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Cross-cultural Communication Translatology: Theories and Practice

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This paper proposes the notion of cross-cultural communication translatology, discusses its theories and principles, and explores its practice. It points out that cross-cultural communication translatology is a multi-disciplinary and multi-field research, which draws ideas from a number of relevant academic disciplines and fields in its theoretical development and practical operations.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication translatology, theory, principle, practice

Foreword

Cross-cultural communication is sometimes termed as intercultural communication. The two terms seem alike, but in fact the former and the latter emphasize "overcoming cultural barriers" and "implementing cultural interaction" respectively. In another word, cross-cultural communication focuses more on divergences while intercultural communication convergences. In this essay I shall first propose the notion "cross-cultural communication translatology", then propose its theories based on relevant studies, later propound the guiding operation principles and some existing practice, and finally apply cross-cultural communication translatology to Chinese-to-English translation.

Literature Review

Since the 1980s scholars inside and outside China have been conducting in-depth research on cross-cultural communication, either at the macro-level, or at the combined macro- and micro-levels. Jia (1997), a pioneer in cross-cultural communication in China, proposes the theoretical foundation and practice principles for the discipline of cross-cultural communication, and does some case studies regarding Sino-western cultural communication. Lian (1993) discusses the differences and similarities between English and Chinese, explains translation principles, and expounds specific translation practice. Mr. Lian does not touch cross-cultural communication theories, but the linguistic philosophy and linguistic theories the book is involved in are indeed part of cross-cultural communication theories. Jin (2003, 2004) explores English-to-Chinese translation and Chinese-to-English translation from the angles of cross-cultural communication, particularly the English

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equivalents for distinctive Chinese expressions. Mr. Jin's books are good examples of localization based on cross-cultural communication, a striking feature being rich examples. Scollon and Scollon (1995) study cross-cultural communication from the perspectives of pragmatics, discourse ideology, professional discourse and gender discourse, paving a way of cross-cultural communication research from the standpoints of linguistics. Samovar, Porter and Stefani (2000) analyze aspects regarding cross-cultural communication from such views as the definition of communication, cultural impact, theory and practice, and knowledge and actions, drawing a clear systematic theoretic framework for cross-cultural communication studies. Nida (2004) emphasizes the influence of cultural differences on translation and communication between members of different cultural communities, with a focus on functional equivalence in translation. Nida's research indicates that cross-cultural communication and translation can be properly integrated. In fact, practically there is a growing tendency of combination between cross-cultural communication and translation or/and teaching. Davis (2005), Gutt (2005), and Nord (2004) expound the relationships between cognition, context, deconstructionism and skopos (or purpose). Xu (2004) and Fan (2009), Chinese foreign language education experts, have done a good job in localization of western cross-cultural communication theories.

In contemporary research cross-cultural communication has been tightly interwoven with translation. Numerous translation theories involving cross-cultural communication fields have emerged, for instance, meme theory, skopos, aesthetics, ecology, and game theory, and a big number of research essays and monographs have been published. Chesterman (2001) argues for the meme theory in translation, assuming that translation theory is similar to organic beings growth, capable of extension and reduplication. Baker (2001) deems that translation is like math and economics, which is a game with fierce competitions, where there are winners and losers and even zero sum results. According to this theory, translation includes definitional (or formative) and selective contents; the former must be translated whereas the latter could be neglected. Hu (2008, pp. 11-15; 2009, pp. 3-8) proposes the notion of eco-translation, illustrating eco-translation or translation ecology as evidenced in Newmark (1988), Katan (1999), and Cronin (2003). Mr. Hu's research is typical translation study under the framework of cross-cultural communication. According to Hu, the eco-system of translation is interdisciplinary interaction between translation, linguistics, culture, anthropology and ecology. Chen (2010) studies alienation in translation arguing that aesthetics plays an important role in literary translation, for it leads to the features of alienation, hybridization and foreignization (pp. 13-20). Ru (2008) conducts a profound research on the cultural translation strategies of The Analects, where he explicates the relationship between cultural translation strategies and translation version reception, holding that the translation version can exist as cultural "others", a vehicle of aesthetical culture and a cultural theory (pp. 50-54). In the English version of *The Analects* we can find such cultural translation strategies as Confucianism explained by Christianity, Ezra Pound's analysis of Chinese characters based on imageries, Prof. Gu Hongming's explanation of Chinese culture from western standpoints, Lin Yutang's folk editing, and Slingerland's explanation of Chinese culture based on Chinese context.

