

第2章 翻译中的选词

第一模块：翻译技巧

长期以来，中国学生在学习英语的过程中总喜欢通过词典中的汉语意思记忆单词，久而久之，就形成了一种“怪圈”：翻译的时候，往往将英语单词和汉语词语一一对应起来，结果造成翻译中用词不当的现象。实际上，几乎每一种语言都有一词多义的现象。具体地说，英语单词和汉语词语并非一一对应的关系；相反，一个英语单词往往对应几个汉语意思，因此翻译时要根据词所在的语境确定其在上下文中的含义。而且，词在上下文中的意义广狭、词的感情色彩、词的语体色彩等都应根据其所在的语境作出选择，然后在目的语中选择恰当的对应词（equivalent）。

一、根据词在语境中的含义选词

首先，多义词的含义取决于其所在的语境。例如，英语单词brood并不总是翻译成“沉思”，比如brood over the matter可译成“把事情放在心上”，brood over his dead mother可译成“对亡故的母亲念念不忘”，brood on one's failure可译成“对失败思来想去”，brood about her可译成“对她沉思默想”，等等。虽然在这些短语中，brood一词的基本含义相同，但因为搭配不同，对应的汉语译文也就不同。还有一些语境中，brood完全就没有“想”或“思考”的意思，例如：

例1

The fog *brooded* over the village by the lake.

雾笼罩着湖边的小村庄。/湖边的小村庄笼罩在茫茫的雾中。

例2

The hen is *brooding*.

母鸡在孵蛋。

也就是说，词的意思要看词所在的搭配、句子，甚至是段落的意思。再看下面的例子：

clear head 清醒的头脑/头脑清醒
 clear water 清澈的水
 clear air 清新的空气/空气清新
 clear sky 晴朗的天空/万里无云的天空/碧空如洗
 clear picture 清晰的照片/图片
 clear view 一览无余的风景/明确的观点（取决于view的含义）
 clear conscience 问心无愧
 clear understanding 透彻的理解/理解透彻
 clear thinking 清晰的思路/思路清晰
 clear meaning 明确的意思/意思明确
 clear skin 洁净的肌肤

由此可以看到，英语单词与不同的词搭配，翻译成汉语时会有不同的选择。借用数学术语说，一个英文单词及其中文翻译不是一对一的“映射”关系。有时候相同的词在同一句话中意思也不尽相同，需要选择不同的汉语词语才能传达原文的意思。例如：

例3

After he had a *row* with his wife at home he had a *row* with his friend on the lake.

在家里同妻子吵架后，他与朋友在湖上泛舟。

例4

Needing some *light* to see by, the burglar crossed the room with a *light* step to *light* the *light* with the *light* green shade.

夜贼需要一点亮光来看东西，便蹑手蹑脚穿过房间，点亮了那盏带浅绿色灯罩的灯。

以上两个例子中row和light放在同一句话中，却有着不同的含义，因此对应的汉语就不一样。另外，一些英语单词在某些语境中具有引申意义，如果直译出来会显得比较生硬，因此需要将引申的意思翻译出来，才显得自然。

例如：

例5

The government had given the *go-ahead* for the power station.

政府已经同意继续建设这个电站。

例6

The boat *seesawed* in the heavy sea.

小舟在波涛汹涌的海中颠簸不已。

例7

Today a politician without *elbows* is as lost as a politician without principles.

如今，一个没有勇气的政治家就像一个没有原则的政治家一样无所作为。

例5中的go-ahead本身有“前进”的意思，这里显然不能直译，所以引申为“继续”；例6中seesaw有“拉锯”和“玩跷跷板”之意，但这里显然也不能直译，而应将其引申意思“颠簸”译出；例7中的elbow指“勇气”，不能直接译作“肘部”。

二、根据语境中词义的广狭选词

词义有广狭之分。同一个英文词有时在不同的语境中其广狭意义不同。比如英语中的cat有时译成“猫”（狭义），有时译成“猫科动物”（广义），cousin有时要译成“表亲”这一广义的概念，有时要译成“表哥”或“表姐”等狭义的概念。再看下面的例子：

例8

Man's youth is a wonderful thing: it is so full of anguish and of magic and he never comes to know it as it is, until it has gone from him forever.

人的青春奇妙无穷，充满着痛楚，充满着魅力。可是，人从来不知青春为何物，老之将至才痛惜青春不再。

例9

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all *men* are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these

are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

我们认为下述真理不言而喻：人生而平等，造物主赋予他们若干不可剥夺的权利，包括生存权、自由权和追求幸福的权利。

例10

She was more of a *man* than any of them.

