of the history of Chinese translations of *The Bible*, we conclude the characteristics about the translation of the Chinese Bible:1)diversity of translators; 2) diversity of translation methods, which is shown in the following major principles:

- a) The use of scholarly Greek and Hebrew text ;
- b) Interpretations based on the best scholarly judgment;

- c) Renderings that will be aurally intelligible and acceptable for the intended audience and the presumed uses of the text;
- d) The incorporation of background information into notes, introductions, and word lists rather than leaving out such information or putting it into the text. (Baker, 1998:28)

While CUV, which is simple, fluent and literary, published by the Union Mandarin Committee, abides by the following translation rules:

- 1) the language must be the national language, no use of dialect;
- 2) the translated text must be simple enough for people from all walks of life to understand;
- 3) the translated version must be faithful to the original text and retain the style of the Chinese language;
- 4) metaphors in the source text must be translated directly (Ren Dongsheng, 2003, 2:13)¹⁴.

In all, the translation of *The Bible* has greatly pushed forward China's modern literature movement, and at the same time it has obviously caused more and more attention paid to the translation of many other Western literatures.

Chapter 2

The Differences of Cultures and Word Translation

2.1 Words as Socio-semiotics

As is mentioned in the previous chapter, socio-semiotics studies all the signs used by human societies, especially the complex and comprehensive verbal signs employed by the human being. In E-C translation, words are the minimal unit and the basic factor in the evaluation of the quality of the translated version is the quality of the translation of words. Words are found in the intricate network of socio-cultural systems. The understanding of words must be associated with other related signs within the system and the contexts are the essential determinants controlling the whole three kinds of meanings of words. In order to gain an exact understanding of words in the source language text, a translator should take the context (non-verbal system) into consideration. However, Chinese and English cultures are quite different from each other, which are included in their respective language and expressed through each of their own languages. This accordingly brings the difference of the meanings of words between Chinese and English, which will be illustrated in the following sections.

2.2 The Difference of Conceptual Meanings of Words

To study the culture of a nation, one must study the words and idiomatic expressions of this nation; To know the differences between the languages and cultures and translation, one must make a comparison between them. One of the best ways is to study the levels of word and semantic senses. The conceptual meaning of the levels of word refers to the cognitive meaning or referential meaning, which reflects or summarizes the objective thing all over the world. However, while observing the material world, this kind of cognitive or referential meaning differs greatly between English and Chinese, due to the differences of the material world and their influences on different cultures. So we will find that vacant semantic senses occur both in English and Chinese. In other words, we can't find equivalents about the words while doing translation. For example, in English culture, there are many words or idiomatic expressions which are not quite familiar to some of the Chinese people, such as hot dog, hippy, the seven Sacraments, etc. And at the same time, in Chinese culture, some words still existing are quite strange to the foreigners, such as “下海、秀才，三座大山，龙袍” and so on. Different countries have formed their own cultures, which are reflected in their languages. It is common that words with different referential meanings, because of the difference of the society, religion, tradition and living style, will appear in the words of translation.

2.3 The Difference of Cultural Meanings of Words

The cultural meaning of the level of word refers to a kind of meaning, which adds to the referential meaning, including the connotative meaning, emotional meaning, associative meaning and other pragmatic meanings concerning the elements of the national culture. It is the cultural phenomena that translation must deal with. The translators must take the cultural phenomena as its direct object of research and take intercultural exchange as its aim. The author here will probe into the aspects of the differences of the cultures between English and Chinese and point out that the difference of cultural meanings of words is often the barrier of translation, which can be seen in the following part.

Firstly, the cultural meaning existing in the English words can't be found to have the same meaning in the equivalent Chinese words.

As far as words are concerned, they are typical representatives of national culture, but are restricted by the national culture in which they exist, because they themselves have a faraway origin. Different nations have different words with different cultures.

The Bible, with fairy tales of the Greek and Romans, is the source of the Western culture. For example, The English idiom "not know somebody from Adam", which can be translated into "根本不认识某人/与某人素昧平生", uses the vehicle "Adam" to indicate a very long time ago. We know "Adam" comes from *The Bible*, who is the ancestor of

human beings and just symbolizes a name correspondingly without any cultural meaning in Chinese. But since *The Bible* doesn't belong to the national culture in China, nowadays, the ordinary readers may be confused by the English words in it.

Secondly, the cultural meaning existing in the Chinese words can't be found to have the same meaning in the equivalent English word. For example, when the Chinese people meet each other, one addresses people of high positions or elders by using “老” and “公”, such as “李老”, “张公”. The word “老” can be put before the family names of those who are older than the caller, such as “老黄,老五,老赵”. However, the English people never use such forms of addressing and always try their best to avoid such uses. Instead, they generally use “Mr.” or “Sir” in their daily life.

Thirdly, though people can find some equivalents of the English words in Chinese, the cultural meaning involved in them differs greatly. It is well known that human beings have the same characteristics, that is, their memories revive at the sight of their familiar places or things. And they are used to using their familiar things to explain the implication of some cultural phenomena. Different cultural background and natural ecological environments make people have different associations. And thus the different cultural meanings come into being. Such is the identical color as “red”, it symbolizes “deficit” “violence” in English, while it

indicates “happy, a festival day”, or “revolution” in Chinese. So the pragmatic meaning involved in the cultural meaning determines our translation techniques in our cross-cultural communication. We should take this kind of meaning into consideration before translation.