Cross-cultural Communication Translatology: Theories

As known from above, in research cross-cultural communication and translation have been integrated more or less. However, no systematic theory has been proposed as to the discipline of cross-cultural communication translation. To redress the shortcomings, we suggest the disciplinary notion of "cross-cultural communication

translatology", which relies on theories covering cross-cultural communication and translation to explore issues in translation practice and teaching. Generally speaking, cross-cultural communication theories involve such fields as communication, linguistics, aesthetics, philosophy, anthropology, literature and pedagogy. In China's context translation practice is divided into Chinese-to-foreign language, foreign language-to-Chinese, and even trilingual translation, for instance, Chinese minority language-to-Chinese-to-English translation. In China translation teaching is linked to a number of aspects. In terms of register translation can be conducted in a variety of genres, such as general linguistic usage, science and technology, and politics. Regarding the mode, translated works can appear in oral or written form or both. As there can be differences in translation agents, there are other-translation, self-translation, collective translation, and individual translation. Besides, translated products have to adapt to other cross-cultural communication factors, for example, situation, target reader or audience, and purpose. In this sense they are both similar and different on these occasions.

Contemporary translation practice shows a feature of diversity. Cronin (2003) assumes that today's translation is interwoven with the context of information and economic globalization, bringing about such issues as individual and Internet identity, and information and aesthetic commodities, as well as tension between globalization or McDonaldization and local culture (pp. 10-17). As Katan (1999) points out, translators (both oral and written translators) in contemporary society must have a bi-cultural vision, which is an indispensable part of cross-cultural communication, related to the translator's identity and work motivation (p. 14). This theory is different from some previous translation theories which lay more emphasis on bilingual proficiency, arguing that translation means translating cultures. Katan (1999) defines cultural translation, and specifies the relevant approaches, illustrated in Table 1 (pp. 17-18).

Table 1 Cultural Translation—Definition and Approaches

Definition	Approaches	
External: behaviors-language, gestures, customs/habits; products-literature, folklore, art, music, artifacts Internal: ideas-beliefs, values, institutions	Behaviorist- ethnocentrism Functionalist	
	Cognitive Dynamic	

Take the international communication of Chinese minority culture (specifically Miao culture) for example. In the case of English translation of Miao culture, ideology and translator's subjectivity are important factors to consider. Miao culture (also called Hmong culture) is part of Chinese culture. As China is a multiethnic and multi-cultural country, translators must acknowledge the Chinese nation, the Chinese culture as a whole organism, the Chinese political system, the Chinese social system, and the Chinese government's leadership. It should be reiterated that the international communication of Chinese minority culture in the 21st century cannot deviate from such a cross-cultural communication framework. Accordingly, Miao's ancestors' migratory routes in the early times are part of the Chinese nation's history; Zhang Xiumei, a Miao hero and leader who led the Miao people against the rulers' oppression, wrote a glorious chapter in Chinese history; Miao's intangible cultural heritages, such as Flying Song and Stilted House, are an important component of excellent Chinese culture, which should be well protected. With the guidance of such ideology and translator's subjectivity, the relevant translation practice is supposed to proceed in a sound healthy way.

Newmark (2001) proposes the two notions of communicative translation and semantic translation. According to him, translation is related to linguistics, logic, philosophy and other disciplines, and hence translation is semantic and moreover communicative. The so-called communication cannot deviate from diversity, and overlapping functions, such as expressive, informative and evocative functions. The translation levels include X (content instructions), Y (textual structure), and Z (subjectivity), which interact with each other. In the process of communication, we should take into account textual intention, translator's purpose, text readers (or audience) and occasions, writing quality, and text authority. In a word, translation is cross-cultural communication, or an important device of cross-cultural communication.

