

Part 1

Intercultural Communication in Translation 翻译中的跨文化交际因素



This cartoon depicts the anecdote of an American dignitary's conversation with his Chinese hostess before a reception in the 1970s. After the greetings, the foreign dignitary pays compliment to the Chinese hostess to express his politeness by saying "You look wonderful!" According to the American custom, he expects an acceptance of the compliment with "Thanks!/Thank you!" The compliment is accurately translated as "您很好看!" However, the topics and the responses of compliments in the Chinese custom are different from that of the Americans. For example, a man usually would not compliment a woman's look or appearance and if there will be any compliment, the reply would usually downgrade the compliment in order to show the Chinese modesty and humbleness. Therefore, when the Chinese response "哪里, 哪里." is translated as "Where, where", the American dignitary is bewildered. The further response from him "from head to toe!" ("从头到脚!") should also be a surprise to the Chinese hostess. Suppose the interpreter is well aware of the cultural differences between the Chinese and the Americans, his translation of "哪里, 哪里?" into "Thanks/Thank you!" could be appropriate in the American way but may not accurately express the hostess' humbleness and modesty.

1.1 The Interconnectedness Between Translation and Intercultural Communication

Translation¹ studies is traditionally an interdisciplinary field involving literary and linguistic research. Susan Bassnett (1998) in her essay “The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies” stresses the connection between translation studies and cultural studies. While Lefevere (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998) argues that translated texts serve as empirical data documenting intercultural transfer, Bassnett also argues similarly that translation is the performative aspect of intercultural communication. Both views obviously emphasize the interconnectedness between translation studies and intercultural communication studies.

At the turn of the 21st century, the world witnessed dynamic socio-economic and political changes involving an interaction between the rise of nationalism and the globalization process featuring the increasing interconnectedness of the world-system in commerce, politics and communication. The meeting of cultural studies and translation studies came at exactly the right time. In short, cultural studies has moved towards increased internationalization in this process, and has discovered the comparative dimension necessary for what has been referred to as “intercultural analysis”.

In this globalization process, translation studies has also been moving away from an anthropological notion of culture and towards a notion of cultures in an intercultural context. It can be seen that translation studies has moved on from endless debates about “equivalence” to discussions of the factors involved in text production across linguistic boundaries. The processes that these interdisciplinary fields have been passing through over the past two or three decades have been remarkably similar and have led in the same direction, towards a greater awareness of the international context and the need to balance local with global discourses. (Bassnett, 1998) The need to introduce the basics of intercultural communication studies to students of translation and interpretation is therefore beyond further discussion.

There have also been significant changes in the relationship between translation studies and linguistics as the latter has also undergone its own cultural turn. As an area that has an intricate relationship with applied linguistics, translation studies can benefit a great deal from the research taking place within the broad field of linguistics. For instance, the emphasis of linguistic studies on the social context of language use and the attention of sociolinguistic studies of language as a means of communication reflect a broader cultural approach in translation studies. In view

¹ Although there is a need in certain contexts to make a distinction between the terms *translation* and *interpretation*, *translation* is used as a cover term in this course to refer to both *translation* and *interpretation* unless it is specified.

of these recent changes, which reveal the common interests of linguistic, cultural and translation studies, it has become a necessity for students of translation to be equipped with some knowledge of the issues in intercultural communication.

As a broad field of study, intercultural communication may refer to a variety of issues to people with different academic perspectives. However, this course attempts to provide students of translation studies with basic knowledge of intercultural communication focusing on the issues of language in connection with intercultural communication. This course therefore looks firstly at the macro issues between language, communication, culture, and society, then moves on to micro issues of intercultural discourse, intercultural pragmatics and intercultural rhetoric. In the workshop section of each Part of this coursebook, students are required to discuss the relationship between language, culture, society and communication with a focus on the major issues related to translation studies from an intercultural perspective. They are encouraged to apply theories into practice, to equip themselves with theoretical as well as practical knowledge in identifying and solving problems of language and translation from intercultural communication perspectives with special reference to the Chinese socio-cultural context.

Questions for Discussion

1. Translation studies is defined as an interdisciplinary field of research. What are the major academic areas that translation studies should be involved in?
2. According to Susan Bassnett, translation is the performative aspect of intercultural communication. What is your interpretation of “the performative aspect” and what are your views on the relationship between translation practice and intercultural communication?

1.2 Approaches to Intercultural Communication Studies

1.2.1 The Scope of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication existed when people from different cultures started to interact with one another. What is new, however, is the systematic study of what happens in intercultural contacts and interactions when the communication process involves culturally diverse people.

The motivation to study intercultural communication was perhaps due to the

increased contact among people from different cultures, as a result of the economic globalization and the emergence of multicultural organizations which require the workforces to develop communication skills and abilities appropriate to a multicultural society and to life in a global village.

Although intercultural contact is inevitable in the world today, we can find that it is not always successful. The communicative behaviours of different cultures frequently disturb us. The behaviours of people from other cultures may seem strange and perhaps odd to us. We may discover that such behaviours frequently fail to meet our normal expectations, and that intercultural communication is really difficult. Even when the natural barrier of a foreign language is dissolved, we may still fail to understand and to be understood. This also suggests the importance of the intercultural awareness and intercultural communication competence of the interpreters/translators who often play the decisive roles in the communication between people of different cultural backgrounds.

Increased contact with other cultures in the contemporary world makes it imperative for us to understand and get along with people who may be vastly different from us. The increased awareness and understanding of other cultures and people who may not share our views, beliefs, values, customs, habits and lifestyles will eventually enhance our ability to coexist peacefully with people of other cultural backgrounds and to help resolve international conflicts. (Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 2000)

The contact and communication with people from different cultures is an important way to learn more about other people and their way of life, including their values, history, habits, and even the substance of their personality. As humans we all have the same basic desires and needs, we just have different ways of achieving them. As we learn this, we can develop a tolerance for difference. This can be accomplished only when we initiate relationships with people who are different from ourselves. Therefore, the goal of intercultural communication studies has usually been set on trying to promote and facilitate communication across cultures. It is also quite clear that knowledge of intercultural communication can help to solve communication problems before they arise.

The study of intercultural communication has raised many questions from different perspectives. Most of the inquiry has been associated with fields of communication, anthropology, international relations, social psychology, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. Therefore, intercultural communication can be seen as an integration of different academic interests and it is important for us to realize that people of different academic backgrounds can be holding various viewpoints and exploring intercultural communication issues in a variety of ways. For instance, those who look at intercultural communication from the mass media

point of view are concerned with such issues as international broadcasting, freedom of expression and transmission of information, etc. Others may be interested in intercultural communication from the perspective of international communication with emphasis on the communication of diplomacy and propaganda, and the communication between nations and between governments. There are also others who could be interested in the area of business communication which could include diverse concerns such as negotiations in international business and communication with multicultural organizations.

It is also evident that the concern with the difficulties which cultural diversity poses for effective communication and the desirability to enhance intercultural communication, has given rise to the marriage of language, culture and communication and to the recognition of intercultural communication as a field of study embracing different academic interests and perspectives. Inherent in this fusion is the idea that intercultural communication entails the investigation of those elements of language and culture that exert the greatest influence on the communication between people from different cultures. Our focus in this course is therefore on the aspects of language, culture and communication which also form the basis of translation practice. (Neuliep, 2006: 1-37)

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the distinction between intercultural communication and intercultural communication studies?
2. Intercultural communication studies can be defined as the systematic study of what happens in intercultural contacts and interactions when the communication process involves culturally diverse people. What does the term “systematic study” mean?
3. Why do the intercultural communication studies entail the investigation of those elements of language and culture that exert the greatest influence on the communication between people from different cultures?
4. Why do people from different cultures still fail to understand and to be understood even when the natural barrier of a foreign language is dissolved? What roles can translation/interpretation play in enhancing intercultural understanding in this process?

1.2.2 The Rationale for Intercultural Communication Studies

Intercultural communication is a complex combination of the cultural, microcultural, environmental, perceptual, and socio-relational contexts between

people who are encoding and decoding verbal and nonverbal messages. Due to such complicated processes, there are different beliefs or reasons for the systematic study of intercultural communication. It is intended in this section to give an explanation of some of these basic reasons with reference to Neuliep's (2006: 32-37) explanation in terms of the basic assumptions about intercultural communication.

First of all, it is assumed that the message sent is usually not the message received in intercultural communication. It is believed that when people from different cultures interact with each other, the message they exchange will bring with them a whole host of thoughts, values, emotions, and behaviours that were cultivated by their respective cultures. Intercultural communication can be seen as a process of activities, i.e. the encoding of thoughts and ideas of one person into a verbal and/or nonverbal message format, which is transmitted through certain channels, either speaking, writing or signaling, to another person who will then decode it, interpret it, and respond to it. It can also be observed that the encoding, decoding, and interpreting activities in this process will have to go through the cultural filter which is possessed in the mind of every participant in communication. In other words, all intercultural exchanges, to a greater or lesser extent, will be affected by the cultural filter which is heavily influenced by ethnocentrism. This could also explain why a message sent is not necessarily the message received in intercultural communication. (Cf. Gudykunst, 1997)

Ethnocentrism in this context refers to the idea that one's own culture is the center of everything, and all other groups (or cultures) are scaled and rated with reference to it. Ethnocentrism is thought to be a universal phenomenon which nourishes a group's pride and vanity while looking on outsiders, or out-groups, with contempt, particularly among monolinguals. Although intercultural experience may help mediate the extent to which we experience ethnocentrism, one of its effects is that it often clouds our perception of others. We have a tendency to judge others, and their communication, based on the standards set by our own culture. Although it may serve various valuable functions, for example, as a sense of ingroup security, group loyalty or as a form of patriotism, it can be problematic to a lesser extent that ethnocentrism may affect people's understanding of other cultures. To a greater extent, it can be an obstacle to effective intercultural communication. Therefore, it is essential to look at how culture, which often appears in the form of ethnocentrism, affects the process of encoding, decoding and interpreting messages in intercultural communication. (Cf. Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997)

It is commonly believed that the competency in a foreign language is essential to effective and successful intercultural communication in the target language culture. There is no doubt that proficiency in a foreign language will facilitate the intercultural communication. However, successful intercultural communication also involves handling various other factors such as the clash of communication

styles. One example is that the use and interpretation of silence varies dramatically across cultures, i.e. knowing when not to speak is more important as a fundamental prerequisite for linguistic and cultural competence in some cultures than in others. In the United States, talk is a highly valued commodity. People are routinely evaluated by their speeches. However, in other collectivistic cultures, such as in Japan, the ROK and China, silence can carry more meaning than words, especially in the maintenance of intimate relationships.