她比他们中间的任何一个都更像男子汉。

例11

Now a paper published online in *Nature Genetics* on 19 September argues that, in our history, *men* have traveled more widely than women.

9月19日《自然遗传学》在线发表的一篇文章指出，人类历史上，男性比女性旅行的范围更为广泛。

以上四个例子中，单数名词man和复数名词men的词义范围不同，在例8和例9中泛指人，属于广义概念，在例10和例11中明显带有性别之分，属于狭义概念，因此前两个译文译成“人”，后两个分别译成了“男子汉”和“男性”。

三、根据语境中词的感情色彩选词

在任何一种语言中，词语都会带有它们的感情色彩，因为语言的使用者经常对所描述的事物有好恶之分，这就决定了词语的褒贬色彩。例如，英语中，当人们描述一个人很节俭时，往往用thrifty这个词，而描述一个人很吝啬时，往往使用stingy，这两个词就有褒贬之分，前一个词是褒义词，后一个是贬义词；而汉语中的“节俭”与“吝啬”本来就体现了褒贬之分。也就是说，英文单词本身就具有褒义或者贬义，翻译成汉语时一定要找到相对应的褒义词或贬义词。请看下面的例子：

例12

Henry keeps *boasting* that he has talked to the president.

亨利总是吹嘘说自己同总统谈过话。

例13

Gately, a quiet and very *polite* young man, made a favourable impression.

盖特利是一位温和安静、彬彬有礼的年轻人，给人留下了很好的印象。

例12中的boast本身就是贬义词，所以将之译成了汉语的贬义词“吹嘘”，例13中的polite本身就是褒义词，所以译文中选择了褒义词“彬彬有礼”。

另外，同一个词在不同的语境中其感情色彩也不尽相同，翻译过程中，译者一定要注意根据语境忠实地传达出原文的感情色彩。比如delicate upbringing应译成“娇生惯养”，属于贬义，delicate touch指写作中注重细节，属于褒义词，因此可以译成“生花妙笔”。delicate health应译成“虚弱的身体”，delicate ball-playing skill中delicate则是褒义词，应译成“灵巧的球技”。请再看下面几个例子：

例14

His most powerful photomontages were made in the 1930s — often satirical portraits of Hitler and other members of the Nazi *leadership*.

他最优秀的蒙太奇式摄影作品是在20世纪30年代拍摄的，这些作品往往是希特勒及其他纳粹头子/头目的讽刺画像。

例15

Thanks to his experience, Eckhart has an important *leadership* role in the company.

埃克哈特因为经验丰富，在公司中担任重要的领导职位。

例14中的leadership显然带有贬义，所以不要译成“领导”，而要译为贬义词“头子/头目”，而例15中的leadership显然带有褒义，所以和后面的role一词合译为“领导职位”。

四、根据语境中词义的语体色彩选词

所谓语体色彩，就是指文体色彩。文体有正式和非正式之分，有古典与现代之分，有文学性和非文学性之分，有口语和书面语之分，这些对翻译都会产生一定的影响，当然也会对选词产生影响。我们不妨看下面的例子：

例16

The wind had gone and there was perfect silence, save for the agitation of the stream, but a few steps upwards the gentle tinkle of the little runnels could be heard in their deeply-cut, dark, and narrow channels.

风已停息，万籁俱寂，只剩下河水的躁动声，再往前走几步就听到幽深

狭窄的水槽中小溪“叮咚叮咚”流动的声音。

例17

The lake plateau glistens in the afternoon light; the forests of Swiss pine are redolent with the scent of fresh resin; and in the villages the Engadin houses and their stunning façades bask in the sunshine.

高原湖泊在午后阳光的照射下波光粼粼，瑞士松树森林散发着新鲜树脂的芳香，恩加丁村里的住宅及其绝美的外墙沐浴在温暖的阳光里。

例16和例17出自散文，在翻译的时候，就要注意贴近散文的风格，选词要贴近其语体色彩，译文中的“停息”“万籁俱寂”“波光粼粼”“散发……芳香”以及“沐浴在温暖的阳光里”很好地传达出原文的语气和文体色彩，也符合中文读者的审美情趣，所以从选词上讲，以上两个译文是成功的。

不仅散文如此，实用文体也是如此，请看下面旅游文本和法律文本的例子：

例18

The Grand Tour takes you right to the source, revealing water in its different guises and the striking landscapes it has formed. The route leads to 22 lakes, to the Rhône and Aletsch glaciers, along mighty rivers and to the most impressive viewpoints high above raging white waters.

