Contents

Chapter ❶

Introduction

1. Definition of Translation

There are many definitions of translation. Now let us look at a few of them:

Translating is the art of recomposing a work in another language without losing its original flavor.   —*Columbia Encyclopedia*

把已说出或写出的话的意思用另一种言语表达出来的活动。

──《中国大百科全书·语言文字卷》

Translating is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL).   —J. C. Catford

Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.   —Eugene A. Nida

To translate is to change into another language, retaining as much of the sense as one can.   —Samuel Johnson

(Translating) is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way the author intended the text.   —Peter Newmark

Translation is an art that involves the re-creation of a work in another language for readers with a different background.   —Malcolm Cowley

In the above definitions, several words are of much importance. The first one is "textual" (or "text"), which reminds us what we usually translate are texts rather than independent words or sentences. The second word is "natural", which tells us that it is not enough to produce grammatically correct sentences (that is the basic demand, especially in Chinese-English translation) but idiomatic, natural sentences. A further demand is raised in the third word "flavor"

(or "style"), that is, the translator should do his best to retain the special characteristics of the original writer. For example, political essays or colloquialisms, or works by Hemingway and by Mark Twain should be reproduced into different styles based on the original ones.

We may add some definitions by modern translation theorists.

Israeli translation theorist Gideon Toury says: "A translation is taken to be any target-language utterance which is presented or regarded as such within the target culture, on whatever grounds."

German translation theorist Christiane Nord gives this definition: "Translation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanded function of the target text."

Toury emphasizes the culture while Nord gives more emphasis to the pragmatic approach, that is, to fulfill the function through the text. However, American translation theorist Jean Sager points out another aspect: "Translation is an externally motivated industrial activity, supported by information technology, which is diversified in response to the particular needs of this form of communication." This definition puts translation as an industry, and translators have to suit the needs of their employers, who may make special demands.

Traditionally, the translator was held to be responsible for the source text. This is not enough. From the above definitions we find not only "in the way the author intended" but also "for readers with a different background". This clearly reveals that the process of translation consists of five links:

| Author of the source text | → | Source text | → | Translator | → | Target text | → | Readers of the target text |
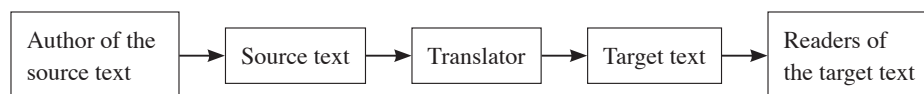
Translation (or the translator) is often compared to a bridge, which is not just between the source text and the target text, but between the author of the text (dispatcher of the original information) and the reader of the target text (final and indirect receiver or receptor of the information). So, as an intermediate information receiver and at the same time the secondary dispatcher, the translator has to analyze the intention of the author in writing the source text and try to convey it to the reader of the translation, who should understand the intention of the author through the target text. That is why translation is considered as an ostensive-inferential cognitive process.

We would find more or less the same emphasis in some of the definitions given by some Chinese translators:

翻译是一种跨文化的信息交流与交换活动，其本质是传播，是传播学中一个有特殊性质的领域。　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　——吕俊

翻译是把具有某一文化背景的发送者用某种语言(文字)所表述的内容尽可能充分地、有效地传达给使用另一种语言(文字)、具有另一种文化背景的接受者。

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　——沈苏儒

翻译是两个语言社会之间的交际过程和交际工具，它的目的是要促进本语言社会的政治、经济和文化进步，它的任务是要把原作中包含的现实世界的逻辑映像或艺术映像，完好无损地从一种语言译注到另一种语言中去。　　　　　——张今

We can quote the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* to sum up translation as a task to be accomplished:

It is sometimes said that there is no task more complex than translation—a claim that can be readily believed when all the variables involved are taken into account. Translators not only need to know their source language well; they must also have a thorough understanding of the field of knowledge covered by the source text, and of any social, cultural, or emotional connotations that need to be specified in the target language if the intended effect is to be conveyed. The same special awareness needs to be present for the target language, so that points of special phrasing, local (e.g. regional) expectations, and so on, can all be taken into account.

Here "intended effect" is determined by the original author, the very translator, and very often the employer or the commissioner of the translation.

Translation can be classified into the following types:

1) Oral (interpretation): instantaneous (consecutive), simultaneous

2) Written: whole text literature, pragmatic excerpt, partial, gist, summary, selective, and adapted translation and rewriting in another language (including "general translation" and "gloss translation")

3) Machine aided translation and machine (computer) translation

Then, there is indirect translation, referring to translation not from the source text but from the translation of the source text in another language.

In a sense, capacity in written translation is the basis of oral interpretation, but the former allows more refining and better accuracy while the latter requires more on-the-spot handling

capacity. Our entrance into the information age often asks for different kinds of translation other than whole text translation. For example, the translator may be given a text of, say, 3,000 words, and is asked to sum up the main idea in 300 words in the target language. In this case, more than language transformation is needed.

As for the purpose of translation, let's quote Peter Newmark from his *About Translation*: 1) to contribute to the understanding and peace between nations, groups, and individuals; 2) to transmit knowledge in plain, appropriate and accessible language, in particular in relation to technology transfer; 3) to explain and mediate between cultures on the basis of common humanity, respecting their strengths, implicitly exposing their weaknesses; 4) to translate the world's great books, the universal works in which the human spirit is enshrined and lives; 5) as a general aid or as a skill required in the acquisition of a foreign language.

2. Criteria of Translation

The activity of translating in China began thousands of years ago when people of different tribes and ethnic groups speaking different languages and dialects communicated with each other. So China has a long history of practice in translation. And later the translation of Buddhist scripture made great contribution to Chinese culture. Xuanzang (玄奘) alone presided over the translation of more than a thousand volumes of Buddhist scriptures. Many translators summed up their experience and raised standards of translation. Zhi Qian (支谦) pointed out in《法句经序》that "佛言，依其义不用饰，取其法不以严。其传经者，当令易晓，勿失厥义，是则为善", emphasizing the conveyance of the original meaning and expressiveness of the translation. Dao An (道安) of the Eastern Jin Dynasty also warned translators on guard against 五失本 ("five losses": five ways of losing the original essence in translation) in《摩诃钵罗若波罗蜜经钞序》[*]. The "five losses" in improper translation he mentioned are: 1) unnecessary reversion of word order, 2) added description (which does not exist in the original text), 3) cutting of repeated wording (necessary as religious scriptures for prayers), 4) omission of repetition of certain conclusive messages, and 5) cutting of contents repeated as introduction to a new topic. We can see that he emphasized the importance of following the original text faithfully.

Ma Jianzhong (马建忠) is remembered not only for his contribution in writing the first Chinese grammar book《马氏文通》but also for making important remarks about translation based on the comparison between European languages and Chinese. He held that the translator should see to it that:

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[*] See《中国译学理论史稿》(陈福康著，上海外语教育出版社，1992)

所有相当之实义，委曲推究，务审其音声之高下，析其字句之繁简，尽其文体之变态，及其义理精深奥折之所由然。夫如是，则一书到手，经营反复，确知其意旨之所在，而又摹写其神情，仿佛其语气，然后心悟神解，振笔而书，译成之文，适如其所译而止，而曾无毫发出入于其间，夫而后能使阅者所得之益与观原文无异，是则为善译也已。

According to him, the translator should carefully read and analyze the source text to get the real meaning, the structure, the style, the spirit, the tone, and the sound effect before he begins to translate. Actually he also mentioned that the effect of the translation on the target readers should be the same as that of the original text on its readers.

The most popular and acclaimed criterion was the three characters: 信, 达, 雅 (usually translated as "faithfulness", "expressiveness", and "elegance/refinement") raised by Yan Fu (严复). He said in《天演论·译例言》:

"译"事三难：信、达、雅。求其信已大难矣，顾信矣不达，虽译犹不译也，则达尚焉。……译文取明深义，故词句之间，时有所颠倒附益，不斤斤于字比句次，而意义则不倍本文。……至原文词理本深，难于共喻，则当前思后衬，以显其意。凡此经营，皆以为达，为达即以为信也。《易》曰：修辞立诚。子曰：辞达而已。又曰：言之无文，行之不远。三者乃文章正轨，亦即为译事楷模。故信、达而外，求其尔雅。

The three characters have been regarded as guiding principles of translation for many years in China. However, the content summed up in the three characters is very general or even sweeping, especially the first character 信 or "faithfulness". In what way can a translation be considered as "faithful"? There have been many interpretations of them over the years. Professor Wang Zuoliang (王佐良) explained the three characters raised by Yan Fu as follows: 他之所谓"信"是指为读者准确传达原作的内容，"达"指尽量运用他们所习见的表达方式，"雅"是通过艺术地再现和加强原作的风格特色来吸引他们。

Modern scholars also raised different criteria:

译书自以能存真为第一要义……最好一面极力求不失原意，一面要译文流畅。

——郑振铎

5

> 译者不但要求达意，并且要以传神为目的，译文必须忠实于原文之字神句气与言外之意。
>
> ——林语堂

Liu Zhongde (刘重德) and Si Guo (思果) modified the three characters raised by Yan Fu respectively into: 信——信于内容，达——达如其分，切——切合风格 and 信、达、贴(贴切，译什么像什么).