2.4 Difficulties in the Translation of Words

Translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in the source language by the same message and/or statement in the target language. Each exercise involves some kinds of loss of the meaning, due to a number of factors. In the first place, if the text describes a situation which has element peculiar to the natural environment and culture of its language area, there is inevitable loss of meaning. Secondly, the two languages, both in their basic character (langue) and their social varieties (parole) in the context have different lexical, grammatical and sound systems, and segment many physical objects virtually or intellectual concepts differently. If translated, the target language is equivalent to the source language, but it just provides a different meaning which often causes the translator to make mistakes in the understanding of them. Once misunderstanding appears, mistranslation occurs. Due to the vast differences of meanings between the Chinese and the English words, the barrier in translation emerges. According to *The Bible*, “so out of the ground, the Lord God formed

every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle and the birds of the air and every animal of the field” (*Genesis 2:19-20*). From the words above, we know everything is given a symbol, expressed in different kinds of languages by different people, black, yellow and white. However, the different words in languages carry out different meanings, even the same word expresses different meanings in different cultures. For example, “cast pearls before swine” in English means “明珠暗投, 对牛弹琴” in Chinese. In the case of its origin, the former originates from Chapter VII of *The Bible*, which refers to “holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and kill you” .*The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1976) (COD) explains that “cast pearls before swine” means “offer a good thing to one incapable of appreciating it”. Similarly, “Imperialism is a paper tiger” is an expression ,more suggestive of outward ferocity and inner weakness than the literal statement ,which means “Imperialism appears to be strong but inwardly it is weak” .With metonymy, simile, metaphor, they make up a score or more figures of speech most commonly used today. But it is sometimes difficult to match them in the target language.

As we know, translation begins with language and the translators’

way of thinking is embodied in language. Different languages reflect different cultures and different ways of thinking. Therefore, in translation, it is an important issue to understand and handle the cultural meaning involving the words with different referential meanings respectively both in English and Chinese. So how to deal with the connotation of culture, due to the different languages, becomes undoubtedly another problem of translation. As Wang Zuoliang, a Chinese famous scholar of translation theory and practice, once said, "The difference between two different cultures are the greatest difficulty in translation. What he(the translator) handles are individual words or expression and what he faces are two great cultures"(李延林,2006:32)¹⁵. To be sure, language and culture are interwoven and they are closely linked too. If the translator takes into consideration culture and the conversion of cultural senses, he will undertake the intercultural communication very well. Otherwise, the intercultural communication means nothing if the translator takes no notice of culture and the conversion of cultural senses.

Chapter 3

Feasibility of Translation of Biblical Words from the Perspective of Socio-semiotics

3.1 Cultural Characteristics of Biblical Words as Socio-semiotics

Living under the same heaven, human beings, who occupy specific geographic region, have a little common understanding about cultural phenomena, such as mutual convictions, customs, mode of life and complexity of people's behavior. This signifies that some general characteristics reflected in different cultures exist in the society. However, different cultures actually have their peculiar characteristics or specific features. These peculiarities attached to different cultures and languages are reflected mostly by some words, which are generally called culturally - loaded lexemes.

In this regard, Jin Huikang (2000:265) ¹⁶ thinks that every language has the so-called culturally-loaded terms, which are the symbolic representation of the value system, history, religion, customs, thinking patterns and life styles of that peculiar culture. There are no equivalent words since such things don't exist in another culture. Nida (2001:127—129) has also held that conceptual culturally-loaded lexemes are the reflections of the characteristics of the philosophical, psychological, religious traditions, etc, of a certain language community.

Hu Wenzhong (1999:64) holds that culturally -loaded lexemes are loaded with specific national cultural information and indicate deep national culture.

According to what are listed above, the biblical words have belonged to the domains of culturally-loaded lexemes. Their influence on Western people's lives and their occurrence in the English language are so extensive that the foreigners regard *The Bible* as their principles for their behaviors. It is well known that religion plays a critically important role in the Western social life and culture. It permeates the social moral conduct, life styles, literature, politics, arts, customs, etc. Religions such as Christianity, regarded as the perfect religion, whose central doctrine appears in the *New Testament*: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but may have everlasting life" influence the value of individualism of American people. In fact, Christianity is based on belief in the life and the teachings of Jesus Christ, as the son of God. The people are dominated by the doctrines of Jesus and changed by the *Holy Spirit*. It might be said that religion has become one of the main cultural features of the Western society and that no other things can impenetrate into almost every field in social life like religion. So we can know that biblical words, as the reflection of the characteristics of the ways of life, customs, political events, sports, etc, in the English language community become a heavily

culturally-loaded subject in transferring the source language into the target language, in which people sometimes can't easily find the equivalents. Of course, this feature of biblical words has become a barrier for the translators to cope with .In other words, the translators will have a lot of difficulties in translating and understanding *The Bible*. So it will be discussed in the following section.

3.2 The Vacancy of Word Translation in the Chinese Culture

One of the problems frequently encountered in the translation of *The Bible* arises from lack of equivalence at the word level. To the translator, translation seems like a simple task to find the Chinese word that has the same meaning as the English word. The translators will have some difficulty in finding precisely the right word in Chinese. Part of difficulty lies in the choice of not only an appropriate Chinese word, but also of a word that will not already be filled with connotations which are strange to the original Language. So if the translator can't find the equivalents in the target language, the cultural blank will appear. The biblical words, as the carrier of Western culture, the culture blank expressed at the word level is called the vacancy of word, which brings barriers to the successful translation. The author thinks it is necessary for the translator to know about the reason why the vacancy actually exists in the biblical words in the following section.

3.2.1 The Reason for the Word Vacancy

The biblical words have their own cultural restraints or cultural loads in them. In the long development of human history, the combination of language, literature, religion and politics has produced many special words and expressions which are remembered frequently by people in today's world. There is no doubt that the formation of words wouldn't take place without a certain cultural and historical context. There are different cultures in different countries, which cause the cultural differences between English and Chinese. This kind of difference brings difficulty to the transfer of *The Bible*. So let's discuss the cultural reason behind the vacancy of words in *The Bible* in this section.