Another example is that most Americans value and employ a very direct and personal style of verbal communication. Personal pronouns are an essential ingredient to the composition of any utterance. The motto of the Americans is “Get to the point”, “Don’t beat about the bush”, “Tell it like it is”, “Speak your mind”, etc. However, many other cultures in the world may prefer an indirect and impersonal communication style. For example, in the Chinese culture, it is often believed that there is no need to articulate every message in certain social context. As the Chinese sayings go, “One should use the eyes and ears, not the mouth”, and “Disaster emanates from careless talk”. Traditionally, Chinese consider the wisest and most trustworthy person as the one who talks the least and the one who listens, watches, and restricts his or her verbal communication. Indirectness is also considered a habitual communication style in the Chinese cultural context. (See also Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988) This may often form a contrast in the intercultural context between the Chinese and the Westerners, particularly Americans. Therefore, the study of communication styles or discourse patterns across cultures is an important area that can help provide a better understanding of the intercultural communication process.

To understand intercultural communication, it is also important to be aware that it is a group phenomenon yet experienced by individuals. However, there is a tendency in intercultural communication that people do not see the individual person, they see the groups to which the person belongs. For instance, when we interact with a person from a different culture, we may carry with us assumptions and impressions of that person based on our understanding of the culture to which the person belongs. We may subconsciously watch our own verbal and nonverbal messages based on those assumptions and impressions. Very often, such assumptions and impressions of the other person are based on the characteristics of the groups with which he or she associates. Such memberships could be his or her culture, race, sex, age, and occupation group. In other words, we have a tendency to see others not as individuals with unique thoughts, ideas, and goals, but rather as an “American”, or a “black person”, or a “woman”, or an “old person”, or “a taxi driver”. With such assumptions and impressions, the risk of miscommunication could be highly possible. We should therefore be aware that the assumptions and impressions based on group data may not be a reliable source for our construction of messages. The background factors

of race, ethnicity, sex, or age of a person does not necessarily mean that he or she will take on the thoughts, behaviours, and attitudes associated with such social groups. Therefore, we should first view the person from a different culture as an individual in an intercultural context. This will help avoid miscommunication during our interaction.

It is also true that when we interact with someone from a different culture, we may feel uncertain, apprehensive, and anxious. We can also find that the communication strategies that we are familiar with may not be effective in the intercultural context. Our communication with people from other cultures can be stressful. It is also important that we should be aware that one cannot be provided with a “cook-book” or a “tool kit” containing a set of formulas or handy tools just right for the jobs in intercultural communication. As a result, we often have to learn to adapt and adjust our communication styles in different contexts. Since there are no fixed set of rules for intercultural communication, we may have to make mistakes, be ready to learn from them, adapt to the environment and acquire effective strategies. Therefore, the most important thing is to cultivate an intercultural awareness. In other words, we must learn to be able to recognize and treat people from different cultures as simply different persons but not better or worse people, and learn to adjust and adapt our verbal and nonverbal messages accordingly in the intercultural context. To this end, the studies of various aspects of the intercultural communication process will help increase our intercultural competence.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why are all intercultural exchanges, to a greater or lesser extent, affected by ethnocentrism?
2. What are the major reasons for the studies of intercultural communication?
3. Why should the cultivation of an intercultural awareness become one of the important goals of intercultural communication studies?
4. In intercultural communication, the encoding, decoding, and interpreting of any verbal and non-verbal message have to go through the cultural filter which is possessed in the mind of every participant. In a context in which intercultural communication is bridged by an interpreter, should the interpreter play a filtering role in the communication process? And why?

1.2.3 Intercultural, Intracultural and Cross-cultural Communication

Many terms are used to refer to related aspects of communication. In the literature of intercultural communication studies, the terms *intercultural*, *intracultural*

and *cross-cultural* are used to refer to different aspects of the studies. In this section, Gudykunst & Kim's (2007: 17-19) explanation is adapted to help us gain an understanding of the three key terms. If intercultural communication refers to communication between people from different cultures, then intracultural communication refers to communication between people from the same culture. Although the term *cross-cultural* is often used as a synonym for *intercultural*, it traditionally implies a comparison of some phenomena across cultures. For example, if we examine communication between two Chinese or between two Americans, we are looking at intracultural communication. If we observe communication between a Chinese and an American, in contrast, we are looking at intercultural communication. If we compare the speech act of apology in the Chinese culture and in the American culture, for example, we are making a cross-cultural comparison. If we look at how an American or a Chinese is making an apology when communicating with each other, in contrast, we are looking at intercultural communication.

However, it should be noted that we see the underlying communication processes in intracultural and intercultural communication as being essentially the same. The two forms of communication are not different in kind, only in degree. In other words, the variables influencing intracultural and intercultural communication are basically the same, only certain variables may have more influence on one communicative situation than on another. For example, our ethnocentric attitudes influence our intercultural communication more than our intracultural communication. The purpose of differentiating between intracultural and intercultural communication is to facilitate their references in discussion, not to suggest they are different types of communication.

Another term that deserves our further attention is *subculture*, which refers to a subset of a culture, with members sharing some values, norms, and/or symbols that are somewhat different from those of other members of the larger culture. In other words, a subculture involves a set of ideas that arise from the larger culture but differ in some respects. Races and ethnic groups are the most important subcultures discussed in this course. Although people tend to use the labels of *race* and *ethnic group* interchangeably, it is incorrect to mix them up. Both race and ethnic group are socially constructed categories. The term *race* normally refers to a group of people who are biologically similar. However, an ethnic group refers to a group of people with common cultural heritage which is usually based on a common national origin or language. For example, in the social context of the US, the term *Asian American* is used to refer to people of different Asian cultural backgrounds, or different ethnic groups, i.e. ethnic Chinese, ethnic Japanese, etc. However, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans or people from other Asian countries may be considered to belong to the same race.

To discuss the process of communication between people from different

subcultures, some specific terms may be used for designating different types of communication, but we should be aware that they are often far from satisfactory. For instance, we may stipulate that interracial communication refers to communication between people from different races and interethnic communication refers to communication between people from different ethnic groups. It is not that simple, however. As one culture may include several races and/or ethnic groups, and one race or ethnic group may exist in different cultures, this leads to problems in labeling some forms of communication. For example, in the American cultural context, if we look at communication between a white person from the United States and a black person from Ghana, are we observing interracial communication or intercultural communication? The answer, obviously, is both. Another example, what if an American-born-Chinese from the United States is communicating with a Chinese from the mainland of China? Such communication is both intraethnic and intercultural. We should be aware that such situations may often lead to conceptual confusion when we try to apply these terms.

Although *intercultural communication* is the most general cover term used to refer to different “types” of communication across cultures, it is still not adequate because there appears to be some confusion about when it can be used to refer to the specific types of communication. Since the underlying processes in different “types” of communication are essentially the same, Gudykunst & Kim (2007) therefore proposed an approach to intercultural communication with the conceptualization of *communicating with strangers*, which is used to refer to the underlying process shared in common by intracultural, intercultural, intraracial, interracial, intraethnic, and interethnic communication. However, this does not necessarily reject the use of the term *intercultural communication* to refer to the communication between people of different cultural groups. We should therefore be careful when using the term *intercultural communication* in this course.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the main distinctions between the terms *intercultural*, *intracultural* and *cross-cultural communication*?
2. Can we say that if an American-born-Chinese communicates with a Chinese from the mainland of China, they are engaging in intercultural communication? If we say yes, why? If we say no, why not?

1.2.4 The Contextual Model and the Sociolinguistic Approach

Although there are different academic pursuits on intercultural communication

studies, two major perspectives, the contextual model and the sociolinguistic approaches, are given more attention. From the contextual perspective, the concern is—with the more personal aspects of communication—what happens when people from different cultures interact face to face. In other words, the contextual approach is an attempt to examine the interpersonal dimensions of intercultural communication in a variety of social-cultural contexts. The focus is on the variables of culture and communication that are intermingled during the communication encounter when participants from different cultures are trying to share ideas, information and feelings. However, the sociolinguistic approaches emphasize the tracing of the sources of intercultural miscommunication to the distinctive nature of the value systems, pervasive configurations of social relations, and dominant ideologies of cultural groups. It has been considered that such dimensions of the social context shape communicative conventions, thereby giving them culturally specific characters. The following is a further explanation of these two approaches.