Fu Lei (傅雷) said the purpose of translation was to "achieve the 'spirit' of the original"(获致原作的精神)，and he added: 以效果而论，翻译应像临画一样，所求的不在形似，而是神似。He compared translation to copying a painting and raised the idea of "spiritual similarity", which is, however, very difficult to grasp.

Qian Zhongshu (钱钟书) put forward the idea of "conversion", which aimed at "perfection": 文学翻译的最高理想可以说是"化"。把作品从一国文字转变成另一国文字，既不能因语文习惯的差异而露出生硬牵强的痕迹，又能完全保存原作的风味，那就算得入于"化境"。It is really very difficult to translate 化境 into English. It is a term used in art, meaning "perfection" or "consummation". It raises the highest criterion for translation, but it is more of an ideal aim than something that can be achieved in practice as nobody can claim his translation is perfect.

Xu Yuanchong (许渊冲) proposed that the translation of poetry should not only be 意美, but also be 音美 and 形美. As for 化, he raised three levels: 等化, 浅化, 深化, so that the translation shall make the reader of the translation 知之, 好之, 乐之. These are the reflections of a well-versed poetry translator. His French and English translations of many classic Chinese poems are well received by Western scholars. He was concerned not only about the meaning but also about the sound effect and even the form of poems from an artistic point of view. He also said that translation was an endless process seeking for the better in order to bring enjoyment to the target reader.

According to Lin Yiliang (林以亮), the translator should "achieve a kind of 'spiritual harmony'" (达到一种心灵上的契合) with the original author. He said: 这种契合超越了空间和时间上的限制，打破了种族上和文化上的樊笼。Here "spiritual harmony" means more than "agreement" but a kind of spiritual joining or harmony between the author of the source text and the translator. And we can add that the actual purpose for the translator is to set up a harmonious link between the source author (information sender) and the target reader (information receptor), on whom the function of any translation is realized.

Every translator should ask himself the question raised by Hu Shi (胡适): 我们要想一想，如果罗素不是英国人而是中国人，是今天的中国人，他要写那句话，该怎样写呢？

Now let's quote some sayings by Western scholars:

1) A translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work. 2) The style and manner of writing should be of the same character as that of the original. 3) A translation should have all the ease of the original composition.   —Alexander Fraser Tytler

We expect approximate truth in translation...what we want to have is the truest possible feel of the original. The characters, the situation, the reflection, must come to us as they were in the author's mind and breast, not necessarily by precisely as he had them on his lips.

—Oliver Edwards

A good translator is 1) to give a just representation of the sense of the original, 2) to convey into his version, as much as possible in a consistency with the genius of the language with which he writes, the author's spirit and manners, and 3) to take care that the version has at least the quality of an original performance so as to appear natural and easy.

—George Campbell

The test of a real translation is that it should not read like translation at all.

—J. B. Philips

A good translation should achieve: 1) Norms: following established rules; 2) Accuracy: faithful reproduction of the original discourse, that is, focusing on the source text; 3) Acceptability: social appropriateness of a linguistic action in the target text culture, that is focusing on target text.   —Gideon Toury

No translation, however learned, is of any value that does not give at least some of the joy to the readers that was given by its original.   —A. J. Arberry

(Tri-ness) Faithfulness, expressiveness, and gracefulness were considered the golden rule in the field of translation.   —Herbert Rotheinstein

...the best translation is one which 1) uses the normal language forms of the receptor language, 2) communicates, as much as possible, to the receptor language speakers the same meaning that was understood by the speakers of the source language, and 3) maintains the dynamics of the original source language text. Maintaining the "dynamics" of the source text means that the translation is presented in such a way that it will, hopefully, evoke the same response as the source text attempted to evoke.   —Mildred L. Larson

In his *Methodological Aspects of Interpretation and Translation Research,* Gile says a

good translation should achieve "ideational clarity, linguistic acceptability, terminological accuracy, and fidelity".

If we compare their sayings, we find faithfulness (信) and expressiveness (达) can embrace all. The most influential perhaps is the theory of "functional equivalence" (later modified as "dynamic equivalence") raised by Eugene A. Nida[*], which, some people say, "has established a new paradigm for translation". But other people have different opinions and say that though "functional equivalence" makes sense theoretically, it can hardly guide the practice of translation. Still others deem it as an ideal impossible to realize. There are also people who raise some doubt about it as the target readers may have different purposes of reading than those of the source readers and the so called "function" can hardly be judged with the same standard. As a matter of fact, different types of translation, the actual purpose of translation, the target readership, and the demand of the designator of translation, etc., may all affect the standard of translation required.

The guiding principle in actual translation is very important in judging the quality of a translation. There are two popular terms concerning this. One is **domestication**, first raised by Lawrence Venuti. It means a translation strategy for a transparent, fluent style in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for readers of the translation. Opposed to domestication is the term **foreignization** (also called **alienation**), which aims at a translation deliberately breaking target conventions by retaining some foreignness or exotic flavor of the original. The two most famous English translations of *Hong Lou Meng* (《红楼梦》) can be thought to have followed the two opposite principles. David Hawkes intended to make his translation *The Story of the Stone* an easy reader for native speakers of English, so he made many "emendations", thus his translation is more of domestication, while the translation entitled *A Dream of Red Mansions* by Yang Hsien-yi (杨宪益) and Gladys Yang (戴乃迭) follows the principle of foreignization in order to introduce to the West not only the story but Chinese culture to the fullest possible extent.

The following is a passage from *Luck* by Mark Twain and its Chinese translation:

> If you'll believe me, he went through with flying colors on examination days! He went through on that purely superficial "cram", and got compliments too, while others, who knew a thousand times more than he, got plucked.
>
> 你信也罢，不信也罢，考试那天他可是出足了风头。他靠一知半解的临时抱佛脚居然考及格了，还受到了表扬。好多人比他强一千倍，反而没及格。

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* See《新编奈达论翻译》(谭载喜编著，中国对外翻译出版公司，1999)，《等值翻译论》(吴新祥、李宏安著，江西教育出版社，1990) and 外国翻译理论研究丛书 compiled by 许钧(湖北教育出版社，1995).

Both the English original and its Chinese translation are of colloquial style, and both are idiomatic expressions. But study carefully and we will find many changes in the actual wording of the translation. The conditional clause "if you'll believe me" has been changed into 你信也罢，不信也罢, "with flying colors" becomes 出风头, and "got plucked" is rendered as 不及格 according to the context. All such accommodations are made to produce a smoothly reading translation. You will surely agree that this translation is very much "domesticated". Domestication emphasizes the naturalness and smoothness of the translation. To achieve this, making proper use of idioms and other idiomatic expressions of the target language is very important.

The following are some more examples of translation guided by the principle of domestication. This kind of translation requires a very good command of both the source and the target languages on the part of the translator.

1. 我对这个消息**半信半疑**。

   I took the news *with a grain of salt*.

2. 他每天要处理许多**棘手的问题**。

   He has many *hot potatoes* to handle every day.

3. 妻子骂骂咧咧地闯了进来，这个得了**"气管炎"**的男人一下子**手足无措**。

   This *hen-pecked* man became *on tenterhooks* when his wife scolded her way into the room.

4. 同学和老师觉得我有问题，**精神不正常**了，家访，谈话，拉我回"正道"——老老实实念书，念最普通的书。可我**有我的主见，决不反悔**。

   My classmates and teachers thought there was something wrong with me, that I was *off my head*. They came to my home to talk me round, to steer me back onto "the right track"—to get me to crack the standard textbooks. But I *stuck to my guns*.

5. 可是这个看上去很简单的问题却**把她难住了**。

   But this seemingly simple question *had her in a pickle*.

6. (士隐)那禁得贫病交攻，竟渐渐的露出了那**下世的光景**来。

   Aging and a prey to poverty and ill health, he began to look like a man *with one foot in the grave*.

7. 那衣裳虽是旧的，我也没大很穿，你要弃嫌，我就不敢说了。

   The clothes may not be new, but they haven't been worn much. Still, if you *turn up your nose at* them, I shan't complain.