环游之路将带您前往水源头，了解水的不同形态及其形成的壮丽美景。该线路途经22座湖泊及罗讷河和阿莱奇冰川，沿着壮观的河流蜿蜒伸展。游客还可前往最令人陶醉的观景点，俯瞰脚下咆哮翻滚的白色浪花。

例19

This Contract and any rights or obligations hereunder are not transferable or assignable by one party to this Contract without the consent of the other party hereto.

未经另一方许可，合同一方不得转让本合同及本合同规定的权利和义务。

例18选自旅游文本，所以汉语译文在选词的时候注意了原文的语体特色，同时也注意到了汉语读者对旅游文本语体色彩的预期，下划线部分明显体现了旅游文本的语体色彩。例19属于合同文本，原文用词比较正式，如 hereunder、transferable or assignable、consent，汉语译文尤其是下划线部分体现了合同文本的语体色彩。

五、根据语境中词的文化意义选词

众所周知，语言是文化的载体。使用不同语言的民族会有某些相同的文化特征，但大多数情况下，由于各民族地理、历史背景不同，其文化差异还是非常显著的，这种差异可导致对词的联想意义不同。英汉两种语言在表达上存在很大的差异，所以，在翻译过程中，要考虑语言的文化语境。一般说来，带有文化特色的词要根据上下文采取适当的翻译策略，以读者明白其中的意思为宜。

例20

What a dull speech! He's merely *parroting* what many others have said.

多么枯燥的讲话！不过是鹦鹉学舌，重复许多人说过的话而已。

例21

One look at his face and we realized that a *thunderstorm* was about to break.

一看到他的脸，就知道暴风雨要来了。

这两个例子中，parrot（动词）和汉语的“鹦鹉学舌”意思相当，所以就直接翻译，thunderstorm用来比喻发怒，而汉语中也会使用“暴风雨”来比喻一个人要发脾气的样子，所以也可以直译。

例22

My brother is the *black sheep* of the family.

我弟弟是我们家的害群之马。

例23

Some people like the feeling of standing *head and shoulders above* others.

有些人喜欢鹤立鸡群的感觉。

例22和例23原文中的black sheep和head and shoulders above有着一定的文化含义，如果异化翻译为“黑羊”和“头和肩膀以上”，中文读者就很难理解，所以分别归化为“害群之马”和“鹤立鸡群”，汉语的这两个比喻比较恰当地传达了原文的意思。

例24

Don't you see that *walking skeleton* there?

看到那个骨瘦如柴的人了吗?

例25

She just wanted to *throw a sprat to catch a whale*.

她只是想吃小亏占大便宜。

2

以上两个例子中斜体部分同样不能进行字面上的翻译，即不能“保持异国情调”，而是要根据汉语的表达习惯进行归化。

本章的讲解表明，由于英汉两种语言本身的不同，加上词的含义、感情色彩、词义广狭、语体色彩受到语言语境、文体语境和文化语境的制约，翻译时应仔细考虑，用心斟酌，同时还要善于使用词典，力求在译文中找到相对应的词语，以保证意思和风格的忠实以及译文的流畅。

第二模块：篇章翻译讲解（社会问题）

原文

In most of Asia, marriage is widespread and illegitimacy almost unknown. In contrast, half of marriages in some Western countries end in divorce, and half of all children are born outside wedlock. Yet marriage is changing fast in East, South-East and South Asia, even though each region has different traditions.

Women are retreating from marriage as they go into the workplace. That's partly because, for a woman, being both employed and married is tough in Asia. Women there are the primary caregivers for husbands, children and, often, for ageing parents; and even when in full-time employment, they are expected to continue to play this role. This is true elsewhere in the world, but the burden that Asian women carry is particularly heavy. And Asian women who give up work to look after children find it hard to return when the offspring are grown. Not surprisingly, Asian women have an unusually pessimistic view of marriage. According to a survey carried out this year, many fewer Japanese women felt positive about their marriage than did Japanese men, or American women or men.

At the same time as employment makes marriage tougher for women, it offers them an alternative. More women are financially independent, so more of them can pursue a single life that may appeal more than the drudgery of a traditional marriage. More education has also contributed to the decline of marriage, because Asian women with the most education have always been the most reluctant to wed — and there are now many more highly educated women.

(255 words)

2

讲解

本篇所讲内容属于社会现象和问题，一般像这种主题的英语文本不会太难，即选词比较简单，句式结构不会特别复杂。但是要注意根据语境选词，这类文本会出现一些由动词加后缀转换而来的抽象名词，要注意翻译成汉语时添加范畴名词或进行相应的转换。具体讲解如下：

1. 选词

1) In most of Asia, marriage is widespread and *illegitimacy* almost unknown.