1) The Difference of the Experience Between the People of China and Foreigners

Because different nations have their own experiences, they undoubtedly have set up their own linguistic cultural systems. According to the *Old Testament*, Sabbath is a sign between Lord and people through people's generations. But, "Sabbath" can't be found to have the same meaning in Chinese translation. As the Israelites gathered manna as their own food, on the sixth day, they gathered twice as much food. Moses, a servant of the Lord, said to the people of Israel, "This is what the Lord

has commanded: Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Six days you shall gather all; but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none" (*Exodus* Chapter 16:23.26). But it's unfamiliar to the Chinese. At this time, the vacancy of words appears when it is to be translated from the source language into the target language. Therefore, if the translators don't know about the above experience encountered by the Israelites in the wilderness, they are not sure to transfer the meaning accurately. According to the above, the word "Sabbath" can be freely translated into "安息日" in Chinese. There are still a lot of biblical words which can't be found to have their equivalents in Chinese, such as Omer (俄梅珥), shekel (舍客勒) (which are the name of the currency at that time). Take the word Mammon (玛门) for example, it comes from Greek, and refers to riches, avarice, and worldly gains personified as a false God. This is why this greedy false god and the true God personified by the sacrificial modes of Jesus can't be served by a true believer with undivided loyalty at the same time. Another word "Amen" (阿门) refers to the realization of the good wishes of the prayers. So many kinds of biblical words can't be found to have their same or similar meaning words, because the Chinese people can't have the same experiences as the Israelites.

2) The Difference of the Cultural Value Between the People of China

and Foreigners

The Chinese culture emphasizes the harmonious relation between people and people, people and the nature, thus regarding the heaven, the earth and the people as a united system. One of the characteristics of the Chinese traditional culture takes the relation among them into consideration. A lot of unidentified relations existing in the biblical words brings obstacle to the translation from English into Chinese. For instance, “Jesus of Nazareth”, including a lot of relations expressed in Chinese, means “来自拿撒勒的耶稣”, “故乡是拿撒勒的耶稣”, “在拿撒勒长大的耶稣”, or “拿撒勒市民耶稣”. How to choose its meaning depends on the background in the context. If the translator translates it into one of them above, he can’t reflect the connotative meaning successfully, only causing the invalidity of the pragmatic meaning.

On the other hand, in the Westerner’s eyes, the natural universe is the cognitive object for the human beings. Understanding the universe and subduing the nature are the basic task in the world, which put the universe in opposition to the people. This kind of value obviously leads to a “profitable” idea in people’s thought. The biblical words with special value of people are difficult for the translators to deal with in the cultural communication. For example, the expression “end of the world” in the English *Bible* differs greatly from “大难临头, 世界末日” (devastating days of the world) in Chinese. In *The Bible*, on the contrary, it can be

used to refer to “righteous day”, when everybody is rewarded according to their actions.

3) The Difference of the National Psychology Between the Foreigners and the People of China

The various national culture inevitably leads to different psychology of the people. Though it is impossible for people to recognize them in our daily life, it still influences the language, feeling and behavior of the people. It is the difference of national psychology that brings the barrier both to the translation and cultural communication. Let's look at the following: (NRSV: *Revelation* Chapter 20; 23) He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years ended. After that he must be let out for a little while (CUV: 他捉住那龙, 就是古蛇, 又叫魔鬼, 也叫撒旦, 把它捆绑一千年, 扔在无底坑里, 将无底坑关闭, 用印封上, 使它不得再迷惑列国。等到那一千年完了, 以后必须暂时释放它)。

The word “dragon” in *The Bible* means “撒旦” in Chinese, which refers to the accusing of the righteousness, or the enemy / opponents of people, voluntarily making something worse, who did aggression toward others and taught others to do bad things. While on the contrary,

dragon (translated into“龙”) symbolizes the precious, good ,happy objects in Chinese. So when translating dragon into “龙” in Chinese, the translators can't express the implicative meaning of it in *The Bible*.

4) The Difference of the Religion Between the Foreigners and the People of China.

In the Westerners' eyes, they believe in *Christianity*. According to the *Old Testament*, God is the almighty creator, the only true God, the King of Kings, so a lot of biblical words come from the person or affairs of the old times. For example, “Immanuel” (translated into 以马内利) means that God is with us, which took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord throughout the prophet, Isaiah before 700 years when Jesus was born, “the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, who is the Lord, expected by the people of Israel”. Millennium(meaning“千禧年”)which means that God will send angels to bind the Devil and Satan for a thousand years, and throw him into the pit, and lock and seal it over him, so that he would deceive nations no more (*Revelation*, 20:1-3). High place(meaning 邱坛)refers to the altar in the hills and mountains where people who lead the worship of false God in Canaanite built the temple and established the alter of burnt offerings, which is hostile to God. It is used to give the burnt offerings to the false god. The lamb of God(translated into “神的羔羊”), which means Jesus, without any sins, is

considered as the lamb without defect or blemish in the Passover for the people in the world. His body bleeding, he lost his life on the cross for the sinners in the world. However, China is a country with the worshiping of many gods. The Chinese people believes in “old heaven father” dominating the nature and worships the ancestors such as “sacrificing of country, family (国祭; 家祭)”. But in the Westerner’s eyes, God, only creator, is the combination of Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit, who differs greatly from that of the Chinese. Meanwhile, a lot of words relevant to the religion, such as “普度众生”(deliver the population). “平时不烧香, 临时抱佛脚”(don’t do anything as usual but depend on the Buddhist in the face of something troublesome) and “天子”(the son of the heaven) exist abundantly in the Chinese society.

3.2.2 The Translation of Word Vacancy

Translation is an art, communication consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and /or statement in one language by the same message and / or statement in another language.

The Bible is viewed as a sacred book. So we shouldn’t be surprised if we find the translation focuses on the accuracy of the content instead of the art of fluency. And we shouldn’t complain that the translation is not high in quality as literature, or history. The addressee of the *Old Testament* is the Chosen People—Israel people, most of whom are

illiterate. At that time, it is the leaders, such as, Moses, a political leader; Joshua, a military leader; Samuel, a prophet; David and Solomon, Kings; Daniel, prime minister, etc, who wrote down the words inspired by God and gathered the people in a synagogue and read the message to people. To the translators, pious Christians and missionaries, *The Bible* is more a sacred book than a literary one. It is a piece of good news to everyone, light in the darkness. The intention of the written *Bible* is clearly expressed like this: and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. So that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work (*II Timothy* 3:15-17) . So at first the translators can't isolate the written intention of *The Bible* from understanding of the meaning of the whole text. Especially, the biblical words with so many original meanings become really difficult in translation. Nida (1986)¹⁷ once said , "Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning, secondly in terms of style". Later on, Nida further explained the essence of translation, functional equivalence .So in translating the biblical words with many significations under one letter, it is an error if they are not translated into the sense. Therefore a translator has great need to study the sentence(meaning) well, both before and after, and make clear whether the words agree with the sentence or not.