9

A warning should be given here: Some English idioms and idiomatic expressions (including some dead metaphors and faded similes) have been used so frequently that they have become **clichés**. You may find them vivid because it may be the first time for you to come across them, but to native speakers of English they have lost their freshness and vividness and sound hackneyed. If you are not sure if an idiom is a cliché, you are advised to consult *The Dictionary of Clichés*. The following are some examples: hit the nail on the head (击中要害), put all one's eggs in one basket (孤注一掷), lock, stock, and barrel (全部), a bolt from the blue (晴天霹雳), cry wolf (狼来了), sour grapes (酸葡萄), a blessing in disguise (塞翁失马), etc.

3. Is Translation Easy?

Some people think translation is easy: As long as you know some grammar rules of a foreign language, you can translate with the help of a dictionary.

Is it really so? First, let us take the simple word *make* as an example.

Make is one of the words we learn when we begin to learn English, and many people think its meaning is 做 in Chinese. But you will agree that the word "make" in the following sentences cannot be translated as 做 .

1. He *made* a great mistake. (犯了大错)
2. It does not *make* any sense to me. (讲得通)
3. I'm not *made* for running. (天生就会)
4. He sent her six valentines to *make* his point. (表明心迹)
5. Let's *make* it five o'clock, OK? (定在)
6. The accident *made* headline the next day. (成了头条新闻)
7. More Chinese companies *make* Fortune 500 list. (被列入／进入)
8. Do you think you can *make* it within three days? (完成)
9. That *makes* the third time I've asked you not to do that! (可是第三次了)
10. It is a common saying that "Manners *make* the man", and another says that "Mind *makes* the man". But truer than either is a third that "Home *makes* the man". (能看出一个人的为人；造就／塑造人)

So《钢铁是怎样炼成的》is translated as *The Making of a Hero*, because the book tells how an ordinary man becomes a hero. If it was translated as "How Iron and Steel Are Made", people would think it is a book about the steel industry.

10

Chinese and English often have different ways to express similar ideas. For example, we say in Chinese 她在唱歌／读书，but in English it is simply "She was singing/reading". It would sound redundant to add the word "song/book". In Chinese we say 吃药 and 喝汤，but in English they say "take medicine" and "eat soup" (because "soup" is considered as food rather than drink). In Chinese 和朋友一起玩 can be used to refer to both children and grown-ups, but in English "to play with one's friends" only suits talking about children and for grown-ups the proper expression is "to have a good time with one's friends".

Now look at the following seemingly easy sentences and see if you can translate them properly. What is WRONG with the translations provided in brackets?

1. He is easily the best student in the class. (他很容易地成了班上最好的学生。)
2. The stranger robbed his wife. (那个陌生人抢了他的妻子。)
3. I can't agree more. (我不能同意更多了。)
4. They gave the boy the lie. (他们对男孩说谎。)
5. This is a very good price. (这是一个非常好的价钱。)
6. She sighed for her mother. (她为她母亲叹了一口气。)
7. Her mother died of difficult labor. (她母亲劳累而死。)
8. I won't do it to save my life. (为了救自己的命，我不会干。)
9. I dare say he is honest. (我敢说他是诚实的。)
10. I have no opinion of him. (我对他没有看法。)
11. He was then bright in the eye. (那时他眼里放出了光芒。)
12. Calculation never makes a hero. (计算界从来没有造出英雄。)
13. Their panic was their only punishment. (惊恐是他们受到的唯一处罚。)
14. Do you have a family? (你成家了吗？)
15. Success is only an idea away. (成功只是一个想法之外。)

Now, let's analyze them one by one.

The word "easily" in Sentence 1 is not of the usual sense and can't be translated as 容易地. It means "without doubt; by far". So the sentence should be translated as 他绝对／无疑是班上最好的学生 or 他比班上别的学生要好许多.

The meaning of 抢了他的妻子 in the translation of Sentence 2 is ambiguous. It may mean the stranger took away the woman and made her his own wife. But in the English sentence, what was actually taken was not the woman but her money or personal belongings. So a clear translation should be 那个陌生人抢了他妻子的钱（东西）.

11

Sentence 3 uses a negative form to express the meaning of the superlative degree. The translation is wrong because "agree" here is an intransitive verb (when used as a transitive verb, it is often followed by a *that*-clause) and "more" is not its object but its adverbial. So the sentence should be translated as 我完全同意, or more vividly 我举双手赞成.

Sentence 4 is an idiomatic way to express certain ideas. Here "give" does not mean "make somebody possess something", but rather "scold" or "punish". So the correct translation of the sentence is 他们指责男孩说谎（他们指责男孩编造的这个谎言）.

"Good" is a typical word whose meaning is often vague. Sentence 5 is an utterance by a customer. So it would be better to translate the sentence simply as 真便宜.

There are many idioms in English, of which a large number are phrasal verbs. The meaning of the phrase "sigh for" in Sentence 6 is "feel a deep longing for (something that is lost or far away)". So the sentence should be translated as 她很怀念母亲 or 她渴望见到母亲.

Some people tend to think a word in one language may always be turned into a corresponding word in another language. So they make an equation between "labor" and 劳动. As a matter of fact, "labor" has some meaning that is not covered by the Chinese word 劳动. In Sentence 7 it means "giving birth to a baby, emphasizing the process". So the sentence actually means 她母亲死于难产. (劳累 can be translated as "hard work".) Don't be too sure of yourself and consult the dictionary more.

Infinitive phrases are often used as adverbials of purpose. But "to save my life" in Sentence 8 is not adverbial of purpose. It is an adverbial of concession only without the word "even". The sentence means 我（宁）死也不干.

We all know "dare" means 敢 in its normal sense. But many words will lose their usual meaning in colloquialism. "I dare say" does not mean the speaker is sure of something. On the contrary, it shows a tone that the speaker is not very sure and is only offering his own tentative opinion without imposing it on others. It simply means 我认为／我看／我觉得.

"Have no opinion" in Sentence 10 is also an idiomatic colloquial expression. It means "have a very poor opinion". So the correct translation should be 我觉得他不怎么样.

In Chinese we say someone's 眼睛放光 only when they see something very exciting such as a large sum of money or a huge pile of treasures, or when they hear some really exciting news. But "bright in the eye" is one of the many roundabout ways of saying someone is drunk. Sentence 11 should therefore be translated as 那时他已喝醉了.

The word "calculation" in Sentence 12 does not mean actual work over numbers but "be (too) careful in planning", and in this context it has some derogatory implication. This sentence is a proverb and can be translated as 举棋不定永远成不了英雄.

惊恐是⋯⋯惩罚 sounds somewhat illogical. In Sentence 13 "punishment" refers to what they suffered rather than the actual punishment they received (and nobody had given them any punishment at all). The sentence means "they panicked but suffered nothing else", so it can be translated as 他们只是受了一场虚惊(有惊无险).

Some people may think你成家了吗 is quite a good translation of Sentence 14 as it sounds much better than 你有家吗. But the word "family" has different reference from that of 家 or 家庭 in Chinese. The question "Do you have a family" is not intended to ask about a person's marriage status but about one's duty to a family, usually emphasizing the duty of a parent. So a proper translation should be 你有孩子了吗？ Many Chinese students say "I have a big family" when they introduce themselves. Foreigners might get surprised and wonder "how come that they have got many children at such young ages when China takes family planning as a basic national policy". If you say "I live in a big family", you imply that you have many siblings. By the way, "family planning" does not refer to any planning about the financial management of the family. It is also different from "birth control" (a way of avoiding pregnancy). The word "family" here also emphasizes children, and the term refers to how many children a couple would like to have and what the ideal intervals between them are. Actually it means 计划生育 but not 节育. So if a couple want to have five or more children they still can have a "family planning".

The translation of Sentence 15 makes no logical sense. The sentence means if they had a good idea they would be successful, so it can be translated as 成功与失败只是一念之差。

Now, let's take a Chinese-English translation for example: 我长得太丑，她根本不看我。Some people translated it as "I was ugly looking and she did not look at me at all". On the surface there is nothing wrong with the translation. But we would ask, if "she" didn't look at "me", how did "she" know "I" was ugly? "She never took a second look at me" would better convey the meaning of the original.

Bilingual translation between Chinese and English is a kind of transformation between the two languages. But as each language has different ways to express an idea, nobody can say there is any absolute version for any translation. We all know no two students will produce exactly the same version though the class is assigned the same translation. Now let's take the translation of this sentence as an example: 她没有出席开幕式，这件事并没有使人感到意外。

Some students may translate it "faithfully" as "She didn't (failed to) come to/didn't turn up at/ wasn't present at the opening ceremony. This thing/matter caused no surprise/surprised nobody."