Pennycook (2003) assumes that English plays an important role in contemporary cross-cultural communication, unavoidably involving the dispute of homogeny vs. heterogeny, the former maintaining a uniform standard for English in today's cross-cultural communication while the latter arguing for world Englishes (p. 3). The notion of world Englishes has been reflected in China since the 1980s as "China English" surfaces as an academic term different from "Chinglish". China English presents English expressions concerning China's contextual features, i.e. those culture-loaded expressions, and as it is based on content, it highlights the approach of foreignization in translation practice. Chinglish, i.e. Chinese English, is an interlanguage or wrong English expressions concerning pragmatics, grammar, logic or rhetoric. The notion of foreignization is of much importance to cross-cultural translation teaching in terms of the evaluation of translation practice and teaching.

As cross-cultural communication lays much emphasis on specific communication fields, it is inevitable that cross-cultural communication translatology is a field-based discipline. Maarek and Wolfsfeld (2003) explore such issues as the relationship between political news and political journalism, the tension between political communication and TV regarding old and new influences, the political communication of the Internet Age, mass communication and public opinions, and political communication and individual influence. We can postulate from their explorations that cross-cultural communication translatology is an academic discipline where themes, subjects (participants), activities and era overlap with each other. For instance, in the era of new media, we have to have a sound knowledge of Wechat, microblog, Twitter, Facebook, and text message. Also, poster, cloud data, big data, online shopping, e-shop, and corporate or organization website are distinctive contemporary means of communication. As translators, we must have relevant background knowledge and familiarize ourselves with the related styles or genres, or we can hardly proceed smoothly with cross-cultural communication translation.

Cross-cultural communication translatology should be closely associated with the trends of on-going translation research and practice. House (2016) points out that translation works in these days are related to ideology, ethics, political actions, narrative approaches, the role of translation in a multi-cultural society, micro history research, and eco-translation (p. 29). Translation ethics involve responsibilities of the translator's text action, related to postmodernism, feminism and post-colonialism. As translation may include issues like human rights and regional hot points, it has to be concerned with political actions. Also, the translator is a "narrator", who presents to the audience or readers the otherwise unfamiliar contents through target texts. Hence, translation is a "narration", which includes individual narration, public narration, conceptual narration, and meta-narration, appearing respectively in the forms of personal story, shared story, the narrative model of specific discipline, and the highly abstract narrative way. House's argument shows considerable theoretic significance for the development of cross-cultural communication translatology. It indicates that cross-cultural communication

translatology is a discipline keeping pace with times.

As shown above, cross-cultural communication translatology is a multi-disciplinary and multi-field research, which draws ideas from relevant academic disciplines and fields in its theoretical development. This discipline highlights the role of ideology (particularly discourse ideology), the cultural translation model, and the combination of theory and practice based on national, collective or individual needs. Under such a framework there are a variety of translation techniques or skills, such as addition, reduction, omission, semantic translation, literal translation, and Chinese pinyin at the micro-level, and a number of approaches at the macro-level, for example, eco-translation, narrative translation, genre translation, cultural translation, editing translation, communicative translation, and multi-modal translation. Next, we shall illustrate how these theories of cross-cultural communication translatology work in specific translation practice.

Guiding Operation Principles and Existing Practice

The guiding operation principles serve as methodologies and approaches for cross-cultural communication translatology. Generally, there are two layers in this regard, namely macro- and micro-level operation principles. At the macro-level, such principles as aesthetics, ideology, linguistics and interdisciplinary visions, are involved. At the micro-level information structure, translation strategies, rhetorical devices and stylistic features are the focuses.

Prof. Xu Yuanchong from Peking University first proposed the principles of Three Beauties, namely sound, form and meaning beauties, which have been widely recognized and adopted by Chinese researchers. Zhang (2013) analyzes the English-translated poems of Li Bai, a famous Chinese poet of the Tang Dynasty, by Prof. Xu's aesthetical advocacy. Huang (2012) illustrates "Three Beauties" in terms of translator's subjectivity, applies them to the research on the Chinese-to-English translation of Book of Poetry (Shi Jing), and acknowledges the positive effect of "Three Beauties" on translator's creativity and subjective initiatives. Since the late 20th century reception aesthetics has gained momentum in the west, whose advocates Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser fully admit the active role of target text readers, assuming their aesthetical value and expectancy are satisfied through the translator's concern and the effective integration of the translator and target text readers' visions (Gao, 2016, pp. 35-39). Reception aesthetics emphasizes the dynamic, interactive, and cooperative in cross-cultural communication translation. Zhao (2009) applies reception aesthetics to studying the English translation of Chinese international publicity texts, concluding that the Chinese-to-English translation of international publicity texts is a matter of linguistic and extra-linguistic synergy.