该句中的*illegitimacy*不应简单地译作“非法性”，而应根据语境译成“非婚生育”，甚至应该加上一个范畴名词“现象”，即“非婚生育现象”。整句话拟译为：

在亚洲大部分国家，合法婚姻甚为普遍，非婚生育现象鲜有发生。

2) And Asian women who give up work to look after children find it hard to return when the offspring are grown.

这里的return不能简单地译作“返回”，而是应根据上下文所谈女性是工作还是在家里照顾孩子的问题译成“重返职场”。整句话拟译为：

为照顾孩子而放弃工作的亚洲女性发现，孩子长大后自己却难返职场。

3) More education has also *contributed to* the decline of marriage...

很多译者只要一看到*contribute...to...*，就会将之译成“为……作出贡献”，但有些时候这一选词在上下文中显得比较突兀，实际上要根据上下文进行变通。本句话拟译为：

受教育更多促使结婚率下降……

2. 添加范畴名词

英语中有些由动词加后缀转换而来的名词在句子中作主语或宾语，如果在译文中依然需要译成主语或宾语，很多时候应该添加一定的范畴名词，如“现象”“态度”“问题”等，使译文句子读起来更通顺。有的时候一些形容

词如果在上下文中词性发生了改变，如变成了名词，也会添加范畴名词。

1) In most of Asia, marriage is widespread and *illegitimacy* almost unknown.

这个句子上文已经讲解，建议将*illegitimacy*译成“非婚生育现象”。

2) ...many fewer Japanese women *felt positive* about their marriage than did Japanese men, or American women or men.

这句话中的*felt positive*如果译成“感到积极/肯定/正面”，会显得拗口，不如将其译为“持正面的态度”或“持积极的态度”。整句话拟译为：

比起日本男性或美国女性和男性，对婚姻持正面态度的日本女性要少很多。

3. 动静之间的转换

词性转化是翻译中经常用到的技巧，一些英语的名词，如动词加-er或-or和其他后缀转换成的名词，有时在句子中会有很强的动词含义，这时一般会转译成汉语的动词。

1) Women there are the primary *caregivers* for husbands, children and, often, for ageing parents...

这句话中的*caregiver*直译成“照顾者”或“护工”显然非常拗口，而且“护工”更多时候表示职业，所以不如译成动词“照顾”。整句话拟译为：

在亚洲，女性的首要职责是照顾丈夫和孩子，而且往往要照顾年迈的父母……

2) *According to* a survey carried out this year, many fewer Japanese women *felt positive* about their marriage than did Japanese men, or American women or men.

很多译者看到介词短语*according to*就想译成“根据……”，实际上这一短语译成动词会显得更像汉语，这里不妨将*According to a survey carried out this year*译成“今年进行的一项调查显示”，即将*according to*译成“显示”。整句话拟译为：

今年进行的一项调查显示，比起日本男性或美国女性和男性，对婚姻持正面态度的日本女性要少很多。

3) More education has also contributed to the *decline of marriage*...

这里的*decline of marriage*如果译成“婚姻的减少”会显得不像汉语，不如译成“结婚率下降”，即将*decline*转译成动词。这句话的译文前面已经给出，此不赘述。

4. 定语从句的处理

如前面讲解所说，这篇文章句式结构并不十分复杂，其中出现了两处定语从句，而且是限定性定语从句，都比较短，所以翻译的时候译成汉语的定语，放在被修饰词的前面即可。

1) This is true elsewhere in the world, but the burden *that Asian women carry* is particularly heavy.

这句话中的定语从句that Asian women carry 很短，直接译成汉语的定语即可。整句话拟译为：

虽然在世界其他地方也是如此，但亚洲女性的负担格外繁重。

2) And Asian women *who give up work to look after children* find it hard to return when the offspring are grown.

这句话中的定语从句who give up work to look after children也很短，所以翻译中可以前置。整句话拟译如下：

为照顾孩子而放弃工作的亚洲女性发现，孩子长大后自己却难返职场。

5. 合句

英语语篇中如果相邻的句子均较短，而且语义相连，翻译时应作合句处理。本篇有一处即是如此：

Women are retreating from marriage as they go into the workplace. That's partly because, for a woman, being both employed and married is tough in Asia.