The word "thing" or "matter" here sounds Chinglish and could be replaced by "fact" or "event". But it is wrong to replace it with the pronoun "it"—and many students would choose "it"—

though either "this" or "that" will be OK. But this version sounds a bit aloof and another possible version might be: "(The fact) that she didn't come to/wasn't present at the opening ceremony caused no surprise." This version sounds a little formal in style. To make it more coherent, the two sentences can be combined by using a conjunction: "She didn't come to/wasn't present at the opening ceremony, but/and this caused no surprise."

Most native speakers of English would organize the sentence in other ways: "It caused no surprise/It was not surprising that she didn't come to the opening ceremony." Or: "As was expected, she didn't come to the opening ceremony."

We may also use a definite subject: "We were not surprised that she didn't come to the opening ceremony/by her absence at the opening ceremony."

Then we can add some words for emphasis: "We were by no means/not at all/not in the least surprised by her absence at the opening ceremony."

More possible versions:

1. "To nobody's surprise, she didn't come to/wasn't present at the opening ceremony."

2. "Her absence at the opening ceremony caused no surprise."

3. "Not unexpectedly that she didn't come to the opening ceremony."

4. "Nobody was surprised by her absence at the opening ceremony."

There are almost endless possible versions for such a simple sentence. Then which is the best or the most proper one? It depends on the context as well as the translator's personal preference. And the judgment can hardly be made as this also concerns different ways or guiding principles of translation.

4. Literal Translation vs. Liberal Translation

There has been an argument going on in China for years between 直译 and 意译. There are different translations for the two terms in English: 直译 is translated as "literal translation" or "word-for-word translation", and 意译 as "liberal translation" or "free translation". But these terms do not really make much sense. For example, a "word-for-word" translation—even between two close languages of the same family—in most cases will make no sense. As for "free translation", the translator is never really "free", but is always restricted by the source text. Actually, the purpose of any and all translation is to convey the meaning of the source text, just as Eugene Nida put it: "Translating is the translating of meaning." Actually, all translation is in this sense 意译. When the target language can express the same idea through a form (idiom, sentence pattern, etc.) similar to that of the source language, it seems to be a "literal translation". However,

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it is not really word-for-word translation without any change. For example, can you say 我是一个学生 is the literal translation of "I am a student"? First, there is no article in Chinese, and 一个 is often not necessary in Chinese. Then, if we go deeper, we find 学生 is not equal to "student", which usually refers to 中学生 or 大学生, while 学生 can also refer to 小学生, which should be "pupil" in English.

There is a joke making fun of word-for-word translation:

A boy asked the teacher in a class: "May I go to the toilet?" The teacher said, "Go ahead." But the boy sat in his seat without moving. After a while, he asked again, "May I go to the toilet, please?" The teacher said, "Go ahead." But this time the boy still sat in his seat and didn't go. His desk-mate asked him in a whisper why he didn't go and he replied: "你没听老师说'去你个头'啊！"

You may argue this is not a true case, so it does not prove anything. However, problems will emerge if you always try to follow the exact wording of the original. Now, let us look at the sentence "You flatter me". A "literal translation" in Chinese may read like 你吹捧我／你抬举我／你拍我马屁. Do such versions make real sense? Someone may offer a better version: (你) 过奖了, or even 哪里，哪里！／岂敢，岂敢！ On the surface these latter versions are better as they are idiomatic and natural. However, if we take pragmatics into consideration, that is, if we consider the purpose of the speaker of this utterance, we shall find the latter versions do not convey the original meaning correctly either. We know 过奖了 and similar expressions in Chinese are often used to show politeness rather than real modesty. They are used as replies whenever one is praised. But a native speaker of English never uses "You flatter me" to express politeness or even modesty. The usual reply to praise is "Thank you". He will say "You flatter me" only when someone feels he is really overestimated, and often has been asked or expected to do something really beyond him. So it is an indirect way of refusal or denial. In certain circumstances, the sentence "You flatter me" can be translated as 我可没有那么大的能耐.

Now, let's look at an example from Chinese into English. Some students translated 大哥比我大21岁，经常开玩笑说他养得出我 as "My brother was 21 years older than I, and he often joked that he could have fathered me." On the surface the translation is very "literal", but is it "faithful"? It is good for the translator to use the word "father" as a verb (instead of using "give birth", etc.), but "could have fathered me" may hint something immoral that the brother might actually be the real father of "I". So the second part should be retranslated as "could have fathered a child of my age" to convey the meaning of the original. You can hardly judge whether this is a "literal" or a "liberal" translation, but it properly conveys the original meaning and is thus a good translation.

The translator's task is to convey the meaning of the original, but there are different comprehension of meaning itself, or there are different levels of meanings and thus different translations. The following are some examples:

1. We had plenty of company in the way of wagonloads and mule-loads of tourists—and dust.

   Version A: 我们有很多以马车装载和骡子负载的旅游者这种方式的同伴——和尘土。

   Version B: 跟我们做伴的真不少，有乘马车的游客，有骑骡子的游客——一路尘土飞扬。

   Version C: 我们的旅伴真不少：马车载的，骡子驮的，还有滚滚尘土。

2. "It's an order from President Bush." "I don't care if it is from bush, tree, or grass."

   Version A:"这是布什总统的命令。""我不在意它来自灌木、树还是草。"

   Version B:"这是布什总统的命令。""我才不在乎它来自布什、树木还是草呢。"

   Version C:"这是布什总统的命令。""管它什么布什、布头还是布片呢，与我无关。"

3. But Diana's champions were overwhelmingly women. Like many of them, she had a heartless husband, in-laws from hell, and fickle boyfriends.

   Version A: 可是黛安娜的冠军绝大多数是妇女。像她们中的很多，她有一个无情的丈夫，来自地狱的姻亲，感情易变的男朋友。

   Version B: 可是黛安娜的拥护者绝大多数是妇女。和她们中的很多人一样，她有个无情无义的丈夫，地狱般的姻亲，见异思迁的男朋友。

   Version C: 而拥戴黛安娜的绝大多数是妇女。因为她的遭遇和她们中的许多人相似：丈夫无情无义，婆家人蛮不讲理，男友个个负心。

Versions A in the above succeed only in translating the surface meaning or literal meaning; Versions B bring out the actual meaning, and Versions C go further to express the meaning smoothly. Versions C are what competent translators should aim at.

Instead of "literal translation" and "liberal translation", Peter Newmark raised another pair of terms— "semantic translation" and "communicative translation". The former refers to the translation of documents, political articles, etc., in which the wording is as important as the meaning, thus requiring more attention to the way of expression, and the latter refers to the translation of literature works like stories and novels, thus allowing the translator more "freedom" to choose proper forms as long as the meaning and aesthetic effect are conveyed—this also means the translator can make better use of his capacity

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in "recreation", or like the Chinese saying: the translator can give full play to the target language (发挥译文优势). The following examples are well translated but we can see the translations are by no means "free". Actually the translator adopts some accommodation to offer more aesthetical enjoyment. However, this requires a real aptitude for the language.

1. wasted and withering years 蹉跎岁月
2. just to reap easy-to-reach profit 坐收近水楼台之利
3. He bent solely upon profit. 他这个人唯利是图。
4. It indeed makes a good story. 真是无巧不成书。
5. The shortest answer is doing. 心动不如行动。(Literal translation 最简单的回答就是做 is passable but of less grace.)

Exercise 1

I. What is WRONG with the following translations?
  1. She is in love with him. 她和他在爱中。
  2. Commit no nuisance. 不要犯讨厌。
  3. I can't help it. 我不能帮它忙。
  4. I found myself at the foot of a hill. 我在一座小山的山脚发现了自己。
  5. People want to buy more birds than I have. 人们想买比我更多的鸟。
  6. 岂有此理。There is no such principle.
  7. 不要嫁祸于人。Don't marry the misfortune to another.
  8. 趣味横生。The interest flows horizontally.
  9. 他这个人从来不管什么三七二十一。He never cares three times seven is equal to twenty-one.
II. Translate the following into proper Chinese. Pay attention to the italicized "simple" words.
  1. It took two long *sittings* to record all the texts.
  2. His joke really *killed* everyone present.
  3. He choked on the last word, his breath *labored* as though he was struggling with a great weight.
  4. Mike looked *pulled down* last week, but he still *pulled down on* A in translation.

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5. A smart toaster can sense when the bread is the *chosen* shade of brown.