Ideology involves source text and target text. In rendering *The Analects (Lunyu)* from Chinese to English, Slingerland (2003) pays much attention to key Chinese terms concerning Chinese culture, particularly those Confucian notions; for instance, Ren (kindness, benevolence) is marked in the order "English version + pinyin + original Chinese character", hence preserving the cultural load of that expression to the biggest extent. T. J. Xiao and Z. P. Xiao (2017) propose a bipartite division of discourse ideology in translation practice, namely macroand micro-level, the former related to politics, "voices", and style while the latter discourse wording and information structure (p. 1308). In the process of translation the source text and target text ideologies operate differently at the starting, medium and ending levels, revealed through authorship, text constructors and recipients, and readership.

Linguistic theories have been widely adopted for translation practice since their inceptions. Catford (1965) explores issues regarding translation from the perspectives of general linguistics, such as formal equivalence, meaning and holistic translation and translatability, at a variety of linguistic levels, i.e. phonology, orthography, vocabulary and syntax. Newmark (1998) holds that the linguistic approach to translation is related to a number of aspects—collocation, semantic categories, evaluative devices, register, signifier and signified, denotation vs. connotation, ambiguity, intervention, metaphor, and rhetorical devices. Roberts (2001) adopts the translation model of "Introduction + Content Translation + Annotation" in putting the Chinese classic (*Dao De Jing—Book of the Way*) into English. In Roberts' practice, Introduction covers literary and political ideologies, titles, texts, comparison between Confucius and Lao Zi, China and Confucianism in Lao Zi's era, and Taoism; also space is given to the explanations of such key terms as "Dao" and "De". Annotation further illustrates the content, implications and philosophies concerned, fully marking the translator's subjectivity and narrowing the gap between Western readers and Chinese classics in perception, ideology and appreciation.

Interdisciplinary principles are closely linked to cross-cultural communication translatology. Snell-Hornby (2006) points out that interdisciplinary features have stood out in translation theories and practice since the 1990s, as notions like meme, norm and ethics emerge (pp. 69-79). House (2016) explores the use of narratology in translation (p. 36). According to her, the units of analysis in translation research should be narratives—story, participants, setting and plot, highlighting how individuals and institutions construct and communication constitute the narration of the world as well as how the translator intervenes in the process. Like a narrator, the translator could adopt a variety of means for narration, such as written and oral texts, images, tables, colors, designs, lighting, and settings. Hawkes (2012) translates into English the Chinese classic—*The Story of the Stone*. In his translated texts the Chinese characters reveal profound social features of Chinese hierarchy in feudal society, and thus his translation practice could be termed as the application of sociological principle. Table 2 shows the English versions of Chinese names.

Table 2
Chinese and English Versions of Characters in The Story of the Stone

Class	Chinese name	English translation
Ruler	宝玉	Jia Bao-yu; Bao-yu
Ruler	黛玉	Lin Dai-yu; Dai-yu
Ruler	贾母	Grandmother Jia
Ruler	李纨	Li Wan
Monk	智善	Benevolentia
Monk	静虚	Euergesia
Monk	色空	Sublimitas
Monk	警幻	Disenchantment
Servant	来旺	Brightie
Servant	多浑虫	"Droopy" Duo
Servant	碧痕	Emerald
Servant	紫鹃	Nightingale

In Table 2 the rulers' names are indicated by pinyin (Romanization) or "title + pinyin"; the second social tier—monks is shown by Latinized expressions which show its supernatural features; servants' names are marked

semantically, jocularly or even contemptibly. For example, "Droopy Duo" presents a picture of slovenly, nose-running person, thereby contemptible and inferior. Hawkes' translation of the Chinese characters' names reveals his profound understanding of Chinese social hierarchy in feudal era.