The Contextual Model

Intercultural communication occurs whenever a minimum of two persons from different cultures or microcultures come together and exchange verbal and nonverbal symbols. Neuliep (2006: 25-28) proposed a contextual model towards the study of intercultural communication. According to the model, intercultural communication occurs within a variety of contexts, including *cultural*, *microcultural*, *environmental*, *perceptual*, and *socio-relational* contexts. A context is a complex combination of a variety of factors, including the setting, situation, circumstances, background, and overall framework within which communication occurs.

The *cultural context* refers to all the aspects of the dominant culture, including the physical geography, within which all communicative exchanges between people take place.

The *microcultural context* refers to separate groups of people of a larger culture, also called microcultures. These groups of people co-exist with other cultural groups in a larger cultural milieu with some differences in ethnicity, race, or language. Microcultures are often treated differently by the members of the larger culture.

The *environmental context* refers to the physical geographical location where communication actually takes place. Although the overall rules for communication are prescribed by culture, the application of the rules is often governed by the specific physical location. For example, yelling can be prohibited or encouraged in the United States depending on the physical location. In a church, yelling is generally prohibited, whereas at a football game yelling is the preferred method of communicating. In the Chinese cultural context, speaking loudly is allowed at public places like restaurants, shopping areas, or on public passenger vehicles, etc., while in most Western countries, people tend to speak in a lower voice in such environments.

The physical environments, such as the physical geography, architecture, landscape design, and even the climate of a particular culture, therefore play an important role in how people communicate in different cultures.

The *socio-relational context* refers to the perceptual contexts of the individuals participating in the interaction, which include their cognitions, attitudes, dispositions, and motivations. Although the way an individual gathers, stores, and retrieves information is part of his or her individual characteristics, it is also influenced by the culture he or she belongs to. Therefore, how an individual perceives the environment and how he or she develops attitudes, including stereotypes about others, changes somewhat from culture to culture.

From the explanation of the key concepts above, intercultural communication can be seen as the interdependence of these various contexts. In other words, the combination of these contexts forms a complex formula to create the phenomenon of intercultural communication. In such a formula, the perceptual contexts combine to create the socio-relational context, which is defined by the verbal and nonverbal messages sent by the interactants. Furthermore, the socio-relational context is influenced by the environmental context and also defined by the microcultural and cultural contexts.

The Sociolinguistic Approach

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the issues concerned are those involving *intercultural* interactions between people of different cultures. However, the sociolinguistic approaches to the study of intercultural communication are prone to *cross-cultural* comparisons tracing the sources of intercultural miscommunication. Their concerns often regard questions of how the distinctive nature of the value systems, pervasive configurations of social relations, and dominant ideologies of different cultural groups shape their communicative conventions, which form specific cultural characters.

One typical aspect of the sociolinguistic approach is the studies of speech acts, which constitutes a subset of cross-cultural communication studies. The major concern is to examine and compare the selected speech act as a basis for addressing the questions about the sources and consequences of intercultural miscommunication. For example, a source of intercultural miscommunication highlighted by the findings of cross-cultural studies is sociolinguistic transfer, which refers to the use of the speaking rules of one's own speech community or cultural group when interacting with members of another community or group. This can occur in interactions in which one or more of the interlocutors are using a foreign or second language but employing the speaking rules of his or her native language. It can even occur in interactions between individuals who have the same native language but belong to speech communities that have different speaking rules, as would be the case, for

example, with British and American English speakers.

To illustrate how sociolinguistic transfer can be a source of intercultural miscommunication, Wolfson's (1989: 23) studies of compliment giving and responding behaviour reveal that differences in the distribution of compliments in different communities are potential sources of intercultural miscommunication; that is, there is frequently interactional trouble when members of one cultural group compliment in situations in which compliments are inappropriate for members of other groups. She cites the time when former American President James Carter, during an official visit to France, complimented a French official on the fine job he was doing. Editorial comment in the French press the next day revealed that Carter's remarks had been interpreted as interference in the internal politics of France. The frequency of complimenting can also be a potential source of miscommunication, for instance, Wolfson points out that the high frequency of compliments given by Americans leads to their being perceived by members of other cultures as "effusive, insincere, and possibly motivated by ulterior considerations".

In another study, for example, Wolfson (1992: 205) also points out that what members of some particular cultural groups thank or apologize for, or compliment on, usually reflects values because, in performing these speech acts, people are often implicitly assessing the behaviour, possessions, accomplishments, character, or appearance of others. She also traces the high frequency of complimenting found amongst status-equal friends, coworkers, and acquaintances in urban middle-class American society to the configuration of social relations in that society. She explains that they compliment frequently because they "live in a complex and open society in which individuals are not members of a single network in which their own place is well defined, but rather belong to a number of networks, both overlapping and non-overlapping, in which they must continually negotiate their roles and relationships with one another."

Herbert (1985, 1989, 1990) traces differences in the patterns of compliment responses given by white middle-class Americans and white middle-class South Africans to different configurations of social relations and pervasive ideologies in these two societies. He argues that Americans compliment frequently in order to negotiate social relations and frequently reject compliments to avoid the implication that they are superior to their interlocutors. He sees this pattern as consistent with the structure of a society in which social relations are open to negotiation and consistent with the ideology of an egalitarian democracy that most Americans publicly support. He argues that, by contrast, South Africans give few compliments but accept most of the ones they receive in order to keep subordinates at distance, by allowing the compliments to imply that they are superior to their interlocutors. He sees this pattern as consistent with a society in which social relations, and especially social relations of power, are, to a large extent, predetermined and also consistent with the ideology of

“institutionalized social inequality publicly enunciated in South Africa” (1989: 43).

In the context of Chinese culture, to blatantly accept a compliment, however, is considered impolite as politeness in Chinese culture embodies the values of modesty and humbleness. When receiving a compliment, for example, the Chinese would employ the ritual of politeness of rejecting the compliment automatically or be apologetic by saying *nali nali* (哪里, 哪里, literally translated into “where, where” meaning “not really”). Since different cultures have different norms for compliment responses, the Chinese ways of coping with compliments, when applied to interactions with people from the American cultural background, would have the potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings to occur. In a discussion of cultural differences in compliment responses, for example, Wierzbicka (1991) uses the case of a “Perplexed” man’s letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, together with the editorial response as an illustration:

Dear Abby,

My wife has a habit of down-grading sincere compliments. If I say, ‘Gee, Hon, you look nice in that dress,’ her reply is likely to be, ‘Do you really think so? It’s just a rag my sister gave me.’ Or if I tell her she did a great job cleaning up the house, her response might be, ‘Well, I guess you haven’t seen the kids’ room.’ I find it hard to understand why she can’t accept a compliment without putting herself down. And it hurts me a little. How do you explain it, Abby?

Perplexed

The editor’s response:

Dear Perplexed,

Your wife lacks self-confidence and feels somewhat embarrassed to accept praise. Don’t be hurt. Most people have difficulty accepting compliments with grace.

Abby

In analyzing this case, Wierzbicka points out that a crucial point, which is missing from Abby’s response, however, is that responses to compliments differ from culture to culture, and that within a complex society such as the United States they depend not only on people’s character traits, such as “lack of confidence”, but also on their cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, it is quite possible that the “Perplexed” man’s wife did not lack self-confidence or self-esteem, she was simply from the Chinese or Asian cultural backgrounds which normally reject or downgrade compliments.

Cross-cultural comparison like the above studies has become an interested

area in cross-cultural communication studies. Sociolinguists, however, have been slow to address the question of how insights from their studies of cross-cultural communication can be used to improve the practice of intercultural communication. Hornberger (1993) attributes this slowness to the tendency of sociolinguists to take a stance as outsiders and in their recognition of the integrity and equality of all cultures, to be reluctant to “meddle” with the cultures they study. She argues, nevertheless, that “given our increasingly interdependent and intercultural world, and the rapidly accumulating evidence of the damage caused by poor intercultural communication” (1993: 304), those who know more about the diversity of cross-cultural communication will eventually contribute to its improvement. This kind of attitude clearly shows its contrast with intercultural communication studies, which are mainly concerned with the features of two cultural systems as they are used in particular intercultural encounters. (See also Chick, 1996/2001: 329-334)

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the major aspects of the contextual approach towards intercultural communication studies?
2. What are the major concerns of the sociolinguistic approach towards intercultural communication studies?
3. What are the differences between the major concerns and focus of the contextual and the sociolinguistic approaches in the studies of communication across cultures?
4. Why have sociolinguists been slow in addressing the questions regarding the immediate application of their studies in improving the practice of intercultural communication?

1.3 The Themes of This Introductory Course

From the above explanation and discussion, it can be seen that intercultural communication refers to the communication phenomena in which participants, different in cultural backgrounds, come into direct or indirect contact with one another. And, there are different approaches to the studies of intercultural communication. It is obvious that the contextual approach to intercultural communication presupposes cultural similarities and differences among the communicators and puts its focus on *contact and communication*, i.e. the communication process between individuals and groups. In comparison, the predominant research purposes of the sociolinguistic or cross-cultural approach aim at describing cultures and/or identifying cultural

similarities and differences.

A brief review of the studies in this area can reveal that the majority of the cross-cultural research activities have focused on communication patterns in specific cultures and on cross-cultural comparisons of communication-related phenomena, following the research tradition of anthropology, sociolinguistics and cross-cultural psychology. In the studies of intercultural communication, one cannot separate the studies of intracultural and cross-cultural understanding of communication from intercultural communication. These aspects combine to form an integrated system that tackles the issues of intercultural communication from different perspectives. To gain an understanding of any intercultural communication transaction, it is basic to know the values, attitudes, beliefs, norms of the target cultures which are programmed in the intracultural process. In this sense, the knowledge from cross-cultural comparative studies undoubtedly contributes to understanding the intercultural communication more fully and realistically.