6. By now a crowd had gathered, and their voice began to rise in *shared* complaint.

7. But now the sadness of her smile *shivered away into* pride.

8. Her kiss was *fluttery* and full of sweetness, but nonetheless a hostess kiss.

9. The broadcast immediately *decided* me.

10. The plain house at the end of the village does not *shout* its presence.

11. The huge false eyelashes *set off* her features to admiration.

5. Some Translation Theories in the West

Recent years have seen rapid development in the studies of translation. Here are some influential theories that might be helpful in forming a deeper reflection on translation. (The author of this book has added some views of his own on these terms based on his personal understanding.)

5.1 The Skopos theory

The Skopos theory was put up by Hans Vermeer. It stresses that it is the intended purpose of the target text determined by the initiator, not the author of the source text or the effect of the source text on its recipient that determines the strategies and methods of translation. The Skopos theory contains two basic rules: 1) The coherence rule—the target text must be sufficiently coherent to allow the intended reader to comprehend it, given their assumed background knowledge and situational circumstances. 2) The fidelity rule—there must be intertextual coherence between the source text and the target text. According to this theory, the translator should use translation strategies most appropriately to achieve the intended purpose of the target text. This can liberate the translator from literalness.

5.2 The theory of "translational action"

The theory of "translational action" was developed by Justa Holz-Manttari. This theory represents a function-oriented approach and holds that translation is primarily a process of intercultural communication, whose end product is a text that is capable of functioning appropriately in situational contexts of use.

5.3 Acceptability

We can see the term itself emphasizes the receiving end of translation—the reader of the target text. According to this theory, translation "involves an encounter, if not a confrontation". So whether a translation is good should be judged by the target reader or audience—they can not only understand the content but accept the language of translation. A translator confronts two languages, and acceptability emphasizes the target language, that is, translation should be adapted to serve the target reader so as to give them a natural "feel", rather than be faithful to the original.

5.4 Domestication and foreignization

These two terms were first used by Lawrence Venuti to describe translation strategies. Domestication means the target text should adopt a transparent, fluent style so as to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers, while foreignization means to break target conventions deliberately by retaining the foreignness of the source text. But Venuti thinks either method is partial and very often a compromise between the two should be reached.

Some people use the term "prospective translation" instead of "domestication". Opposed to "prospective translation", which is target reader-orientated, is "retrospective translation", which primarily regards the author of the source text as the most important.

5.5 Communicative translation and semantic translation

This pair of terms was first used by Peter Newmark. Communicative translation views translation as a "communicative process which takes place within a social context". It is generally orientated towards the needs of the target reader. It treats the source text as a message rather than a mere string of linguistic units, aiming at preserving its original function and reproducing its effect on the target readership. The method of communicative translation fits literature translation. Semantic translation, on the other hand, requires the translator to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original intended by the author within the bare syntactic and semantic constraints of the target language, that is, to render the author's original thought-process in the target language instead of attempting to re-interpret the source text in a way which the translator considers more appropriate for the target setting. In a sense, semantic translation deems the original words as sacred and the translator should preserve them even they might cause inconsistency, ambiguity, or even mistakes. Semantic translation is often adopted in the translation of literary, technical and scientific texts as well as other contexts where the language of the source text is as important as its content.

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5.6 Translation equivalence

This is a term used to describe the nature and extent of the relationship between the source text and the target text. J. C. Catford stated it as "the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language". Scholars have different arguments about equivalence. For example, some scholars say that equivalence can be reached at different linguistic levels. Eugene Nida put forward the idea of "functional equivalence" or "dynamic equivalence" (as against "formal equivalence")—the use of different means to make the target text have the same effect on the reader as the source text. Nida's theory was once very influential in China. But as it is hard to judge whether a target text is equivalent to the source text, many scholars no longer use it as a criterion to assess translation. Otto Kade said there were "total (one-to-one) equivalence", "facultative (one-to-many) equivalence", "approximative (one-to-part) equivalence" and "zero (one-to-none) equivalence". Werner Koller, however, put forward more wide-ranged concepts of "denotative equivalence", "connotative equivalence", "text-normative equivalence", "pragmatic equivalence", and "formal-aesthetical equivalence". Other scholars also put forward "linguistic equivalence", "paradigmatic equivalence", "stylistic equivalence", "textual equivalence", etc. to emphasize different aspects of translation.

The word "equivalence" may mean "similarity", "analogy", "correspondence", or "matching"; it can hardly be considered as an operable criterion to judge or assess a translation.

5.7 Explicitation

As translation involves cultural as well as linguistic shifts, sometimes in the source text there are some expressions which seem inexplicit or not clear if translated literarily, so additional explanatory words or phrases should be used to make the meaning explicit to the target reader. Sometimes the translator has to spell out implicatures by adding connectives to help the logical flow of the text and increase its readability. But we should note that a translator may underestimate the target reader's comprehension ability and too much explicitation may spoil the intention of the author of the source text, especially when cross-cultural exchanges are becoming more frequent. So we hold that there must be a proper degree or extent of explicitation.

5.8 Mapping

Mapping is a new concept raised by Holmes, which interprets translation as two maps: the first is derived by the translator from the source text, and constantly referred to as an overall mental conception as a whole, and the second is created by the translator on the basis of his

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choice (linguistic, stylistic, rhythmic, etc.) that reflects the shape the target text will finally take. Comparison of the two maps can reveal the quality of a translation.

5.9 Compensation

It is defined by Hervey and Higgins as "the technique of making up for the translation loss of important source text features by approximating their efforts in the target text through means other than those used in the source text". Other scholars point out that "compensation" should mainly be used for stylistic, text-specific features and efforts, but not systemic and language-specific ones. This requires the translator to be creative-minded.

5.10 Poetics of translation

Poetics of translation is concerned with the poetics of the source text in its own literary system and that of the target text in a different system. This theory stresses the faithfulness that is less based on linguistic accuracy than on fidelity to the sense or spirit of the original.

5.11 Corpora based translation

A corpus is a collection of texts that records actually used language data, from which people can find regularities of the usage of languages. Large corpora have been established in many academic institutions and now bilingual corpora are widely used for reference in translation, especially in compiling bilingual dictionaries. Such corpora are called "comparable corpora".

5.12 Hermeneutic motion

This is a model introduced by Steiner. This theory holds that the process of translating can be divided into four stages: 1) *trust* or *faith*—the translator assumes that the source text contains a sense to be extracted and received into and via his own speech; 2) *aggression*, *penetration*, or *decipherment*—the translator invades, extracts, and brings home the meaning of the original; 3) *incorporation*, *embodiment*, or *appropriative use*—the translator adds new element into the target linguistic and cultural system; and 4) *compensation*, *restitution*, or *fidelity*—the translator recomposes the translation. Scholars in China usually divide the process of translating into two major stages: *comprehension* and *expression*. The four stages proposed in the Hermeneutic motion explicitly tell the details of the two and give some idea of how to produce a good translation.

5.13 Expectancy norms

This term is based on the view of the reader of the target text. This term was first used by Andrew Chesterman. Such norms are established by readers of the translation, that is, what translation they expect to be like and how they should compare or contrast with native texts. So in a sense, such norms concern more about the product than the process of translation.

6. Translatability

There are over three thousand languages in the world today. As different code systems, different languages have different grammar rules and various ways to express similar ideas. But all nations—communities speaking different languages—live in the same world and have much in common. Human beings all have five senses and similar emotions like love and hatred. All people need basic necessities for life and are facing more or less similar problems. To put it in academic terms, different nations share the same cognitive environment of our earth. As globalization goes wider and deeper, the world is getting smaller. In a sense this provides more basis for translation. But as different nations live in different parts of the world with various natural conditions and different cultures, many phenomena are culture-specific and may not be found in other cultures. So translatability is relatively limited. That is why it is often necessary to borrow or invent new words, to give explanations or add notes in translation. Then, languages are used not only to express people's feelings and reflect the objective world (called "linguistic niceties"), but also to describe languages themselves, and there are many puns and word games in almost every language. Some of these usages are really hard or impossible to translate into other languages. This lessens translatability.

Liu Miqing (刘宓庆) says: "It must be said that translatability is not absolute. Since it is limited to certain extent and there does not exist information everywhere on all linguistic levels, a complete realization of effective transference is thus restricted. Restrictions of various kinds form the so-called 'limitation of translatability':

1. The relativity of isomorphism and fuzziness of language;

2. Obstructions in interlingual transfer:

(1) Structural obstruction;

(2) Usage obstruction;

(3) Expression obstruction: 1) Positive or negative expressions, 2) Activeness or passivity, 3) Images or non-images, 4) Morphological or lexical expression of meaning, 5) Focus and levels;

(4) Semantic obstruction: 1) Many words with one meaning, 2) One word with many meanings, 3) Limitation of semantic means;

(5) Cultural obstruction: Linguistic signs indicating 1) the consciousness, 2) the sound and sight images, 3) the social structure, 4) the regional features, 5) material objects peculiar to a nation."