Application of Cross-cultural Communication Translatology

As mentioned in Part 4 cross-cultural communication translatology has been implicitly or explicitly applied in the translation practices available. Next, we shall further explore its application in the international publicity of Chinese ethnic minority culture. Consider the following example:

水碓是土家族传统生活器物。流行于铜仁市沿河县等地。水碓由石碓窝、碓头、碓身、碓翼、碓桩组成。所 不同的是石碓特别大,一次能装一箩谷子。碓身被碓桩支撑着后半部,舂米时不是人踩脚踏板,而是吊着一截木 水槽,水槽上面架有一根竹筒,引日夜流动的河水入槽,槽内积水,增加重量,水槽下沉,碓头升高,待水倒空, 水槽重量减轻, 碓头即落下舂米, 如此循环往复。用水碓舂的米, 浑圆饱满, 煮饭味香可口。(Source: Guizhou Ethnic Affairs Commission: Encyclopedia of traditional minority culture of Guizhou Province, p. 69, Guiyang: Guizhou Education Press, 2013)

Suggested English version:

Rice polishing device using water power (Shui Dui) is a piece of traditional livelihood equipment for the Tujia people, mostly seen in such counties as Yanhe in Tongren Prefecture. Shui Dui consists of stone pit, head, wing and poles. Something striking about it is that it is very big, capable of holding a barrel of rice for one feeding. The lower half of its body rests on poles. When husking rice, people do not need to tread on a board, but the equipment is driven by a wooden water trough fed by a bamboo pipe hung above. The water goes into the trough day and night and the increased weight makes the water trough sink and the head of Shui Dui lift. The repetition of rise and fall makes rice husked. The rice produced in this way is round and full, and delicious.)



Figure 1. Shui Dui. (Source: http://image.baidu.com)

The Chinese source text shows the nature, composition and operating techniques of the Tujia people's rice polishing device, as well as the tastes of food produced by it. The text is a recipe-type genre, and the translated text follows suit. Recipe-type or instructions-type text is characterized with clear organization and information, which is conducive to the international publicity of Chinese ethnic minority culture. According to Systemic Functional Grammar each text had a generic structure potential, including obligatory and optional elements. (Hasan, 1996, pp. 50-72). Here the obligatory elements cover the components of the device and its operation, that is, feeding, power, running and end-product. The optional elements relate to how the translator chooses to expand the dialogue with target text readers. In Martin and White's view it is a "dialogic expansion". (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 202-205). In order for the readers to appreciate and enjoy the device, its operation and the products concerned, we preserve the evaluation of the fragrance of rice as indicated in the source text and add more to the description of the rice feeding process, highlighting the translator's engagement, subjectivity and interaction with the target text readers. Besides, a picture of the device is presented so as to impress the target text readers better in a multimodal way. Clearly, the linguistic principle is adopted in the translation practice.

Conclusion

The core of cross-cultural communication translatology is translatology, whose superordinate perspective is cross-cultural communication. The two disciplines complement with each other. It is safely argued that cross-cultural communication provides theoretical insights for translatology whereas translatology enriches and drives the development of cross-cultural communication. Under such a dialectical relationship translation practice is deeply marked with culture. In conclusion, under the guidance of cross-cultural communication translatology translation practice should emphasize three aspects. First, the relationship between discourse ideology and translation strategies should be well handled. In this relationship ideology is the superordinate structure, expressing the translator's attitude (e.g. advocacy, depreciation, and authentic re-presentation). Under the influence of attitude the translator has to consider source text, target text and readers, and source text writer. Accordingly, appropriate translation strategies (e.g. domestication, foreignization, domestication + foreignization, and generic change) and techniques (such as addition, omission, reduction, zero translation, semantic translation, literal translation, transliteration, and pinyin) are adopted. Second, a cultural model for translation should be emphasized, which consists of three stages, namely, inputs, filters and outputs, as indicated by T. J. Xiao and Z. P. Xiao (2018, pp. 301-307). In this process, the translator is a cultural mediator. Third, cross-cultural communication translatology is an interdisciplinary science itself. Put in another way, it absorbs nutrients from other disciplines in its development. Predictably, this discipline could well serve international cultural exchange and promote the soft power of Chinese culture.

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