The above explanation may have revealed the significance for students of this course to have a balanced understanding of the cross-cultural characterization of communication patterns as well as the themes of intercultural communication. As an introduction to intercultural communication, the purpose of this course therefore is to combine the intercultural and cross-cultural approaches so as to provide students with a broader range of issues in intercultural communication studies in general. The themes introduced in this course therefore include the following, namely, *language and communication*, *language and culture*, *language and society*, and *intercultural discourse*, each of which will be elaborated in a separate section in the course-book. In each of these sections, abundant materials will be provided for discussion or practice. Students are normally required to study the materials outside the classroom so that they can focus on an in-depth discussion of the related issues with their partners in class.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the major purposes of this course?
2. Why is it important to provide a balanced view from both the perspectives of intercultural and cross-cultural studies in this course?
3. Why is it necessary for students to be equipped with knowledge of *language and communication*, *language and culture*, *language and society*, and *intercultural discourse*?

1.4 Workshop

1.4.1 Translation and Studies in Communication & Culture

Task 1. Translation: A Communicative Device

Task Description: In the following excerpt, the author points out that “Some researchers postulate an autonomous status for translation studies, arguing that these studies bring together work in a wide variety of fields, including literary study, anthropology, psychology, and linguistics. Others claim that the domain of translation studies is an important sub-branch of applied linguistics”. Discuss the nature of translation and translation studies and support your own arguments with academic views from other sources as well as your personal experience and understanding.

...

Translation is undoubtedly a communicative device; moreover, as John Rupert Firth (1956: 135) put it, “The fact is, translation is a necessity on economic and on general human grounds.” Some researchers postulate an autonomous status for translation studies, arguing that these studies bring together work in a wide variety of fields, including literary study, anthropology, psychology, and linguistics. Others claim that the domain of translation studies is an important sub-branch of applied linguistics. Proponents of both opinions would have to admit, however, that the field of translation studies has multidisciplinary dimensions and aspects.

The term “translation” normally refers to written materials but is also an umbrella term used for all tasks where elements of a text of one language (the source language, SL) are molded into a text of another language (the target language, TL) whether the medium is written, spoken, or signed. There are specific professional contexts where a distinction is made between people who work with the spoken or signed language (interpreters), and those who work with the written language (translators). Although usually the two roles are seen as quite distinct, there are hybrid situations that blur this distinction. When, for instance, a court interpreter reads a legal document in one language while reciting it aloud in another she/he is said to be sight-translating. On the other hand, prosecuting authorities and law enforcement agencies often call on translators to transcribe and translate foreign language conversations that were taped during investigations.

...

[Excerpt from: Gutknecht C. 2001. Translation. In Aronof M. & Rees-Miller, J. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. 692-693.]

Task 2. The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies

Task Description: In her essay “The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies” Susan Bassnett makes the connection between translation studies and cultural studies. Discuss the relatedness between intercultural communication studies and translation studies with a focus on the view on translation as the performative aspect of intercultural communication and intercultural transfer.

...

So cultural studies in its new internationalist phase turned to sociology, ethnography and history. And likewise, translation studies turned to ethnography and history and sociology to deepen the methods of analyzing what happens to texts in the process of what we might call “intercultural transfer”, or translation. The moment for the meeting of cultural studies and translation studies came at exactly the right time for both. For the great debate of the 1990s is the relationship between globalisation, on the one hand, between the increasing interconnectedness of the world-system in commercial, political and communication terms and the rise of nationalisms on the other. Globalisation is a process, certainly; but there is also mass resistance to globalization. As Stuart Hall points out, identity is about defining oneself against what one is not:

To be English is to know yourself in relation to the French, and the hot-blooded Mediterraneans, and the passionate traumatized Russian soul. You go round the entire globe: when you know what everybody else is, then you are what they are not. (Hall, 1991)

In short, cultural studies has moved from its very English beginnings towards increased internationalisation, and has discovered the comparative dimension necessary for what we might call “intercultural analysis”. Translation studies has moved away from an anthropological notion of culture (albeit a very fuzzy version) and towards a notion of cultures in the plural. In terms of methodology, cultural studies has abandoned its evangelical phase as an oppositional force to traditional literary studies and is looking more closely at questions of hegemonic relations in text production. Similarly, translation studies has moved on from endless debates about “equivalence” to discussion of the factors involved in text production across linguistic boundaries. The processes that both these interdisciplinary fields have been passing through over the past two or three decades have been remarkably similar, and have led in the same direction, towards a greater awareness of the international context and the need to balance local with global discourses. Methodologically, both have used semiotics to explore the problematics of encoding and decoding.

The often uneasy relationship between literary studies and sociology that has

characterised debates in cultural studies also has its parallel in translation studies in the uneasy relationship between literary studies and linguistics. But here again, there have been significant changes. Linguistics has also undergone its own cultural turn, and a great deal of work currently taking place within the broad field of linguistics is of immense value to translation: research in lexicography, in corpus linguistics and frame analysis demonstrate the importance of context and reflects a broader cultural approach than the old-style contrastive linguistics of the past.

...

[Excerpt from: Bassnett, S. 1998. The translation turn in cultural studies. In Bassnett, S. & Lefevere, A. (Eds.), *Constructing Cultures-Essays on Literary Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. 132-133.]

1.4.2 The Problems of Translation and Equivalence

Task Description: The following tasks aim at providing illustrations of the problems in achieving equivalence in translation. Study the cases and discuss the questions given for each task.

People tend to assume that a text in one language can be accurately translated into another as long as the translator uses a good bilingual dictionary. Unfortunately, language translation is difficult and subject to countless misinterpretations. All languages are culturally bound, and direct translations in many cases are difficult if not impossible because (1) a word often has more than one meaning, (2) many words are culturally loaded and have no direct equivalents, (3) cultural orientations can render a direct translation nonsensical, and (4) a culture may not have the background and understanding to translate experiences specific to other cultures. Even when messages provide adequate interpretations of the original text, there is usually no full equivalence through translation. What may appear to be synonymous messages may not be equivalent.

The examples in the following will illustrate the difficulties of foreign language translation and the serious consequences of inappropriate translation of words with multiple meanings. From these examples, you will see that the translators must not only build bridges between languages but also between the differences of two cultures. Previous studies of language and culture have revealed that each language is a way of seeing and reflecting the delicate nuances of cultural perceptions, and it is the translator who not only reconstructs the equivalencies of words across linguistic boundaries but also reflects and transplants the emotional vibrations of another culture. These difficulties reflected by the following examples can be referred to

as the difficulties of linguistic equivalence, including vocabulary, grammatical-syntactical, experiential-cultural equivalence. You can find your own examples and further discuss the difficulties in various other aspects of the matter.

1.4.2.1 Vocabulary or Lexical Equivalence

Task Description: Study and analyze the following illustration of the problems in translating lexical items between Chinese and English. Discuss the following questions.

1. Do words translated from one language into another, for example, from English into Chinese, have equivalence in meaning? For instance, are the English word *propaganda* and the Chinese word 宣传 (*xuanchuan*) equivalent in meaning?
2. In China, there is a strong tendency among Chinese speakers of English to consider that there is a one-to-one relationship between *propaganda* and 宣传 and to use the two words interchangeably in translation. A typical example is the translation of 宣传部 (*xuanchuanbu*). For example, 中共中央宣传部 was formally translated as “The Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China”. With reference to the comparison of the following dictionary entries, discuss the unpleasant consequence that may be incurred in intercultural communication context as a result of mistranslation. Also discuss the recent changes in the translation version of 中共中央宣传部, “The Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China”, from the perspective of the change of social attitudes towards other cultures in China.
3. If there is no one-to-one relationship between such pairs of words as *propaganda* and 宣传 in Chinese and English, what problem would the users of bilingual Chinese-English or English-Chinese dictionaries face when provided with a translation like 宣传 for *propaganda* and vice versa?

One of the goals of translation is to convey the meaning and style of the original language. Dictionary translations, however, help very little in achieving such goals since they rarely reflect the common language usage in a culture. There is a tendency that people from monolingual culture would think that words in a language should have their equivalents in another language. Therefore, a foreign language learner may look for the equivalents of his native words in a bilingual dictionary in order to talk in a foreign language. This kind of mindset towards the words of two different languages is harmful to the learning of a foreign language since words are “symbols for dynamic and explicit features of the culture” (Nida, 1975) and it is difficult to establish absolute correspondence between related words in two different languages.

This could be more of a problem if a bilingual dictionary appears to be the sources of equivalents, which may further reinforce the learners' perception of the bilingual dictionary as the authority for a translation equivalent.

The purpose of this exercise is to provide a typical example to illustrate the non-equivalence between words of Chinese and English, which may appear to be the "equivalent" based on the entries of Chinese-English and English-Chinese dictionaries. Students are required to discuss the difficulty and the problem for the translation of the word and other culturally loaded words, paying special attention to the tasks for discussion as explained in the following.

Compare the following dictionary entries from Chinese and English monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, and other quotations for your discussion:

Monolingual Dictionaries

1. *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary* (1987)

propaganda is information, frequently exaggerated or false information, which is spread by political groups in order to influence the public; usually used showing disapproval. EG *It is essential to sort the truth from the propaganda...*

2. *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (《现代汉语词典》, 1984)

宣传：对群众说明讲解，使群众相信并跟着行动：~队/~共产主义。

[Translation: "To give an explanation and illustration to the masses so as to make them believe something and follow a certain action: propaganda team/propaganda for Communism."]