And the translator needs to live a clean life, and be full devout in prayers, and has not his wit occupied about the worldly things,...that the Holy Spirit ,the author of wisdom and cunning, and truth, might dress him in the translator's work¹⁸ . Like the *Old Testament*, the *New Testament* is not only for Israel, but also for the "Gentiles". Several places in the *New Testament* are verses which contain the sentence "Let anyone with ears listen". And in *Romans* 10:17—18, it reads: So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. But I ask, have them not heard? Indeed they have, for "their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." Like translation of the *Old Testament* ,only the translators are familiar with the original meaning and try to understand its historical background, can they translate *The Bible accurately*.

Correspondingly, the technique adopted in the translation of biblical words varies according to the historical contexts in which the biblical words appear. Simply duplicating the existing translation of *The Bible* wouldn't work in the translation of biblical words. The Translators need to adopt different techniques to translate the biblical words. In short, the translation of biblical words is more dynamic and energetic than the translation of the general literary works. It is for this reason that we would like to know more about the translation of biblical words .And this leads us to the discussion in the fourth chapter.

Chapter 4

Techniques of Word Translation of *The Bible* from the Perspective of Socio-Semiotics

As is listed above, the biblical words, like other words, in the discourse contain the referential meaning, linguistic meaning and pragmatic meaning. In translation, it is necessary for the translators to decode the verbal signs very cautiously in *The Bible*, try their utmost to understand the meaning of the biblical source text, then record them by means of literal translation, free translation, and transliteration or by other means in order to realize the effect of “correspondence in meaning, similarity in function” for *The Bible*.

4.1 Word Translation of Referential Meaning in *The Bible*

According to Li Ming (2005:176), there are mainly three types of semantic correspondence between the linguistic units of two different languages. The first one is correspondence and the other two are partial correspondence, and non-correspondence or semantic zero. Correspondence means a word in the source language (SL) can find one correspondent in meaning in the target language (TL); partial correspondence means a word in the SL may find a partial correspondence in meaning in the TL; non-correspondence means a word in the SL which doesn't have

correspondence at all in the TL. While translating the biblical words, the translator must pay attention to the characteristics and usages of those words according to different people and their thoughts. So in most cases, partial correspondence and non-correspondence at the referential meaning level rise very often in the semantic correspondence between the linguistic units of two different languages. One reason for this problem in translation is the cultural difference that lies behind the two language systems. Frankly speaking, biblical words can find their pervasive influence both on the English and the Chinese cultures. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, most of the biblical words can't find their corresponding referential meaning in the Chinese language. There are many biblical words whose referents don't exist in the Chinese language, so simply translating them into Chinese without making any change would make no sense at all. Or we can say the referential meaning of these biblical words would be totally lost if they were to be translated into Chinese. So in this part, we'll discuss the methods to solve non-equivalence of the referential meaning.

4.1.1 Transliteration

Actually, Transliteration is not a translating method in that it doesn't give the meaning of the original word. It only means that a letter or a word in one language is substituted for the correspondent letter or word in

the target language, which has the similar pronunciation which the original one has. Words translated in this way, though giving no meaning, are an advantage over other methods.

Generally speaking, language is a semiotic system. On the one hand, the signs of the source text are only meaningful in its own semiotic system, and they lose their original meaning if copied mechanically in disregard of specific condition. On the other hand, the semiotic system of language is not closed, it can accept the loan words under certain conditions. Therefore, the translators can adopt transliteration when translating some proper biblical names. What we'll discuss is as follows:

1)Names of Places and Persons

The translators faithfully carried out the transliteration method in translating names of places and persons. This solution is easily seen in the translation of biblical words. There are numbers of successful examples:

Name of Person:

NAAMAN(乃縵) DAVID(大卫)

MARK(马可) MAKTHA(马大)

MATTHEW(马太)

Name of Place:

TARSUS(大数) HAM(含)

ARAM(亚兰) ASSYRIA(亚述)

PARAN(巴兰)

2) Measures of Capacity and Weight

On the one hand, measures of capacity and weight in the biblical times are obviously not certain. On the other hand, the transliteration is foreign and reverent. So the transliteration can be applied widely in this special cultural background. Of course, this rendering is in line with the translation principle-Formal Correspondence .Examples are as follows:

Capacity	汉译容量单位	Weight	汉译重量单位
SEAH	细亚	Shekel	舍客勒
Bath	罢特	Beka	比加
HIN	欣	Talent	他连得
EPHAh	伊法	Daric	达利克

3) Unique Words

Some words in *The Bible* are peculiar. They can't be found anywhere except in *The Bible*. In the Chinese culture, they don't have any equivalence. So we have nothing to do but translate them phonetically. For example, "Manna" is translated into "吗哪" in the CUV ,which is a kind of food to be provided for the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years and expresses the love of God .

4) Universally Accepted Words

Influenced by the pious missionaries and the foreign translators, people in China have touched *The Bible* and come to be keen on the

Christianity for more than 1300 years. The Chinese widely accept the influential words and even make them their daily expressions. These words are translated so phonetically that people are very familiar with them. For instance ,Hallelujah, (哈利路亚), which stands for praising the Lord (赞美主); “Emmanuel (以马内利)”, which signifies that God is with us. “Satan (撒旦)”, which is used to describe the proud angel, who turns against God. These words are very popular with both the believers and nonbelievers.

5) A few Common Words “

The following transliterations are common words:

These words “低土马” (Jn 20:20) , “拉比” (Mt 26:49) , “魔利” (Mt 5:22) and “拉加” (Mt 5:22) , “大利大吉米”(Mark:5:41-42) come from their Hebrew pronunciation. But they all mean common things. “Raca” (拉加) means “empty one”; “Moros” (魔利) means “dull or stupid”; “Didymus ”(低土马) means “a twin”; “Rabbi” (拉比) refers to “a teacher”. And “Talithacumi ”(大利大吉米) refers to “get up”. So in biblical translation, when transliteration is used, like “Elizabeth” (put into “以利沙白”), “Euodio” (put into “友阿爹”), it seems that it does not take adequate account of the sex of the names. And if you look at its meaning, which refers to fragrant or fine traveling, you will find that the cultural meaning of the original text is lost when doing translation. However, transliteration methods are both necessary and important for

the readers to study the illustrated version about *The Bible*, where every kind of biblical words is given the true implication of them. We can know more about it.