Liu's remark concerns almost all the elements of translation. As a matter of fact, no translation is perfect in a sense and the best one only shows the highest translatability but not 100 percent.

Read the following and see if you can find where the pun lies. Can you manage to translate them into Chinese and keep the pun?

1. —What's the relation between the door-mat and the door?
   —A step *father* (father—farther)
2. "*Call me a taxi*," said the fat man.
   "Okay," said the doorman. "You're a taxi, but you look more like a truck to me." (indirect object + direct object—object + complement)
3. —Do you ever draw pictures in the nude?
   —No. I usually wear *a smoking jacket*.
   —What? Aren't you aware of the danger of fire? (a jacket one wears when smoking—a jacket from which smoke is coming out)
4. —What can I do for you, Mr. Smith?
   —Well doctor, my nose *runs* and my feet *smell*.
   —Hmmm, that's awkward. You're built upside down. (different meanings of "run" and "smell")
5. —Why is a room full of married people very empty?
   —Because there isn't a *single* person in it. (different meanings of "single")
6. At a wedding a man loses his *bachelor*'s degree and a woman wins her *master*'s. (different meanings of "bachelor" and "master")
7. A teacher came to a prison to teach the inmates English. He began his lesson by saying "I suppose you all know what a *sentence* is". (different meanings of "sentence")
8. A cold can be either positive or negative. Sometimes the *eyes* have it and sometimes the *nose*. (the eyes, the nose—those who say "aye" and those who say "no")

The sentence "Anger is only one letter short of danger" makes use of spelling. Though it can be translated as 生气只比危险少一个字母, the Chinese version does not make much sense and

thus loses the tricky point of the original because you cannot establish any literal relation between 生气 and 危险.

Alliteration is a rhetorical means that can achieve special effect. It is agreed that its translatability is fairly low. However, here are some examples of good translation:

1. Predictably, this winter will be snowy, sleety, and slushy.

   可以预言，今冬将多雪、多冻雨、多泥泞。

2. It's composite of fantasy, fallacy, and fiction.

   这是虚幻、虚妄和虚构的混合物。

3. That Home is Home though it is never so Homely.

   家不甚佳仍是家。

4. It was a splendid population—for all the sleepy, sluggish-brained sloths stay at home.

   (出来的)这帮人个个出类拔萃——因为凡是呆板、呆滞、呆头呆脑的呆子都呆在了家里。

5. The dishiest dish in this area was dished up with a dish of trouble last night.

   本地区最漂亮的大美人昨天晚上倒了大霉。

6. When things happen that you don't like, you have two choices: You get bitter or better.

   发生你不喜欢的事情时，你有两种选择：要么痛苦不堪，要么痛快达观。

Alliteration is adopted in the following two Chinese-English translations:

1. 天天吃旺旺，运气一定旺。(a food ad)

   Want Want wishes well whoever wants.

2. 蜡烛有心还惜别，替人垂泪到天明。

   Weep, weep, the candles are watching us part,

   Drip, drip, they are burning with broken heart.

Then, when it comes to language itself, as English and Chinese are of very different writing systems, the translation of sentences concerning words and characters needs some talent. The following are two examples:

1. "How do you spell your name?" he asked. "Sherryl. Two Rs, one Y, one L."

   "你的名字怎么写？"他问。"雪莉。冰雪的雪，茉莉的莉。"

2. It is a long word, and it begins with a P, and then there is a splotch, and then it ends in something that might have been *-ence* and might have been *-ution*. (pollution)

这是个笔画繁多的词，第一个字以三点水开始，然后是个墨团，第二个字下面似乎是个"不"，也可能是个"木"。(污染)

This is a Chinese example:"干娘，你这**梅**汤做得好，有多少在屋里？"王婆笑道："老身做了一世**媒**，那讨一个在屋里！"(《水浒传》) See the translation: "You make excellent *damson* broth," he said. "Have you got many damsons in your room there?" "I have dealt in *damsels* all my life," the old woman said, "but I never keep them in my room."

The following sentence can be considered as a kind of pun and its translation is clever: 她在家养病结果把病养家了。She had begun by nursing her illness at home only to end up making a home for her illness.

Many Chinese 歇后语——a kind of allegorical saying that usually consists of two parts, of which the first is often a descriptive statement and the second carries the real message though often unstated—also contain puns. Some people translated 和尚打伞——无法无天 as "A monk under an umbrella—bald and bold" or "A monk with an umbrella—hairless and fearless". It must be said that the translator is clever enough to produce such wording as "bald and bold" and "hairless and fearless", but both failed to relate 发 and 法, and neither "bold" nor "fearless" can be derived from "umbrella". This tells us that translatability is limited in word games like this. No matter how smart a translator may be, some sense of humor is lost. As for the following three, the first part can only be omitted in translation:

1. 外甥打灯笼——照旧。
   Everything goes as usual.
2. 擀面杖吹火———一窍不通。
   That's really beyond me.
3. 孔夫子搬家——尽是输。
   One has never won.

As the majority of Chinese characters consist of two radicals, many word games and riddles are made by making use of this feature. It is surely hard to translate such word games.

1. 信是人言，本是取信于人，因而必须言而有信。
2. 烟乃火因，曾见抽烟起火，应该因此戒烟。

3. 冻雨洒窗，东两点，西三点。

4. 切西瓜分片，横七刀，竖八刀。

5. 无田不富，有禾才稳。

However, many translators have tried to translate puns. For example, there are two English versions of the Chinese pun:

人曾为僧，人弗可以成佛；

女卑是婢，女又何妨称奴。

Version A: A Buddhist cannot bud in a Buddha.

A maiden may be made a housemaid.

Version B: The man who has been a monk cannot be a Buddha.

The girl who is a bond may also be called a slave.

The second version is better as it reads more like a play on the words, but it still can hardly convey the original fun in the formation of Chinese characters and may sound meaningless to English readers.

How do you like this translation?

米的妈妈是谁？是花，因为花生米。

米的爸爸是谁？是蝶，因为蝶恋花。

米的姥姥是谁？是爆米花，因为既抱过米又抱过花。

Who's rice's mother? It's flower, because flower gives birth to rice.

Who's rice's father? It's butterfly, because butterfly loves flower.

Who's rice's grandma? It's popcorn, because popcorn has brought up both rice and flower.

Former American President Ford once said, "I'm a Ford, not a Lincoln." We know Lincoln is considered the second greatest president in American history, so in a sense Mr. Ford was modest and sighed he could not be compared with President Lincoln. But if we translate the sentence into 我是福特，不是林肯, the Chinese version does not convey the whole meaning. Actually Mr. Ford was also using a pun, as both Ford and Lincoln are brand names of famous cars. However, if we translate his words into 我是福特车而不是林肯车, Chinese readers may feel the wording somewhat awkward and may still fail to get the implied meaning in his saying. Everybody in the United States knows that Ford is the brand

of a popular car, not very expensive and is therefore owned by many ordinary people, while Lincoln is the brand of an expensive limousine that only the rich can afford. So Mr. Ford also implied that he served the broad masses of people rather than the rich, which can be explained but hardly be fully conveyed in any translation.

Exercise 2

I. Correct the following translations.

1. 比赛中我们赢了对手。We won our rival in the contest.
2. 教师答应她请假三天。The teacher promised her to have three days' leave.
3. 他想要一台冰箱，但他目前没有钱买。He wants a refrigerator, but he can't afford it at present.
4. 身体不好，年轻人就不能担当起这一任务。Being in poor health, youth can hardly shoulder this task.
5. 人民犯了法，也要受处罚，也要坐班房，也有死刑。When the people break the law, they too should be punished, imprisoned, or even sentenced to death.
6. 她满意地走了。She went away satisfactorily.
7. 听了这个故事，他心里很不舒服。Hearing the story, he felt uncomfortable.

II. Translate the following sentences into Chinese.

1. This is the official kind of strike.
2. He carries his age astonishingly well.
3. We cannot possibly forget it.
4. She found her tongue with difficulty.
5. Many kiss the baby for the nurse's sake.
6. I am a little under the weather.
7. What shall I go in?
8. The photo flatters her.
9. It will get you nowhere.
10. This is a silly argument in the wake of history.
11. He is all there as a teacher.
12. Next to no wife, good wife is best.
13. One of the few things you can say about England with absolute certainty is that it has a lot of weather.

14. The "privacy of indifference" rang a bell somewhere.

15. When the going gets tough, the tough gets going.

III. The following is the first part of Chapter One of *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* and its Chinese translation 《天演论》 by Yan Fu. Study them and give your comment.