3. *Great Dictionary* 《大辞典》(GD 1985)

宣传：(1) 宣布传达；(2) 用语言或文字来表达意义，传播给众人。

[Translation: "(1) To announce or to convey a message. (2) Using language or words to express meanings and spread them to the public."]

Bilingual Dictionaries

1. *A New English-Chinese Dictionary* (《新英汉词典》, 1985)

Propaganda: (1) 宣传机构，宣传组织：set up a ~ for revolution 建立革命的宣传机构 (2) 宣传；宣传方法；宣传运动：The insurance firms staged clever ~. 保险公司进行了巧妙的宣传/carry on active ~ 大力宣传(或conduct)/~ among the masses 宣传群众，在群众中做宣传工作/a ~ organ (department) 宣传机器(部门)

2. *A Modern Chinese-English Dictionary* (《现代汉英词典》, 1990)

宣传：conduct propaganda; propagate

宣传群众：spread propaganda among the masses

宣传队：propaganda team 文艺宣传队：performing arts propaganda team.

Word History

In English the word *propaganda* is basically derogatory in sense and connotation. According to *Webster's Word Histories* (Mish, 1990), [The] ecclesiastical use of *propaganda* was known in eighteenth-century English. By the 1790s, however, a generic use for this word had been found. It was applied to “a group or movement organized for spreading a particular doctrine or system of principles”. By the 1840s this usage had acquired a derogatory connotation. In his *Dictionary of Science, Literature, and Art* (1842), William Brande observes that “the name *propaganda* is applied in modern political language as a term of reproach to secret associations for the spread of opinions and principles which are viewed by most governments with horror and aversion.” Early in the twentieth century we find *propaganda* used for “the systematic dissemination of ideas, information, allegations, or rumors so as to promote or injure a particular cause”. This sense gave rise to its use to denote the ideas, etc., so disseminated. During the First World War a profusion of propaganda was disseminated by both sides of the conflict. Much of it was loaded with emotionalism, exaggeration, and falsehood. This further derogated the connotation of the word *propaganda*.

A tentative comparison of the above dictionary entries shows that the derogatory sense and connotation for the word *propaganda* in English is absent in the Chinese word 宣传, which in contemporary Chinese language is used in different aspects of everyday life to mean the “passing of information”. Therefore the English word *propaganda* is obviously not the equivalent for the Chinese word 宣传, which may pose a serious problem in cross-cultural communication between native speakers of Chinese and English.

[Adapted from: Chen, Jianping. 2005. Cultural understanding of lexical items. In Chen Jianping, *Studies of EFL Learning in China*. Beijing: Higher Education Press. 17-29.]

1.4.2.2 Grammatical-Syntactical Equivalence

Task Description: According to the following reading materials, although the passive voice is used in English for a number of purposes, it is often used for merely stylistic variation. However, to speakers of many Asian languages, the subject of a passive sentence is often understood to be the “victim” of the action. Even fluent English speakers from Chinese and Japanese backgrounds may continue to make this interpretation which could cause serious misunderstanding in English. Discuss the impact of structural differences between languages on cross-cultural understanding, with reference to recent Chinese media language

of the “passive era” (被时代), for example, Chinese netizens’ coining of words and phrases like 被捐款, 被就业, 被代表, 被高速, etc. Discuss further the differences between the passive voice in English and the 被 structure in Chinese in the expression of cultural meaning. For example, the passive voice is often used in English to express “formalness” in English while the 被 structure for “forcefulness” in Chinese. How would you translate these Chinese phrases into English? What are your other examples or observations?

The grammar of a language may reveal the way time and space are segmented and organized, convey beliefs about animacy and the relative power of beings, and imply a great deal of other information by conventional presupposition. Classical Greek and some varieties of Quechua treat the future tense as referring to events behind the speaker and the past tense as referring to events that are ahead, for instance, the reverse of the way they are thought of in English. According to Nida (1975), Quechua speakers point out that we can see the past, since it has happened, but not the future. Therefore, the past must be in front of our eyes, whereas the future that we cannot see must be behind us. To give another example related to grammar, speakers of a variety of Asian languages, despite their unrelatedness, share an interpretation of the passive formation in sentences which could cause serious misunderstanding in English. The passive is used in English for a number of purposes, including emphasizing the object, de-emphasizing the agent, focusing on the completed state of the action, or merely stylistic variation. For example:

John baked that cake.

That cake was baked by John.

To speakers of many Asian languages, however, the two sentences have different meanings, since the subject of a passive sentence is understood to be the “victim” of the action. Thus, the first sentence would be merely a statement of fact, whereas the second would imply that the agent did a bad job. Even fluent English speakers from Chinese and Japanese backgrounds may continue to make this interpretation.

The potential for interaction among language, culture, and cognitive patterning is also realized in conventional discourse organization (i.e. patterning beyond the domain of a single sentence). Comparative study of the discourse organization of individuals from different language backgrounds who are retelling the same story illustrates how cultural differences in experiences and values may be reflected in such patterned elements as sequences of events, forwarding or background of information, and narrative perspective. (See Chafe, 1980) It can thus be seen that the meaning of lexical, grammatical, or discourse structures is largely arbitrary and depends upon the agreement of a group of speakers (the speech community) as to their symbolic value.

[Adapted from: Saville-Troike, M. 1996. The ethnography of communication. In McKay, S. L. & Hornberger, N. H. (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 351-373.]

1.4.2.3 Experiential-Cultural Equivalence

Task Description: The following discussion and illustration provides a case analysis of the difficulties in the experiential-cultural aspect of translation. Finish the following tasks:

1. Try to interpret the news item like a sight interpretation exercise. Then, discuss with your partner the difficulties in translating the key concepts (particularly the bold-faced phrases) from the cross-cultural perspective.
2. Discuss how you would translate the phrase 杀出一条血路 into English and try to avoid misunderstanding or incomprehension.
3. Give further examples of Chinese cultural experience reflected in the Chinese language that is difficult to explain in English.

Translators must render not only the structural differences between languages but also the cultural differences. To convey the speaker's or the author's approach or attitude, translators often need to consider the factor of shared experience. The meanings of words are based on shared experience of the users of the language, and the ability of a word to convey or elicit meaning often depends on the culturally informed perceptions of both the source and the receiver, or the speaker and the hearer, in other words. In translation practice, when we lack the words in our vocabulary to represent those experiences in the other culture, or vice versa, we actually lack cultural experience that are shared by people of both cultures, and hence the lack of equivalents to represent the cultural experience. Therefore, translations frequently produce misunderstanding or incomprehension because of the lack of common cultural experience and orientations.

In the following discussion, think about your own cultural experience from a cross-cultural perspective with reference to the English language. Try to find out what cultural experience reflected in the Chinese language that is difficult to explain in English. For example, in the following news item quoted, you may find that the concepts of 十七大精神, 科学发展观思想 and 解放思想 may have rich socio-political connotations difficult to be rendered into English. And a literal translation of the phrase 杀出一条血路 may cause misunderstanding that Chinese are too militant in their behaviour, which is definitely not the meaning of the phrase. Suppose you are required to put this news item into English, try your best to explain, not to "translate", these concepts in English, and the rendition should be able to take care of the cross-cultural differences between Chinese and English in this context.

以“杀出一条血路”的气魄闯出一条新路

12月25日上午，中共广东省委十届二次全会在广州开幕。全会认真学习贯彻党的十七大精神和中央经济工作会议精神，总结今年工作，部署明年工作。全会由省委常委会主持。中共中央政治局委员、省委书记汪洋在讲话中强调，当前广东的发展已经站在了一个新的历史起点上，正处于经济社会发展全面转入科学发展轨道的关键时期，广东作为改革开放的先行区，科学发展观思想的提出地，要继续解放思想，坚持改革开放，以当年改革开放初期“杀出一条血路”的气魄，努力在实践科学发展观上闯出一条新路，争当实践科学发展观的排头兵。省委副书记、省长黄华华对明年经济工作作了具体部署。

(From <http://leaders.people.com.cn/GB/6700559.html>, Dec. 26, 2007)

1.4.3 Translatability of Cultural Perspectives

Task Description: In an article discussing the translatability of cultural perspectives, professor Gao Yihong (1998) presented a case study, illustrating the difficulties in translating cultural experience, concepts and perspectives. The case study is a rare example to show difficulties and problems in cross-cultural understanding, an issue which most students of translation/interpretation cannot avoid in their translation practice. Please read the following extracts and discuss the following questions:

1. In this case of unsuccessful cross-cultural communication, what lies behind the problem, cross-cultural understanding or translatability issues?
2. What are the most difficult aspects in this translation exercise?
3. Are languages and cultural perspectives essentially translatable?
4. According to your opinion, who is responsible for the failure or conflict in this case—the author, the translator or the reader/commentator?
5. What role can translators play in an intercultural communication process like this?