4.1.2 Creative Translation Approach

When transliteration achieves no effect and sometimes even makes the translations awkward beyond understanding, we may resort to the creative translation so that the target language can be understood and appreciated by the readers through the source language. Creative translation approach can be defined as attaching new meanings to the existing Chinese words, which are similar meanings to that of the foreign words or their meanings. The existing Chinese words originally have some meanings which are more understandable, acceptable, meaningful than those from transliteration. Once the words are translated according to the method, it meets less resistance, because of the commonly known idioms spread among all the readers.

For example: In *ICo* 9:5, it reads:

NRSV: Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as is done by the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

CUV: 难道我们没有权柄娶信主的姊妹为妻, 带着一同往来, 仿佛其余的使徒和主的弟兄, 并矶法一样吗?

At first sight, the readers who don't understand the meaning of “姊妹” here would be greatly surprised: it is not lawful in China at present for the people to marry several sisters. And then they would regard that the early Christians were offensive in their behaviors. Actually, “sisters” and “brothers” in the NT means “Woman and man who believe in God, the Son and the Holy Spirit”.

Another case in point is “man” and its translation “人”. For example, in Psalms 144:3, it reads:

NRSV: O Lord, what are human beings that you regard them, or mortals that you think of them?

CUV: 耶和华啊，人算什么，你竟认识他

世人算什么，你竟顾念他？

At the first sight, it is contradictory to the principle of love from God. It's little difficult for the readers to understand its meaning. Actually, in many other places in *The Bible*, “man” means “Adam”, who was created to be the first person in the world. It originated from “Adama” in Hebrew, Which means “dust of the ground”, from which it is written like this: then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground. [*Genesis:2:7*]. After Adam was tempted and committed sins, God said to Adam, “For out of it you're taken, you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (*Genesis:3:19*). So “Adam”, as a general name for man, means the people who are “soil-belonged, lowly, criminal and degenerated. In the *Old*

Testament, Adam is regarded as their ancestor of the humankind by the Western people, who bring the “original sin” to the humanity. During the NT, the following verses will show how the words transfer from their ordinary meanings to their special meanings.

Romans 5:12-14 shows us like this:

⊙ NRSV: Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned- sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

CUV. 这就如罪是从一人入了世界，死又是从罪来的；于是死就临到众人，因为众人都犯了罪。没有律法之先，罪已经在世上，但没有律法，罪也不算罪。然而从亚当到摩西，死就作了王，连那些不与亚当犯有一样罪过的，也在他的权下。亚当乃是那以后要来之人的预像。

And in *I Corinthians 15:22*, we can also find its special meaning like this:

NRSV: For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ

CUV: 在亚当里众人都死了，照样，在基督里众人也都要复活。

So in *ISAIAH 31:3*, it reads:

NRSV: The Egyptians are human, and not God:

CUV: 埃及人不过是人，并不是神。

The word “人” in this sentence also refers to Adam originally. There are some other examples which are as follows: “天国” (heaven), “福音” (gospel), “信心” (faith), “罪” (sin), “奉献” (sacrifice), “悔改” (repent), “先知” (prophet), “外邦人” (Gentile, nonbeliever), and so on. And all these words become gradually part of people in the Chinese language as more and more people begin to read and understand *The Bible* nowadays. But such biblical words signified quite different things in ancient times. So if you have no proper biblical knowledge of training, you will find some difficulty in grasping the words.

4.1.3 Transplanting

By transplanting, we mean transplanting the source language words completely into the target language by literal rendering. When equivalents can't be found in the target language, this is a way to introduce the culturally - loaded words, which is intelligible in the target language. For example, in *Leviticus 3:1*, it reads:

NRSV: In the offering is a sacrifice of well-being if you offer an animal of the herd, whether male or female, you shall offer one without blemish before the Lord

CUV: 人献供物为平安祭，若是从牛群中献，无论是公的，是母的，必用没有残疾的献在耶和华面前。

Readers, who don't know the meaning of “平安祭” here, would be astonished: What the early Christians were doing. Because the Chinese are only familiar with one of the superstitions—killing the animals before the idols. In fact, in *The Bible*, the “peace offering” means the good relationship between the Lord and the people, who can be satisfied with the God's love because of people's uncertainty or discomfort. Similarly “Passover Feast” (*Leviticus*, 23:5) is put directly into “逾越节”, which means that the Lord made a distinction between Egypt and Israel by killing the first born of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, the firstborn of the female slave and all the firstborn of the livestock in Egypt. The Lord said to his servant that the whole congregation of Israel were to slaughter a lamb without blemish and then took some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they ate it. The blood was used as a sign that when passing over the Israelites, the Lord saved them completely. So “逾越节” comes into being from that time on, which implies the deep cultural meaning in the source language. Like “膏抹”(to anoint), “指”(finger), “牛膝草”(hyssop), “没药”(myrrh), “乳香”(frankincense), “至圣所”(the holy of holies), words transplanted in Chinese are more intelligible and acceptable to the Chinese readers, thus both enriching the vocabulary of the Chinese and expanding the cultural view of the people.

4.1.4 Adaptation

At the lexical level, it usually means that using the established words in the TL to replace the SL words though they are culturally-loaded. In order to avoid “Confucianizing”, the translator used a lot of existing terms instead of establishing new Chinese terms, especially the philosophical ones. This made the text less lofty and elegant to the educated readers, but more popular with the ordinary readers. Thus it is useful for the evangelical mission as a religion. There still exist expressions of the measures of capacity, weight and length which is translated adaptedly. The words such as “斤” Litra (Jn 12:7;19:39), “斗” Kmodiu (Mt 5 : 15), “丈” fathom (Ac 27:28) “升” kab (2ki 6:25) are very common and habitual for the Chinese readers.