It may be safely assumed that, two thousand years ago, before Caesar set foot in southern Britain, the whole countryside visible from the windows of the room in which I write, was in what is called "the state of nature". Except, it may be, by raising a few sepulchral mounds, such as those which still, here and there, break the flowing contours of the downs, man's hands had made no mark upon it; and the thin veil of vegetation which overspread the broad-backed heights and the shelving sides of the tombs was unaffected by his industry. The native grasses and weeds, the scattered patches of gorse, contended with one another for the possession of the scanty surface soil; they fought against the droughts of summer, the frosts of winter, and the furious gales which swept, with unbroken force, now from the Atlantic, and now from the North Sea, at all times of the year; they filled up, as they might, the gaps made in their ranks by all sorts of underground and overground animal ravagers. One year with another, with an average population, the floating balance of the unceasing struggle for existence among the indigenous plants, maintained itself.

赫胥黎独处一室之中，在英伦之南，背山而面野。槛外诸境，历历如在几下。乃悬想二千年前，当罗马大将恺彻未到时，此间有何景物。计惟有天造草昧，人功未施，其借征人境者，不过几处荒坟，散见坡陀起伏间。而灌木丛林，蒙茸山麓，未经删治如今者，则无疑也。怒生之草，交加之藤，势如争长相雄，各据一抔壤土，夏与畏日争，冬与严霜争，四时之内，飘风怒吹，或西发西洋，或东起北海，旁午交扇，无时而息。上有鸟兽之践啄，下有蚁蟪之啮伤，憔悴孤虚，旋生旋灭，菀枯顷刻，莫可究详。是离离者亦各尽天能，以自存种族而已。数亩之内，战事炽然，强者后亡，弱者先绝，年年岁岁，偏有遗留，未知始自何年，更不知止于何代。

The following is a comment by Wang Zuoliang (王佐良):

严复把整段原文拆开照汉语习惯的方式重新组合：原文里的复杂长句在译文里变成了若干系列短句，主从关系不见了，读起来反而更加流畅……为了要使译文读起来像中国古代的说部与史书，严复调动了他所掌握的种种风格手段来增加读者的历史感。

7. Basic Differences Between English and Chinese

First, let's read the following Chinese passages and their English translations:

1. 今天晚上，很好的月光。(《狂人日记》)

   The moon is extremely bright tonight.

2. 午后便步行至鹊华桥，雇了一只小船，荡起双桨。朝北不远，便到了历下亭前。上岸进去，入了大门，便是一个亭子，油漆已大半剥蚀完了。亭上还悬着一副对联，写的是："历下此亭古，济南名士多。"(《老残游记》)

   After lunch he walked to the Sparrow Flower Bridge, where he hired a small boat and paddled along towards the north. Soon he reached the Li Xia Pavilion. Then he stepped ashore and went in, and when he entered the gate he saw another pavilion, the paint of which was practically all worn off, and on its front columns were two scrolls with the following words: "The pavilion is ancient as history; Ji'nan is full of scholars."

3. 生长在乡间，失去了父母与几亩薄田，十八岁的时候便跑到城里来。带着乡间小伙子的足壮与诚实，凡是以卖力气就能吃饭的事他几乎全作过了。可是，不久他就看出来，拉车是件更容易挣钱的事；作别的苦工，收入是有限的；拉车多着一些变化与机会，不知道在什么时候与地点就会遇到一些多于所希望的报酬。(《骆驼祥子》)

   Born in the countryside and having lost his parents and his barren lands, Xiangzi came to Beijing when he was eighteen. With strong muscle and honesty he did almost all the labors by which he could earn his bread. Soon it appeared clear to him that a rickshaw was more paid than to do other labors with limited payment. Besides, drawing a rickshaw may be flexible and of much opportunity and sometimes he may be paid even much more than what he expected.

4. 一语未了，只听后院中有人笑声，说："我来迟了，不曾迎接远客！"黛玉纳罕道："这些人个个皆敛声屏气，恭肃严整如此，这来者系谁，这样放诞无礼？"心下想时，只见一群媳妇丫鬟围拥着一个人从后房门进来。这个人打扮与众姑娘不同，彩绣辉煌，恍若神妃仙子……一双丹凤三角眼，两弯柳叶吊梢眉，身量苗条，体格风骚，粉面含春威不露，丹唇未启笑先闻。黛玉连忙起身接见。贾母笑道："你不认得他，他是我们这里有名的一个泼皮破落户儿，南省俗谓作'辣子'，你只叫他'凤辣子'就是了。"(《红楼梦》)

   She had scarcely finished speaking when someone could be heard talking and laughing in a very loud voice in the inner courtyard behind them. "Oh dear! I'm

late," said the voice. "I've missed the arrival of our guest." "Everyone else around here seems to go about with bated breath," thought Daiyu, "Who can this new arrival be who is so brash and unmannerly?" As she wondered, a beautiful young woman entered from the room behind the one they were sitting in, surrounded by a bevy of serving women and maids. She was dressed quite differently from the others present, gleaming like some fairly princess with sparkling jewels and gay embroideries...

> She had moreover,
>
> Eyes like a painted phoenix,
>
> Eyebrows like willow-leaves,
>
> A slender form,
>
> Seductive grace;
>
> The ever-smiling summer face
>
> Of hidden thunders showed no trace;
>
> The ever-bubbling laughter started
>
> Almost before the lips were parted.

"You don't know her," said Grandmother Jia merrily. "She's a holy terror this one. What we used to call in Nanking a 'peppercorn'. You just call her 'Peppercorn Feng'. She'll know who you mean!" (translated by David Hawkes)

Now let's read some English passages and their Chinese translations:

1. Spring has so much more than speech in its unfolding flowers and leaves, and the coursing of its streams, and in its restless seeking.

   春花含苞待放，绿叶缓缓舒展，溪水潺潺流淌，欢乐的春天涌动着无限的追求和希望，这一切难以用语言表达。

2. The rain now becomes a torrent, flung capriciously by a rising wind. Together they batter the trees and level the grasses. Water streams off roofs and out of rain spouts. It pounds against the window in such a steady wash that I am sightless. There is only water. How can so much fall so fast? How could the clouds have supported this vast weight? How can the earth endure beneath it?

   这时的雨倾盆如注，狂风刮得雨飘拂不定。风雨交加，恣意鞭打树木，夷平草地。雨水从屋顶奔泻而下，漫出排水管，不停地泼溅在窗户上，使我什么也看不见。眼前只有水。哪来这么多雨水，下得这么急？云层怎么能承受住这么巨大的重量？大地又怎么能经得起这么猛烈的冲击？

3. Punctuation, in short, gives us the human voice, and all the meanings that lie between the words. "You aren't young, are you?" loses its innocence when it loses the question mark. Every child knows the menace of a dropped apostrophe (the parent's "Don't do that" shifting into the more slowly enunciated "Do not do that"), and every believer, the ignominy of having his faith reduced to "faith". Add an exclamation point to "To be or not to be..." and the gloomy Dane has all the resolve he needs; add a comma, and the noble sobriety of "God save the Queen" becomes a cry of desperation bordering on double sacrilege.

简而言之，标点符号传递了说话人的声音，传递了字里行间的所有含义。去掉"你不小了，是吧？"这句话的问号，语气就不再单纯。所有孩子都知道，父母说话时去掉"Don't do that. (别那样做)"里的那个缩略号，改用慢声慢气的"Do not do that. (不要那样做)"表达的是一种带有威胁的口气。所有教徒都明白，信仰二字一旦加上了引号就成了"所谓的信仰"，是一种侮辱。给"是生存还是灭亡……"这句话加上一个惊叹号，那位忧心忡忡的丹麦人便成为将生死置之度外的勇士。而在"上帝保佑吾女王"中加上一个逗号，崇高的庄重的祝愿顿时成为绝望的呼号，既亵渎了上帝又亵渎了女王。

Comparing the above Chinese and English passages we can find that English sentences have comparatively "complete" structures. They always contain the subjects and predicates, which must be verbs. In contrast, many Chinese sentences seem to be loose in structure; many seem to be "incomplete" because they don't have any subject, and the predicates are not necessarily verbs. As there is no gender, number or case for the noun or the pronoun, and no tense, aspect, voice or mood for the verb, Chinese words have no morphological changes when serving different grammatical functions, so there is no demand for agreement between the subject and the predicate. Chinese is a typical analytical language, whose grammatical meanings are expressed mostly through lexical means and word order. That is why Chinese is also called an "isolating language". The relation between different parts of a clause or between clauses also seems to be very loose in Chinese, which is often compared as "flowing water". Wang Li (王力) once remarked that English is a language of "rule of law" (meaning it has strict grammar rules) while Chinese is a language of "rule of man" (people can express their ideas more freely as long as they can understand each other in an agreed way). English has certain forms or patterns to express the logical relationship between different parts in the sentence, especially between clauses, so it has comparatively higher cohesion. But Chinese does not care much in this respect; rather, it adopts a streaming form, stressing rhythmic flow. Actually, the Chinese sentence does not have any clear bound and it is not considered wrong to use

commas all the way through a paragraph (Classic Chinese did not have punctuation marks; Chinese borrowed them much later and they do not form part of the grammar system). So the structure of the Chinese sentence seems to be loose but the meaning is still clear.