In the 1980s, there arose in the People's Republic of China a "Chinese Cultural Linguistics" (CCL). Defined as either a new branch of linguistics or a new school of thought in the arena of cultural studies, CCL attempts to capture the characteristics of the Chinese language by relating it to the Chinese culture. Among the three schools within CCL—"cultural expression", "cultural reference", and "cultural identification", the last is by far the most influential and controversial, and it is represented by Dr. Shen Xiaolong, a professor of Chinese from Fudan University in Shanghai. Compared with the other CCL schools, the "cultural identification" school draws a closer link between language and culture to the extent that language and

culture entirely identify with each other. The study of the Chinese (Han) language, therefore, is essentially an interpretation of the cultural “spirit” or the way of thinking of the Chinese (Han) people. It is claimed that such cultural “spirit” or “world view” is shared by various aspects within the same culture; it is not shared with other cultures. In his study of Chinese sentence patterns, Shen proposes the contrasted concepts of “distributed view” vs. “focused view” to characterize respectively the features of Chinese and what he calls “Western inflectional languages”. Drawing a direct parallel between painting and language, Shen says that while Western painting employs “the focused view” which requires the painter to portray the world from a single perspective, Chinese painting employs “the distributed view” which allows the painter to portray the world seen from changing or various “distributed” viewpoints. This difference is basic in Chinese and Western modes of thinking, and is likewise demonstrated in language. The sentence patterns of Western inflectional languages are focused on the verb. Sentence constituents are largely governed by the inflectional changes of the verb, which denote tense, aspect, person, number, case, gender, etc. Agreement of forms is essential. In Chinese, such a structural focus is absent. Instead, sentences are formed from “flowing phrase-chunks”; words are rather freely chained together according to inherent logic of the content. The principle of organization is “meaning agreement”, not “form agreement”. Comprehension of sentences depends less on formal, objective features, and more on context and the reader’s subjective perception.

Shen’s CCL has raised great controversy among Chinese linguists. One of the debating issues is the “uniqueness” vs. “universality” in language and culture. However, the debate has been confined to scholars within the Chinese-speaking context. Professor Gao Yihong of Beijing University believes it is necessary to bring the discussion to an international context. Thus in cooperation with her students and friends, Professor Gao had some of Shen Xiaolong’s articles translated into English. During the process of translation, she sent one of the translated articles (Shen, 1988c) to Eugene Nida, a well-known American linguist and translation theorist, asking for his comments. The feedback received was long and trenchant. When Professor Gao passed on these commentaries to the original author Professor Shen, he reacted strongly in his response to these comments coming from “a Westerner”. Again, a key issue of dispute is “uniqueness” vs. “universality”. Yet related to the dispute is the quality of translation and translatability. In this cross-cultural communication failure or conflict, who is responsible—the author, the translator or the reader/commentator? Are languages and cultural perspectives essentially translatable? Read the following extracts and give your opinions and your translation of the Chinese text.

Extracts of the original text (O), translation (T), and commentaries(C) by Eugene Nida:

O: 人类各种语言都是以形式和意义相结合的方式来表达思想的。

T: Every human language expresses ideas by combining form and meaning.

C: Why would a writer want to specify “human” with language? There are no other verbal languages except those produced by people.

O: 这样照搬西方语言学来进行汉语的形式分析，其结果就是貌合神离，也就是我们语法学所说的汉语语法之貌（形式），不合于汉语语法之神（意义）。

T: If we analyze Chinese with grammatical theory indiscriminately copied from Western linguistics, it is apparently in harmony but actually at variance. That is, the appearance of Chinese grammatical theories presented by modern Chinese linguists does not accord with the spirit of Chinese sentence structure (meaning).

C: It would be important to indicate “variance with what?” The statement “does not accord with the spirit of Chinese sentence structure (meaning)” is very confusing and no doubt so in the original.

O: 由于（汉语）客观标记缺乏，语言结构的确认上就更多地依靠人的主观感觉和判断，依靠人以逻辑事理为基础的推理。

T: Due to the lack of such objective markers, the recognition of language structure depends more on personal perception and judgment, and on the inference based on logical development.

C: Words like “perception, judgment, and logical development” need clear definitions, which this writer obviously uses in a very obscure manner. The statement about “natural logic development” is especially suspect. This kind of “loose writing” is not going to help Chinese linguists. You obviously have a text that is hopelessly inadequate. No one could make sense of this without rewriting it.

O: 这种以逻辑事理显示语法结构和脉络的意合方法和以人的主观感觉来体验认同语言组织的“神摄”方法，都说明汉语语法是一种需要人的主体意识积极参与的语法，而不是像西方形态语言的语法那样可以对之作客观、冷静的形式标记分析的语法。汉语的这种主体性强、人的因素突出的特点，我们称之为汉语的人文性。

T: The meaning-oriented method which organizes grammatical frames and veins through logical development, and the “spirit-oriented” method which relies on subjective perceptions for the comprehension of structural organization—these two methods indicate that Chinese grammar is one that demands subjective participation of the individual mind. Such a grammar is very different from that of Western inflectional languages to which objective analysis of formal markers can be carried out. Chinese is a language that highlights human subjectivity; this we call the humanistic nature of Chinese.

C: 1. What are the “veins” of the logical development? This doesn’t make sense.

2. “Active participation of the individual mind” is of course true of all languages because polysemy is inevitable on the lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels. 3. Chinese requires no more “human subjectivity” than any other language. Chinese people can recognize awkwardness in their own language just as speakers of all languages react to violations of normal syntagmatic sets.

O: 如何把语言规律放在文化特征的基础上加以考察呢?以句子组织规律来说,它同中国文化的特点有这样一些内在联系: 1.焦点透视与散点透视…… 2.自然时空与心理时空。

T: How do we study linguistic laws as related to cultural characteristics? Here I shall give some examples concerning syntax. The following are some features shared by Chinese sentence structure and certain aspects of Chinese culture: 1. Focused View vs. Distributed View... 2. Natural Time and Space vs. Psychological Time and Space.

C: The initial question does not make sense without more than what follows in the “focused view and the distributed view”, etc. These are words they do not really have meaning... The statement “psychological time and space” is largely meaningless, because all concepts of time and space as communicated by language are psychological, so that Chinese is not distinctive in this matter.

O: 这种(汉语)句子铺排之“散”,并不是一种随意而杂乱的“散”,而是“形散而神不散”。这种“神”,就是汉语句子铺排的逻辑事理性。

T: The distribution of viewpoints does not mean disorder or disorganization. It is distributed in form but focused in spirit. The “spirit” here is the logical development in sentence arrangement.

C: The use of the term “spirit” is typical of loose pseudo-scientific language.

O: 如果说西方语言的句子是一种物理空间,那么汉语句子是一种心理时间流。

T: If the sentence pattern of Western languages is a bulk of physical space, then that of Chinese is a current of psychological time.

C: The idea of sentence patterns in Western languages being “a bulk of physical space” is simply not true, and furthermore this kind of statement is typical of people who want to make their statements seem high-flown and philosophical.

O: 中国哲学、艺术和语言注重的是心理时空,而且特别偏重于时间。即使是空间,也表现为流动空间。……中国画的“气韵生动”即指“空间艺术”中的“时间因素”。……中国戏剧造型讲究在连绵协调的姿态运动中追求一种势、韵味、境界。

T: Chinese philosophy, art and language stress psychological time and space, with special emphasis on time... In Chinese painting, “rhythm of energy” in fact refers

to “the temporal factor” in “the art of space”... The Chinese opera pursues energy, rhythm, flavor and spiritual state through successive, coordinative actions.

C: Such statements are relatively meaningless... It is meaningless to compare portrait painting with Chinese opera, mixing oranges and apples. The statement about Chinese opera pursuing “energy, rhythm, flavor, and spiritual state” can be said equally well of Western opera.

O: 中国现代语法学在开始建立时之所以模仿西方的语法体系，很大的一个原因是它认为人类的语言是有共性的，就好像人类的物质现象是有共性的一样；其实，语言本质上是一种文化现象。人类各民族的文化是千差万别、丰富多彩的。各种文化之间没有一种“公约数”，也就是说，没有一种共同的衡量尺度，人类的共性只体现在人类的基本特征和基本活动上。

T: When first established, modern Chinese linguistics was modeled on Western grammatical theories. This is largely because it was taken for granted that there were universals in languages, just as there were universals in physical phenomena around the world. However, language is essentially a cultural phenomenon. The cultures of different nations have their unique characteristics and values; they share no “common denominators”. That is to say, there are no universal criteria to measure cultural phenomena. The universals of human beings are only their basic characters and basic actions.

C: But there are certain language universals and there are also anthropological universals. In fact, most linguists and anthropologists view humans behaving all over the world as being essentially 90 percent similar. Unfortunately the present author is not well informed. The statement that they share “no common denominators” is quite wrong. What about matters of power, solidarity, status?

A few quotations from the responses to the comments in the discussion among the author (A), translator (T) and discussants (D):

A: Among the comments I received from more than a hundred Chinese and international scholars, sharp criticisms are not rare. However, the arrogance of this American linguist surprises me. “Universals” among different cultures do not depend on a single word of a Westerner. If there is something that you don’t understand, especially something from another culture, you’d better keep your mind open. When you blame others for having “limited acquaintance” with your norm, it shows exactly your own limitation.

D₁: The critic’s reaction is natural for someone who is not very familiar with the Chinese culture. In my opinion, the responsibility of the miscommunication lies in the author. The problem is that when he asserts the uniqueness of Chinese, it seems to imply its superiority. Of course a Western scholar will not accept this.

D₂: The key issue is not responsibility, but translatability. A culture is essentially

untranslatable. That is not to say the language itself cannot be translated, but that it is impossible for the reader to reach the experience and feeling the author meant to convey.

T: Some parts are indeed very difficult to translate. An example is the concept of “散点透视” (distributed view) as the essential feature of Chinese painting. In the first draft it was translated as “the dispersed view”. I was not happy with it, because it could not capture the unity embodied in the original concept. So I tried a long list of other possibilities, but none seemed to work well. Once I thought of “multi-focus”, but then laughed it away, because the picture conveyed is no longer traditional Chinese painting, but Picasso’s cubist painting! The present version “distributed view” is not satisfactory either, because it cannot well convey the implied meaning of “形散而神不散” (distributed in form but focused in spirit).