4.2 Word Translation of Linguistic Meaning in *The Bible*:

Regarding the importance of transferring the linguistic meaning in translation, Tan Zaixi (2000:48-49) points out in *The Science of Translation* that:

Socio-semiotics studies the referential meaning of language and emphasizes all kinds of associative meanings and pragmatic meanings; it also lays stress on the dialectic unity of language content and form, and he declares that not only the language

content is a key component of meaning, but also other features shown in grammatical structure and figures of speech of language are also important elements of meaning.

The linguistic meaning is based on the relation of signs to each other within the same sign system. Generally speaking, all the signs related to language are meaningful under the socio-semiotics, verbal or non-verbal expression. This kind of meaning mainly lies in the tactfully set structures at phonetic, lexical and syntactical levels. For instance, puns and repetition at the lexical level can produce linguistic meaning. However, English and Chinese differ from each other greatly. According to the sign system, English is a hypotactic language while Chinese is a paratactic language, so when doing translation, the translators should attach the great importance to the main functions of them. Especially a translator should pay attention to the linguistic meaning of these biblical words. And we should try to use every possible means to fully transfer the aesthetic and expressive functions embedded in the aspects like sound, form and style or in the aspects like humor, wit and satire. The following part is devoted to the discussion of this issue.

4.2.1 Repetition

Lexical repetition is used for various purposes, the chief of which

are emphasis, the heightening of mood, tension or atmosphere, coherence, and aesthetic effect and affective function of the language. For example: In *Matthew 10:35*, it reads:

For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

CUV: 因为我来是叫人与父亲生疏，女儿与母亲生疏，媳妇与婆婆生疏。

The original version repeats “against” three times, which emphasizes the idea of God. In the translated text, the translator used three parallel structures to express the idea, which conveys the aesthetic function and informative function of the source text.

Here is another interesting example from *I Chronicles 7:20 – 21*:

NRSV:

The sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son, Zabad his son, Sthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead. Now the people of Gath, who were born in the land, killed them, because they came down to raid their cattle.

CUV:以法莲的儿子是书提拉；书提拉的儿子是比列；比列的儿子是他哈；他哈的儿子是以拉大；以拉大的儿子是他哈；他哈的儿子是撒拔；撒拔的儿子是书提拉。以法莲又生以谢、以列；这二人因为下去夺取迦特人的牲畜，被本地的迦特人杀了。

The original version repeats “his son” six times, which emphasizes

the relation among them in a clear and simple way. In the translated text, the translator uses the seven parallel structures to convey the aesthetic function and informative function of the source text.

4.2.2 Pun

Pun refers to the use of a humorous word to suggest different meanings or applications, which have the same or nearly the same sound but different meanings. Basically, the linguistic meaning in the ST is hard to be reproduced in the TT as English and Chinese have different lexical and phonetic systems. So in cases where pun has been used, it is very difficult for a translator to successfully reserve the linguistic meaning brought about by playing on words. Let's look at the following example:

The book was so dull that it had him into the land of Nod in half an hour .

译：这本书枯燥无味，不到半小时，他就进入了睡乡。

“The land of Nod ”, as is described in *The Bible*, is a place lying to the east of Eden .Here these biblical words are also used as a play on words, because the word “nod” also bears the meaning of “sleep” in English. Therefore these biblical words themselves are homophonic puns. The application of the biblical words can help to achieve humorous and jocular effects in the sentence. Obviously, we can't literally translate it into “挪得之乡”, which doesn't make any sense to the target readers. It is

impossible to transfer the linguistic meaning in the homophonic puns, but we can just retain the most important function and meaning in the TT. In this case, the “land of nod” is liberally translated into “睡乡”, which exactly shows the jocular flavor of the ST. Linguistic meaning in the source language is unavoidably lost in the case. In all, if the expressive and informative functions demonstrated by the ST have been totally transferred to the TT, we can say the translator successfully translates the linguistic meaning.

4.3 Word Translation of Pragmatic Meanings in *The Bible*

The pragmatic meaning from the perspective of socio – semiotics refers to the relation between a sign and its interpreter. As the interpreter is closely associated with a certain language in a certain culture, the pragmatic meaning which plays a very important part in social communication, naturally and tightly bound to a certain culture, that is to say, the pragmatic meaning is, to a language degree, a heavily culturally-loaded meaning. In translation, most of the linguistic meanings and the referential meanings are very difficult to be kept due to different language systems and cultural backgrounds, so the pragmatic meaning is used to retain the relevant original cultural meaning. Only by taking such techniques can we make the TT more understandable and readable, or it is impossible to fully understand the meanings. The pragmatic meaning

of the biblical words is closely related to the situation of the communication. For example, Jesus' crying to God when he was on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing", which is a kind of expressive function, whose core is the mind of the speaker, the writer, and the originator of the utterance. He used the utterance to express his feelings irrespective of any response. Therefore, in translating the biblical words, more than often we are inclined to transfer the pragmatic meaning first, and we consider the referential and linguistic meanings. Let's discuss it in the following part.

4.3.1 Transfer of General Implied Meaning

Since the knowledge and beliefs that constitute people's culture are habitually encoded and transmitted in the language of the people .It's extremely difficult to separate the two languages , permeating people's thinking ways of viewing the world, which are integral parts of human beings and both express and embody cultural reality.

Different nations and religions express the same pragmatic meanings by different referents. Different things may be associated with the same pragmatic meaning. For example:

The noble silent men scattered here and there, each in his department; silently thinking, silently working; whom no Morning

Newspaper makes mention of! They are the salt of the Earth .

— Thomas Carlyle

(cit. Tian Yusan & Hu Junqian 1998:348)

译文：到处都不乏沉默寡言的高尚人物，各人在其工作岗位上默默的思索，默默的工作，晨报从来不提他们，而他们确是社会的中坚、民族的脊梁。

Problems in translating the biblical words would turn out to be much easier if the translator knows the real meaning of the salt of the earth. In fact, if you are familiar with the NT, you'll easily find the true cultural pragmatic meanings behind the literal expression. In *Matthew 5:13, 14* , it reads like this:

NRSV:

You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.