这两句话本身不长，而且后一句显然说明了前一句的部分原因，所以建议翻译时合句。拟译如下：

随着女性进入职场，她们从婚姻中淡出，部分原因在于：在亚洲，对女性来说，兼顾工作和婚姻非常困难。

6. 长句的翻译

本篇的最后一句较长，要注意对原句进行结构分析。其中前面是结果，后面说明原因，但原因较长，译文中这部分最好依然放在后面，否则会让人感觉“头重脚轻”。

More education has also contributed to the decline of marriage, because Asian women with the most education have always been the most reluctant to wed — and there are now many more highly educated women. 拟译为：

受教育更多促使结婚率下降，因为接受教育最多的亚洲女性本来就最不愿意结婚，而现在有更多女性拥有高学历。

7. 注意风格

本篇探讨的是社会问题，中文中此类型的篇章一般措辞比较正式，所以在翻译过程中应注意选用正式的词汇。

参考译文

在亚洲大部分国家，合法婚姻甚为普遍，非婚生育现象鲜有发生。与此

相反，西方一些国家有一半的婚姻以离婚收场，一半儿童为婚外所生。然而，无论在东亚、东南亚，还是南亚，婚姻状况都在发生很大的变化，尽管这些地区的传统各不相同。

随着女性进入职场，她们从婚姻中淡出，部分原因在于：在亚洲，对女性来说，兼顾工作和婚姻非常困难。在亚洲，女性的首要职责是照顾丈夫和孩子，而且往往要照顾年迈的父母；即便是做全职工作，仍要承担这样的责任。虽然在世界其他地方也是如此，但亚洲女性的负担格外繁重。为照顾孩子而放弃工作的亚洲女性发现，孩子长大后自己却难返职场。亚洲女性对婚姻抱有异乎寻常的悲观态度也就不足为奇了。今年进行的一项调查显示，比起日本男性或美国女性和男性，对婚姻持正面态度的日本女性要少很多。

就业在让婚姻对女性而言变得更艰难的同时，也为她们提供了另一种选择。越来越多的女性经济独立，所以越来越多的人可以追求单身生活，单身生活比传统婚姻单调沉闷的生活更具吸引力。受教育更多促使结婚率下降，因为接受教育最多的亚洲女性本来就最不愿意结婚，而现在有更多女性拥有高学历。

第三模块：翻译练习

1. 请运用本章所学翻译技巧翻译下列句子。

- 1) He is the last man to come to work every day.
- 2) He is the last man to accuse his friends.
- 3) He is the last man for such an important job.
- 4) This is the last place where I expected to meet you.
- 5) After taking off his coat, he wanted to have a rest, but when he looked at his watch, he found the plane was taking off, so he took off and rushed to the boarding gate.
- 6) Swiss cities entice visitors with their rich history, cultural and culinary diversity, and compact scale — almost everywhere is within walking distance.
- 7) He found Hemingway to be utterly unlike the rough, tough, brusque, outdoors, literary lion.
- 8) He was a man of history, so you have to be alert.
- 9) You could tell he was absorbed in his conversation, and not paying much attention to the road.
- 10) Vietnam War was his entrée to the new Administration, his third

incarnation as a foreign policy consultant.

- 11) Larsson is a master at depicting the relationship between business, social hypocrisy and criminal behaviour, and his heroes do not want to be rescued through any form of conventional state intervention.
- 12) To break the ice, Ted spoke of his interest in mountain climbing, and they soon had a conversation going.
- 13) More magnificent horses never were seen; glossy coats, tremendous haunches, strong enough to shake a house if it came to an earnest pull, immense feet, slow-stepping; very gentle the huge creatures seemed.
- 14) Each Party may terminate this Cooperation Agreement at any time upon three months written notice to the other Party.
- 15) Amid a mass of worldwide troubles and a poor record for the twentieth century, we see our species — with cause — as functioning very badly, as blunders when not knaves, as violent, ignoble, corrupt, inept, incapable of mastering the forces that threaten us, weakly subject to our worst instincts; in short, decadent.

2. 请翻译以下篇章。

The flight from marriage in Asia is thus the result of the greater freedom that women enjoy these days, which is to be celebrated. But it is also creating social problems. Compared with the West, Asian countries have invested less in pensions and other forms of social protection, on the assumption that the family will look after ageing or ill relatives. That can no longer be taken for granted. The decline of marriage is also contributing to the collapse in the birth rate. Fertility in East Asia has fallen from 5.3 children per woman in the late 1960s to 1.6 now. And there are other, less obvious issues.

Can marriage be revived in Asia? Maybe, if expectations of those roles of both sexes change; but shifting traditional attitudes is hard. Governments cannot legislate away popular prejudices. They can, though, encourage change. Relaxing divorce laws might, paradoxically, boost marriage. Women who now steer clear of wedlock might be more willing to tie the knot if they know it can be untied — not just because they can get out of the marriage if it doesn't work, but also because their freedom to leave might keep their husbands on their toes.