D₁: The conflict was not a result of the translation, but a result of different theories and research methods held by the author and the commentator.

D₂: The commentator and the author were not only mutually irritated but also mutually shocked by the other’s “extreme” attitude. Yet “shock” is nothing to be afraid of. It shows a lack of communication, and from this very sense it justifies the need of translation. The more translation, the more communication and understanding, and consequently less shock.

T: Shock is indeed painful, not only for the reader and author, but also for the translator. My first response to the commentator and author’s “extreme” reactions was also a “shock”, a deep feeling of frustration or sadness. I wonder if with all the efforts spent, we were merely acting out the “Tower of Babel.” But now I am going beyond that “shock”. It has made me think a lot, and this by all means is enriching. I still don’t know what exactly we will end up with; I suppose such communication is an ever-lasting process. And I believe if a system is open and growth-oriented, shocking experience at a certain stage is conducive to health.

[Adapted from: Gao, Yihong. 1998. Translatability of cultural perspectives: A case presentation. In Heisey, D. R. & Gong, Wenxiang (Eds.), *Communication and Culture: China and the World Entering the 21st Century*. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V. 39-55.]

1.4.4 Practice in Translating Culture

Task Description: Translation is translating culture. The following is an adapted script of a comic piece entitled *Got the Money Anyway* for the CCTV Spring Festival Gala of 2009. Although the language used is plain and simple, most of the dialogues between the actors are intended to bring about humourous effects

based on their creative use of language and the exploitation of cultural capsules, or minidramas portraying actual or potential real life situations, often with a bit of localism. Imagine that you are watching the play with foreign students studying Chinese in China and you are trying to explain the play to them in English. Or you can act out part of the play with your partners in English so that you can discuss and experience the cross-cultural differences and difficulties in rendering humour in different cultures.

A translated version of the script is provided for your references. Each of the first 100 turns in the play is marked with a serial number for the convenience of reference. In order to achieve the best effect, you are suggested to read the translated version after you have done the practice.

“不差钱”¹

(舞台上是一个餐厅的背景，写着：“苏格兰情调”。演员甲穿着中山装，身上背着一串蒜头，手上拿着野鸡，拉着演员乙上场。)

1. 演员甲： 到了。
2. 演员乙： 到了。
3. 演员甲： 这就是铁岭最贵的一家饭店。这不，苏格兰调情 (tiáo qíng)。
4. 演员乙： 爷爷，你念反了，苏格兰情调 (qíng diào)。
5. 演员甲： 啊，情调？就搁这儿吃。
6. 演员乙： 爷爷，这家老贵的啦。
7. 演员甲： 贵？咱带钱了，带三万多块，那包呢？
8. 演员乙： 我没拿包啊。
9. 演员甲： 装钱那包，黄包。
10. 演员乙： 完了，让我落炕上了。
11. 演员甲： 你说，你这孩子还能办点事不？！你说这给你办事，落炕上了还。兜里还有钱吗？
12. 演员乙： 兜里，多少钱哪才？才70多块钱。
13. 演员甲： 我还有400。行了，够了。
14. 演员乙： 这也不够啊。
15. 演员甲： 哎呀，够不够就这样了。服务员！
(演员丙上)
16. 演员丙： 对不起大爷，我们这是高档酒店，不收农副产品。
17. 演员甲： 不是，我们是吃饭的。

1 节选并改编自2009年中央电视台春节联欢晚会节目，原编者崔凯等。

18. 演员丙: 妈呀, 吃饭的呀?
19. 演员甲: 不像啊?
20. 演员丙: 不太像。
21. 演员甲: 我说姑娘啊, 这顿饭非常重要。
22. 演员丙: 妈呀, 你管谁叫姑娘呢, 人家是纯爷们。
23. 演员甲: 咋这么个打扮呢, 还穿个裙子呢。
24. 演员丙: 这是按我们苏格兰风格来包装的。再说也不是裙子啊, 这不七分裤吗。你看, 是有腿的嘛。妈呀, 着急穿跑偏了。妈呀, 我说走道咋没有裆呢。
25. 演员甲: 行了, 那条腿留明儿个穿, 哈哈。哎呀, 小伙子我跟你说话, 今天我要请一位重要客人吃饭, 你一定要招待好啊。
26. 演员丙: 呃, 没问题。
27. 演员甲: 来来来, 我问问你, 你们这个酒店, 如果要急头白脸吃一顿, 得多少钱?
28. 演员丙: 咋还吃急眼了呢?
29. 演员甲: 不是, 我意思就是, 最贵的都点上。
30. 演员丙: 得一两万的。
31. 演员甲: 一两万? 啊, 那啥, 有没有那种情况, 今儿个吃完了, 明儿个来结账?
32. 演员丙: 打白条儿啊?
33. 演员甲: 不是啊, 我这不是打白条, 不差钱, 有钱。喏。
34. 演员丙: 啥意思?
35. 演员甲: 小费。
36. 演员丙: 妈呀, 大爷你真敞亮, 你太帅了。
37. 演员甲: 给一百块钱还帅呢。我跟你说不白给啊。一会儿客人到了, 你一定要给足我面子, 明白吗? 我到点菜的时候, 你得替我兜着点。
38. 演员丙: 咋兜呢?
39. 演员甲: 既把面子又给了, 但是呢又不能花得……太狠。就是我要点贵菜……
40. 演员丙: 我就说没有呗。
41. 演员甲: 哎呀妈呀, 你太厉害了。来来来, 拿点。再给你30, 来。
42. 演员丙: 我跟你都明码的哦。
43. 演员甲: 谢谢。
44. 演员丙: 放心吧。
45. 演员乙: 爷爷, 我有点饿了。
46. 演员甲: 饿了? 来碗面条。
47. 演员丙: 呃, 78一碗。

48. 演员甲: 啥面哪? 这么贵啊。
49. 演员丙: 苏格兰打卤面。
50. 演员甲: 那个……是不是卤子贵呀?
51. 演员丙: 卤不要钱。
52. 演员甲: 啊, 那就来碗卤子, 先尝尝咸淡。快去, 快去。
53. 演员丙: 妈呀, 没这么上过呀。
54. 演员甲: 那是我没来, 我要来, 你早就这么上了。去吧去吧, 快去。
55. 演员丙: 这老爷子, 我要说面条不要钱, 要面条了你还。
56. 演员甲: 来, 站起来。跟你说啊, 一会儿星光大道的毕老师来了, 你一定要给我争个脸, 好不? 这是人生最好的一次机会, 知道吗? 爷爷培养你都已经四十多年了。
57. 演员乙: 爷爷, 我才多大呀。
58. 演员甲: 我还培养你爸三十多年呢。这不, 你爸那是个半成品, 我都给培养成文化站站长了。你一定要超过他, 有决心吗?
59. 演员乙: 有。
60. 演员甲: 表一下决心。
61. 演员乙: 我指定: 洪湖水, 浪打浪, 长江后浪推前浪, 一浪更比一浪强, 把我爹拍在沙滩上!
62. 演员甲: 有志向。
63. 演员丙: 哎, 来了。
64. 演员甲: 来, 先把这卤子喝了, 孩子饿了。
65. 演员乙: 爷爷, 有点咸了。
66. 演员甲: 没事, 给她整碗水去。
67. 演员丙: 免费的水呗, 是不?
68. 演员甲: 白开水就行。真够抠的。
- (演员丁上)
69. 演员丙: 哟, 你不是那谁吗, 你是那个……蒙住了。朱军?! 不是朱军。白岩松?! 不是。老毕……你是毕老师吗?!
70. 演员丁: 我姓毕。
71. 演员丙: 哎呀我的妈呀, 毕老师来了。你咋出来了呢? 哎呀我的妈呀, 快来人啊, 毕老师, 一会儿该跑了, 毕老师……
72. 演员甲: 干啥哩, 吵吵巴火的, 让狼撵了咋的?
73. 演员丙: 毕老师……
74. 演员甲: 我知道, 这就是我要请的客人。
75. 演员丙: 哎呀我的妈呀, 毕老师, 你给我照个相呗!
76. 演员甲: 你先等一会儿。刚到是吧?
77. 演员丁: 刚到, 刚到。
78. 演员甲: 我在这儿等半天了。

79. 演员丁: 你好你好。请问您是……?
80. 演员甲: 你找谁?
81. 演员丁: 我找莲花乡文化站站长赵铁柱。
82. 演员甲: 找对了, 这就是赵铁柱的爹, 我是……
83. 演员乙: 赵铁柱是我爹。
84. 演员甲: 我是赵铁柱的爹。你不是找爹吗? 是不是, 这就对了。
85. 演员丁: 爹……不是, 我找您儿子。
86. 演员甲: 他在乡里等你呢。啊呀, 乡里布置得老隆重了。乡长、书记都在那儿排队等你呢。布一个大厅, 完事弄一个大房间, 给你弄一个大照片挂中间, 周围全是花呀。
87. 演员丁: 老哥, 那花都是什么颜色?
88. 演员甲: 白的、黄的都有啊。可漂亮, 真的。老百姓都拿笔等着, 等得都哭啊, 等你呢。
89. 演员丁: 哭什么?
90. 演员甲: 这不激动吗, 你去了。来吧, 请……
91. 演员丁: 咱去乡里吧。
92. 演员甲: 别介, 乡里布置我, 说先搁铁岭吃一顿, 完事再上那儿。你看吧。
93. 演员丁: 在这儿吃饭?
94. 演员甲: 这是铁岭最贵的, 你来吧。
95. 演员丁: 别别, 大爷, 不, 老哥, 我在飞机上吃了。
96. 演员甲: 那客随主便, 好不好? 给你怎么安排你就听话, 来来。
97. 演员丙: 毕老师, 你不给照个相吗? 毕老师。
98. 演员丁: 你是男服务员?
99. 演员丙: 嗯哪。
100. 演员丁: 长得挺委婉的。

……

Got the Money Anyway¹

(This short play is set in a restaurant named “Scottish Taste/Feel”. Actor A, in his customary Chinese tunic suit, enters, carrying a string of garlic on his back and a pheasant in hand, with his granddaughter Actor B in tow.)