CUV:你们是世上的盐，你们是世上的光。

As we can see in the TT, the translation has transferred the pragmatic meaning of the original words and given up the reproduction of the referential meaning of the biblical words. As the original image is not familiar to the Chinese readers, it is not necessary to represent the image that would perplex the Chinese readers.

Another case is available for us to make clear the translation to them.

In *John 21:15-17*, it reads like this:

NRSV: When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs". A second time, he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, lord, you know that I love you," Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep," He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "lord, you know everything, you know that love you". Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

CUV: 他们吃完了早饭，耶稣对西门彼得说：“约翰的儿子西门（“约翰”在马太 16 章 17 节称“约拿”），你爱我比这些更深吗？”彼得说：“主啊，是的，你知道我爱你。”耶稣对他说：“你喂养我的小羊。”耶稣第二次又对他说：“约翰的儿子西门，你知道我爱你吗？”彼得说：“主啊，是的，你知道我爱你。”耶稣说：“你牧羊我的羊。”第三次对他说：“约翰的儿子西门，你爱我吗？”彼得因为耶稣第三次对他说“我爱你吗？”，就忧愁，对耶稣说：“主啊，你是无所不知的，你知道我爱人。”耶稣说：“你喂养我的羊”。

In the conversation, “Do you love me?” is repeated for three times. Here, the translator has used the way of repetition to express the emotional love of Jesus. In Jesus, everything can be achieved. Before being crucified in the cross, Jesus had known the weakness of the people, with no exception of his lovely disciples, including Peter. In fact, when Jesus was before the council, Peter denies Jesus for three times. It is clearly shown in Mark 14:66-71, it reads:

NRSV: While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. But he began to curse, and he swore a Peter, “I do not know this man you are talking about.”

CUV: 彼得在下边院子里。来了大祭司的一个使女，见彼得烤火，就看着他，说：“你素来也是同拿撒勒人耶稣一伙的。”彼得却不承认，说：“我不知道，也不明白你说的是什么。”于是出来，到了前院，鸡就叫了。那使女看见他，又对旁边站着的人说：“这也是他们一党的。”彼得又不承认。过了不多的时候，旁边站着的人又对彼得说：“”你真是他们一党的！因为你是加利利人。”彼得就以咒起誓地说：“我不认得你们说的这个人。”

From what is listed above, we can easily find the true and gracious love of God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (他名称为奇妙，策士，全能的神，永在的父，和平的君) (*ISAIAH 9:6*); because he is the greatest healer all over the world when anybody is hurt or wounded, which is testified with a line in the *Proverbs 3:8*:

NRSV: It will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment for your body CUV:(这便医好你的肚脐，滋润你的百骨)。

In view of Jesus's foretelling, Peter went out and wept bitterly after his denial of Jesus for three times. When Jesus was before the High Priest, because of the repetition once used by Jesus, "Do you love me?" and "Yes, Lord, you love me" emphasized the healing of Jesus later to Peter after Peter committed sin to God. But it's God's authority that can deliver the people from the sins. From the repeated same simple words, we can find the implied pragmatic meaning differs greatly from beginning to end. Here, Jesus further helps or wants to heal his lovely disciple in the future, Peter by his repetition of the same words. Thus, before the cock crows, Jesus went out and wept bitterly (*Matthew 26:75*), which obviously illustrates that Peter was sorry for his words and wanted to be given the forgiveness from God, thus leading to Peter's proclaiming the gospel all

over the Western countries and establishing the tents for God on the earth.

4.3.2 Transfer of Religious Meaning

However, the CUV does employ some Chinese culturally- loaded words to translate the biblical words according to their pragmatic meanings. Buddhism had already been established in China, when the CUV was translated, and some religious terms of Buddhism had already become well known. If we take a look at different religions in China ,we can sense that Taoism and Buddhism have become parts of the Chinese culture. Buddhist translation greatly influenced the translation of *The Bible*. *The Bible* translators borrowed many words from the Chinese culture and some words were marked by Buddhist scripture. Taoism is a local religion in China, and many seemingly religious terms from Taoism are actually part of our daily life. The following is an example to show how adaptation of translation is to transfer the pragmatic meaning of the words in the SL.

In the Gospel, according to John, the very first words are “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God ,and the Word was God”.

The translation in the Union Version is “太初有道，道与神同在，道就是神”。

The word “Tao” is borrowed from Taoism, meaning logos. Because “Tao” has become part of Chinese culture, when those of Buddhism

translate *The Bible*, it is very natural for us to borrow this word. Christianity has also some quite similar religious concepts to those of Buddhism. In the secular people's eye, though they are basically different, the translators used adoption to shorten the distance of understanding. In order to make the TT more understandable to Chinese readers, the translator has adopted the adaptation to tell exactly what "the word" means. Having done so, we find that the pragmatic meaning and informative function have been retained and the Chinese readers will have no difficulty in understanding the sentence. There is another example illustrating the same translation. In *Matthew 23:33*, it reads:

NRSV: You snakes, you blood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell?

CUV: 你们这些蛇类毒蛇之种啊! 怎能逃脱地狱的刑罚呢?

Here, in the SL "Hell" is translated into "地狱" in Chinese, which is very familiar to the Chinese people. And it has the same culture as the Buddhist culture. So we can easily translate its pragmatic meaning.

Some others like "交鬼": consult with Spirits of the Dead (Leviticus 20:1.1); "诫命": commandment (Deuteronomy 4:40); "魔鬼": Devil (John 3:8); "神": God (Romans 1:17)

According to Nida's functional equivalence, the maximal level on

the basis of both cognitive and experiential factors refers to the statements as the readers of a translated text should be able to understand and appreciate it in essentially the same manner as the original readers did. It becomes a high degree of language-culture correspondence between the source and the target languages and an unusually effective translation to develop receptors' capacity for a response very close to what the original readers experienced. This maximal level of equivalence is rare, if ever, achieved, except for texts of little or no aesthetic value, involving only routine information.