No matter how complicated they may look, English sentences can be summed up to be of three basic sentence patterns:

1. S + P (intransitive verb)
2. S + P (transitive verb) + O

   This pattern has two variations: "S + O_1 (indirect object) + O_2 (direct object)" and "S + P + O + C" (O and C together called "compound object")

3. S + P (linking verb) + Predictive

   Some people call the predictive "complement to the subject". This pattern also has a variation: "There + be + S + prepositional phrase".

But so far there is no agreement on how many basic sentence patterns there are in Chinese. Comparatively speaking, Chinese syntactic structures seem to be of a much greater number and very loose. German linguist Humboldt said, "The less external grammar rules the Chinese language has, the more internal grammar rules it has." On the contrary, English sentences are of a close-knit structure, which reflects the way English speaking people think. They pay more attention to formal logic while the Chinese lay stress on dialectical thinking. Chinese people traditionally tend to see the world from the perspective of man—the center of the universe. The world exists for man, and actions must be performed by man. So the agent of the action is often implicit in the sentence as the subjectivity is embedded in the language of the people. I think this is why Humboldt said Chinese has more "internal grammar rules". Chinese has no formal or marked indication to denote grammatical relations between different parts of the sentence. It uses auxiliaries and word order to express such notions like tense, voice, mood, and so on.

Rudolf Flesch said in *The Art of Plain Talk*: Chinese "keeps his feet on the ground and says everything in the most concrete, specific words". Chinese has "the habit of expressing ideas by metaphors, similes, and allegories, in short, by every known device for making a thing plain by comparing it with something else". Flesch's remark also reveals something unique of Chinese.

In fact, so far there is no absolute agreement on how to analyze the Chinese sentence. A most frequently cited example is 王冕七岁上死了父亲. Some people say 王冕 is the subject; some say 父亲 is the subject; some say 王冕 is the "big subject" and 父亲 the "small subject"; still some people say 王冕七岁上 is an adverbial of time. The last assertion is obviously the English way of analyzing the sentence, as the sentence is usually translated as "Wang Mian's father died when Wang Mian was only seven years old". However, many people propose to analyze the

sentence from a semantic angle rather than its syntactic structure. They say 王冕 is the theme or topic of the sentence and 七岁上死了父亲 is the rheme or the comment. Then many zero-subject sentences (different from sentences with the subject omitted) do not have a subject, but they may still have a theme as the starting point of the information. Even for existential sentences like 墙上有个洞, it is better to call 墙上 as the theme rather than the adverbial of place. In a series of clauses, the theme may be the same—so it may not appear in the latter clauses—or may shift, and very often several clauses have a common theme, that is, the rheme in the previous clause may serve as the theme of the following clause, and it is often omitted as long as the meaning is clear.

The most important difference between the two languages lies in **parataxis** and **hypotaxis**. Most linguists agree that Chinese tends to be a paratactic language, that is, connectives between different parts of the sentence or between clauses are not compulsory. Chinese has no relative words and uses fewer conjunctions than English, while English tends to be a hypotactic language, which uses a lot of complex sentence structures, and relations between clauses must be expressed by conjunctions or other relative words, though it is changing towards paratactic structure in many ways. This will be further dealt with in Chapter 5.

The awareness of major differences between Chinese and English is the basis for translation between the two languages. So a competent translator must be a conscious and keen language observer. As a matter of fact, most statements, arguments or suggestions in this book are based on the comparison and contrast of the two languages.

Look at the following examples. How can we translate them into idiomatic English by paying attention to the differences between Chinese and English?

1. 他在会上尽谈些东家长西家短一类的话。
2. 怕什么？敌人是骂不倒我们的。
3. 他每天风里来，雨里去，一年到头忙忙碌碌。
4. 面对敌人的刺刀，他面不改色心不跳。

We can translate 一类的话 in Sentence 1 as "and things like that", but the original critic tone is somewhat lost. If we change the translation into "He prattled about gossips about his neighbors at the meeting", the original tone is better conveyed though the surface wording is somewhat different. (把人)骂倒 in Sentence 2 is a very vivid expression, but there is no similar expressions in English. To convey the meaning, we have to use idiomatic English expression. A possible version of Sentence 2 may be: "What are you afraid of? No amount of abuse can defeat us." Very often, it will prove to be one of the hindrances to produce a faithful translation trying to keep the

original sentence structure. If we translate Sentence 3 as "He is busy all the year round coming in the wind and going in the rain" (the last part is from the version provided in 《新世纪汉英大词典》), people may ask how come that the weather is always windy or rainy when he goes or comes? To express the idea of 风里来，雨里去, English speakers may say "brave the weather" or "go through wind and rain," and the whole sentence may be translated as "Rain or shine, he is busy all the year round". "The color of his face does not change and his heart does not beat" is the literal translation of 面不改色心不跳, but such a translation would surely be misleading as one would be considered dead if his heart stops beating. To bring out the meaning of this common Chinese expression we can say: "He doesn't show the slightest panic/fear and his heart does not even beat any faster."

We may also find that very often Chinese and English have different focus in the beginning of the sentence—the theme. For example, in Chinese we say 我很难说清楚, its English equivalent should be "It is difficult for me to explain", not "I am difficult to explain", because the difficulty lies in "how to explain", not the person. (In English "for" introduces the logical subject of the infinitive.) It is all right to say in English "He is difficult to please", but its literal translation 他很难讨好 does not sound clear. A better version should be 很难讨好他, as the English sentence can also be written as "It is difficult to please him".

We say in Chinese 这辆汽车的速度很快／这家商店的东西价格很贵, but in English "This car's speed is quick" or "The prices of goods at this store are expensive" would sound funny, because in idiomatic English "speed" and "price" can only be "high" or "low". But a car can run very "quickly" and things themselves can be "expensive". Some beginners in learning English may also say "His body is healthy", "His left eye is blind", or "I felt headache" because we do say 他的身体不好, 他的左眼瞎了, and 我感到头疼.

It would sound very awkward to translate 子弹打中了他的左腿 and 他一把抓住我的手 as "The bullet hit his left leg" and "He grabbed my hand". This is also because Chinese and English often have different focus in expressing an idea. In English the part of a person usually is not used as the object of a verb but the person should be the focal object and the actual part is expressed through a prepositional phrase. So the two Chinese sentences should be translated as "The bullet hit him in the left leg" and "He grabbed me by the hand".

All these tell us that it is not enough for a translator just to know the grammar rules. A clear understanding of the different idiomatic usages of English and Chinese is the basis for good translation.

Exercise 3

I. Correct or improve the following translations.

1. 这位美国专家的汉语水平很高。This American specialist has a high level of Chinese.

2. 我们要把改革开放提高到一个新水平。We must raise our reform and opening up policy to a new level.

3. 她有好几分钟说不出话来。She could not say any words for several minutes.

4. 他们把顾客当做上帝和自己的亲人。They treat the customers as God and their own relatives.

5. 这真是岂有此理！There is no such reasoning in any way!

6. 遇到紧急情况，请拨 110 报警。If you meet critical conditions, please call the police by calling 110.

7. 艰苦奋斗的精神要贯彻始终。The spirit of plain living and hard struggle must be carried through.

8. 你放心，我死也不会说出去的。Set your heart at rest. I won't tell anybody even if I died.

9. 讨论涉及了好几个热点问题。The discussion involved several hot spot problems.

10. 必须加强保护未成年人的立法。We must strengthen the legalization of the protection of non-grownups.

II. Translate the following sentences into English. Pay attention to the words in bold.

1. 我们要把**引进来**和**走出去**更好地结合起来。

2. 可以说，西藏公共卫生的体系已**初步建立**起来。

3. 要建立和不断**完善**资源有偿使用制度和生态环境补偿机制。

4. 金融危机造成了许多国家市场**疲软**。

5. 大家公认，徐志摩的写作风格**自成一家**。

6. 近年信息产业涌现出一**批新人**。