1. Actor A Here we are.
2. Actor B Here we are.
3. Actor A It's the most pricy eatin' spot in Tieling: “Scottish Tease/Fool”.

1 A reference version of translation for the script, translated by Wang Weidong and Hu Sai.

4. Actor B You got it wrong—Scottish taste/feel, not tease/fool.
5. Actor A All right, taste/feel. We're gonna have our meal here anyway.
6. Actor B But it's very expensive.
7. Actor A So whut? We've got the money, 30,000 *yuan*. Where's the bag?
8. Actor B What bag?
9. Actor A The yellow one with the money in it.
10. Actor B Oh no, I left it on the brick bed.
11. Actor A So whut can you do at all? I'm goin' t'rough all this for you and you had the nerve to forget the bag on the bed! Any money left on you?
12. Actor B Let me see... (*Fumbling*) only 70-plus *yuan*.
13. Actor A Here's 400 more.
14. Actor B Still not enough.
15. Actor A No matter. Waiter!
- (*Actor C, the waiter, enters.*)
16. Actor C Sorry, sir. We're of high class here. We don't take on stuff from street peddlers.
17. Actor A We're your customers. Don't we look like it?
18. Actor C Not quite.
19. Actor A Not quite?
20. Actor C Not quite!
21. Actor A We're gonna have an important meal here, miss.
22. Actor C Don't you call me a miss. I'm a man—from the inside out.
23. Actor A Then how c'me you wearin' a skirt?
24. Actor C Why, it's men's wear in Scottish style. See, it's no skirt but Capri pants. Look at this, look. Oh, damn it, I didn't get into one of the trousers in a hurry. No wonder I feel different while walking.
25. Actor A Leave that trouser for tomorrow, hah! I tell you, boy, we're gonna have a damn' important guest here in a minute. You should do you' best.
26. Actor C No problem.
27. Actor A How much does a meal cost here if we get at it like mad?
28. Actor C Why so?/What's wrong?
29. Actor A I mean if we order nothin' but the best.
30. Actor C About 10,000 to 20,000.

31. Actor A Whut if s'mebody eats today and pays tomorrow?
32. Actor C You'll give me an IOU?
33. Actor A Not that. I've got the money anyway. Take this.
34. Actor C What's it?
35. Actor A A tip for you.
36. Actor C You do understand people/things/the world, sir—you look cool!
37. Actor A Whut's a hundred yuan to me! Still, you ain't get it for nothin'.
When my guest c'mes, you put on a show with me. If I order
expensive food, you should stop me doin' so.
38. Actor C Like how?
39. Actor A Showin' due respect for my guest, yes. Spendin' too much on a
meal, no. Whut if I ask for somethin' dear?
40. Actor C I'll say "sorry, this we don't have."
41. Actor A You're smart. C'me, here's another 30 *yuan*.
42. Actor C I'm not gonna cheat you when it comes to prices.
43. Actor A Thank you, boy.
44. Actor C Nothing much.
45. Actor B Grandpa, I'm hungry.
46. Actor A How much's a bowl of noodles?
47. Actor C 78 *yuan*.
48. Actor A Whut noodles can be so expensive?
49. Actor C Scottish sauced noodles.
50. Actor A Does the sauce cost much, too?
51. Actor C It's free.
52. Actor A Get us a bowl of sauce, so we can see whether the taste's right.
Quick.
53. Actor C That's no way to serve a meal, sir.
54. Actor A You think so only because I didn't show up here before. Now it's
time to make s'me change.
55. Actor C (*To himself*) Had I said the noodles are free, he would've asked
for noodles. (*Exits*)
56. Actor A (*To Actor B*) Listen here, Actor B. When Mr. Bi from CCTV's
Starlight Broadway c'mes, you must show you' best, OK? It's the
best opport'nity for you' own future. Grandpa's been preparin'
you over the past 40-plus years.

57. Actor B Grandpa, see how old I am now.
58. Actor A I prepared you' daddy for 30 extra years. Though he ain't good enough, he's the chief of the township's cultural center. So you really should outdo him. Can you make it or not?
59. Actor B I can.
60. Actor A Swear if you're serious.
61. Actor B The Yangtze River like the Hong waters rolls on and on,
Each wave behind higher than the one at the front.
Young people are born to challenge their elders;
I'll beach my daddy like... like a wrecked old ship.
62. Actor A Good for you!/Well said!
(*Actor C enters again.*)
63. Actor C Here's the sauce for you.
64. Actor A (*To Actor B*) Eat this, so you won't be too hungry.
65. Actor B Grandpa, it's a bit salty.
66. Actor A (*To Actor C*) Fetch her s'me water to drink.
67. Actor C You mean free water?
68. Actor A Just plain boiled water, you miser.
(*Actor D, MC/anchorman of CCTV's Starlight Broadway program, enters.*)
69. Actor C Why, aren't you that one—Zhujun! Oh sorry. Bai Yansong? Oh no. Or a Bi something! Are you Mr. Bi?
70. Actor D I'm Bi Fujian.
71. Actor C Come here everyone, it's Mr. Bi here. (*To Actor D*) Why are you hanging out here, sir? Hurry up! Come here! He can go elsewhere at any minute.
72. Actor A Whut the hell's going on? Anythin' to be so fussy abut? You're being hounded by a wolf?
73. Actor C He's Mr. Bi...
74. Actor A I know, an' he's the guest I'm honored to keep comp'ny today.
75. Actor C Gosh, can I have a picture taken with you, Mr. Bi?
76. Actor A (*To Actor C*) Wait, wait. (*To Actor D*) Welc'me, Mr. Bi.
77. Actor D Nice to meet you.
78. Actor A I've been waitin' all this time for you.
79. Actor D Thanks a lot really. May I have your name please?
80. Actor A Which man did you expect to see?

81. Actor D I'm looking for Zhao Tiezhu, chief of Lotus Township's cultural center.
82. Actor A You got it. Here's his daddy and I'm...
83. Actor B Zhao Tiezhu is my daddy.
84. Actor A An' I'm Tiezhu's daddy. Aren't you lookin' for a dad... I mean it's right to be looking my way.
85. Actor D Hi, daddy... I mean buddy. So where's your son?
86. Actor A He's at the township waitin' for you. Local government officials all lining up, too, to pay their pious respects to you. With enormous care they've prepared a great hall, a big room, with a large photo of you hung in the middle. Flowers all around.
87. Actor D What're the colors of the flowers, buddy?
88. Actor A They're all in white and yellow. Lots of folks' waiting for you with signature pens in hands, tears spillin' all over.
89. Actor D Why's that?
90. Actor A They're excited.
91. Actor D Let's go there, then.
92. Actor A The center asked me to feast you here in town first. How about that?
93. Actor D Why here?
94. Actor A Here we've got the best restaurant in Tieling. Do c'me this way please.
95. Actor D But I've had my meal on the plane.
96. Actor A You're my guest, so please follow my arrangements.
97. Actor C A picture of the two of us, please.
98. Actor D (To Actor C) You're... a male waiter?
99. Actor C Yup.
100. Actor D You look awfully, awfully sweet, boy.
- ...

Suggested Readings

Chick, J. K. 2001. Intercultural Communication. In MacKay, S. L. & Hornberger, N. H. (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. 329-348.

In this chapter, Keith introduces intercultural communication typically from the sociolinguistic perspectives. The questions that the author is trying to answer include: What are the sources of intercultural miscommunication? What are the social effects of such miscommunication? What can be done to improve intercultural communication?

Gudykunst, W. B. & Young Y. K. 2007. Introduction. In *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*. (4th edition). Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. 3-21.

In this “introduction” to the whole book, the authors give a very clear explanation of the basic concepts of communication and culture. A working definition of culture is also provided with further explanation. Comparing with Keith’s introduction, you may find that they are adopting different approaches to the study of intercultural communication, which has been explained in this section.

Gutknecht, C. 2001. Translation. In Aronoff, M. & Rees-Miller, J. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Linguistics*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. 692-693.

In this short introduction to Translation, the author touches upon many of the basic issues in the study of translation and interpretation. For a beginner of translation studies, this introduction provides a quick reference of the basic notions in the area.

Neuliep, J. W. 2006. The necessity of intercultural communication. In *Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach* (3rd edition). Landon: Sage Publications. 1-37.

This is also the first chapter of the book, which explains many of the basic concepts in the study of intercultural communication with clear illustrations. The discussion of the dimensions of communication, the nature of culture and the fundamental assumptions of intercultural communication will give the beginner an enjoyable reading experience in the exploration of intercultural communication.

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E. & Stefani, L. A. 2000. Language and culture: Words and meanings. In *Communication Between Cultures*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. 120-146.

This is a good introduction to the relationship between language and culture. Since our discussion in this course will put an emphasis on the language aspects of intercultural communication, the topics discussed in this chapter, such as *culture and meaning, culture and the use of language, foreign languages and translation*, will be helpful for a better understanding of the issues/problems of translation raised in this section.