The kind of translation represents the cultural and historical features of the original, without any attempt to modernize the text. However, the listed above are the given their modern equivalents, since the information in those terms is of greater importance to the reader than the biblical form of those terms. The translators have tried to avoid words and forms, which are not in current or widespread use, so that the younger readers and the non-English speakers find fewer difficulties in reading *The Bible*. The beginning of this translation gave us the obscure meanings of these words, which are adaptedly treated now. Actually, people can't find equivalents in the TT, so the translator has transferred the pragmatic meaning of biblical words, which is understandable to the Chinese.

4.3.3 Transfer of Affective Meanings

Encountering a lot of biblical words with one's strong emotion or clear attitude towards something, the translator shall detect the strong emotion hidden in them and give priority to the transfer of the expressive function in the process of transferring the affective meaning. Let's take a look at the following:

beat the air: 徒劳无功

cast pearls before swine: 明珠暗投

an eye for an eye and a tooth: 以其人之道还治其人之身

ye blind guides, which strain out the gnat and swallow the camel:
捡了芝麻, 丢西瓜

If they are literally translated, the translator hasn't conveyed their exact and exact cultural meanings. The translators use free translation to realize the pragmatic meanings of the biblical words so that they are accessible among the Chinese people.

The last case in the pragmatic meaning means translation is about telling the time, CUV also used Chinese traditional time system to be equivalent to that of *The Bible*. Let's have a look at *MT 20:3*:

RV: And he went out about the third hour

CUV: 约在巳初出去

Again e.g In Mt 20:5-6, it reads:

RV: Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise

CUV: 午正和申初又出去，也是这样行。

Here, “午正”, “申初” and “己初” belong to the Chinese traditional terms, leaving the reader a good impression, which are more accessible to the general readers and help them understand *The Bible* greatly. In translating these biblical words, the referential meaning of the time has been lost for the Chinese readers to understand the TT. These biblical words work as the same expression as the Chinese traditional customs. At the same time, by taking the technique of adaptation, the translator has well shown the affective meaning of the ST. If “午正”, “申初” and “己初” weren't translated, the affective and informative meanings wouldn't be represented and the Chinese readers may face great difficulty in figuring out what “sixth, ninth, eleventh, and third hour” are in this sentence. It is really a good translation as the pragmatic meaning of the original image and expressive and aesthetic functions have all been reserved.

As far as the biblical words are concerned, the pragmatic meaning would be, generally speaking, transferred prior to other two meanings, as most biblical words are rich in indirect culturally-loaded information. Furthermore, the transfer of function, which is to a great extent

determined by the text type, would also cause some necessary changes in the transfer of the most important meanings.

According to socio-semiotics, any sign system that is related to translation should be taken into consideration when we translate something relevant. From the above discussion, we know that we should not only make an analysis of the language itself but also consider the figures of speech, the text types or the paralinguistic factors, which belong to the non-verbal signs.

It is known to us that the biblical words have wide and far – reaching influence and contributions to the Chinese language and China’s Christians. We can find the biblical words often appear in the Chinese people’s daily activities, such as “天使(angel)”, “救赎主(redeemer)”, “福音(Gospel)”, “伊甸园(Eden)”, “方舟(ark)”, “撒旦(Satan)”, “阿门(Amen)”, “洗礼(baptism)”, “忏悔(repent)” and “十字架(cross)”. Therefore, if we study translation of the biblical words from the socio-semiotic perspective, we can have a good command of *The Bible*.

In conclusion, every linguistic sign has its referential meaning, linguistic meaning and pragmatic meaning. These three meanings cannot be separated from each other as each of them is one side of a linguistic sign. However, all the three meanings may account for different proportions. For example, in the science and technical text, the referential meaning may become the only important meaning; in newspaper and

publicizing brochures, apart from the referential meaning, the pragmatic meaning may sometimes take up a great proportion; while in the literary language, the pragmatic meaning or linguistic meaning would count the most. Obviously, the translators should try their best to make sure that the most important meaning in a certain context would be transferred in the first place.

Conclusion

Inspired by the socio-semiotic theory, the author of this thesis tends to make a study of the E-C translation of biblical words. Due to the differences in language, culture, and living surroundings, some English Biblical words can't be put into Chinese. And the non-equivalence is mainly found in the process of translation for the target language since it is short of equivalent expressions. First the thesis offers an overview of the socio-semiotics and the translation of *The Bible*. Then it has further discussed the differences of the translation of words between English and Chinese in view of the conceptual and cultural meanings. According to different backgrounds, the thesis has mainly discussed the immense culturally-loaded Biblical words. In order to tackle the cultural differences, the socio-semiotics approach has been introduced and expounded through an analysis of the transfer of the referential, linguistic and pragmatic meanings as well as functions of language. Having done so, the author comes to the following findings:

Firstly the socio-semiotic translation method is an effective way in dealing with the culturally – loaded biblical words. Based on the criterion of correspondence in meaning and similarity in function, the translator can first find the balance between meanings and functions and then transfer the primary meanings and functions of the biblical words. With

non-correspondence at the levels of referential meaning, linguistic meaning and pragmatic meaning, the translators shall first transfer the pragmatic meaning which helps to fill the gap between the English and Chinese cultures. In addition, by taking the linguistic meaning into account, the translator can further achieve the effect produced by figures of speech in the original biblical words.

Secondly, socio-semiotic theory sheds new light on the nature of translation and helps deal with the problems existing in translating process in a more effective way. Translation is not a study confined to linguistic area; it also involves many other disciplines like the communication theory. As has been shown in the translation of these biblical words, many other sign systems like the figure of speech, religion should be taken into consideration. So the characteristics of socio-semiotics can help the translator obtain much wider and deeper insight, which is not accessible to the other translation methods.

Thirdly, the biblical word is an important unit of the part that composes *The Bible*. With its vitality and pervasiveness, it can be seen in various areas in the Chinese people's social life. The translators should equip themselves with language competence and cultural social knowledge of both the source language and the target language so that the translation criteria-correspondence in meaning and similarity in function can be achieved in the translation of *The Bible*.

Notes

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攻读硕士学位期间主要的研究成果目录

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