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Teaching Translation Online:
A Reflective Study

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Abstract

The development of Internet technology has had a wide-ranging effect on education, and has also resulted in a number of attempts to train translators online. This paper is based on an empirical study of the teaching of a formal translation course online. It looks at different aspects of an online translation course, including the technical requirements, pedagogical strategies and constraints, issues of classroom interaction, and the advantages and disadvantages of online teaching. It is based on the analysis of actual teaching experience and feedback from the students involved. Its findings indicate that although advances in Internet technology have made online teaching of translation feasible, when offering a course online as part of a formal study program, consideration will need to be given to a number of practical issues which do not exist in conventional teaching and may not be encountered in experiments in online teaching. These issues concern the selection of an appropriate network and software program, online technical support, online teaching strategies, communications protocol, in-class interaction and discussion,

marking, and other relevant factors. Such issues all have an impact on formal online teaching and therefore need to be considered when designing and implementing online translation courses. The paper concludes that an online translation course has unique features and should therefore be considered as a course in its own right. The research findings provide a useful point of reference for further studies and the development of future online translation courses.

1. Introduction

The modern development of telecommunications technologies has had a far-reaching effect on the education sector. Some attempts have been made to apply different types of technology to training translators and interpreters by the distance mode, such as telephone, teleconferencing, videoconferencing via satellite and the Internet (e.g. Carr & Steyn 2000; Language Line Services 2008; Berlitz Interpretation Services 2001; Moeketsi & Wallmach 2005; Ko 2006a). Over the last decade or so, Internet technologies have been extensively harnessed for the exploration of online teaching and learning practices in language (a close sibling of translation and interpreting) and other relevant disciplines (e.g. Wang & Chen 2007; Wong & Fauverge 1999; McAndrew et al. 1996; Buckett et al. 1999; Kötter et al. 1999; Chou 2001). The rapid advances in Internet technology have also led to attempts to develop virtual online classes specifically for translation and interpreting programs, such as Mayor & Ivars (2007) and Ko & Chen (2011).

However, a review of the literature on online translation training

indicates that there is little research on actual online courses offered to students as part of a standard study program. Although experiments in online teaching and learning are important in exploring various aspects of such practice, the actual implementation of a formal online course is equally important, as certain problems that may not be encountered in experiments may arise in such situations. In his research on training interpreters by the distance mode, Ko (2006b) points out that a long-term empirical study is necessary to prove the effectiveness of such a program because it takes time for students to become familiar with the new learning environment. This paper is based on an empirical study of a formal translation course taught online. The course was conducted in a setting in which the teachers and students were in different cities in Australia and were connected via the Internet. For the purposes of this research, data was collected from the weekly teaching observations of the main teacher (the author of this paper) and feedback from students in a questionnaire administered at the end of the course.

2. Course Design

The course in question was a translation course from Chinese into English at the level of Professional Translator, accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) in Australia. NAATI has specific requirements for Professional Translators in terms of their ability and competence (cf. NAATI 2002). The duration of the course was 14 weeks, with 2 contact hours per week. The class was conducted on Tuesday evenings in the second semester of 2009.

There were two teachers, one coordinator and 13 students involved. The main teacher was in Brisbane, Queensland, while another

teacher was in Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory, and the coordinator was in Adelaide, South Australia. The main teacher conducted most of the teaching for this course, the teacher from Canberra taught only once, and the coordinator was present online most of time but not actually involved in the teaching. Both teachers carried out their teaching from their home offices. All the students were from the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Institute of South Australia in Adelaide and attended classes in a computer laboratory there. They were all adult students, but for privacy reasons, more detailed information about their background could not be made available. The coordinator was either in the laboratory or in her office. No IT technician was present online when classes were conducted. The distance between the students and teachers was up to 2500 kms. Both teachers and students participated in classes using computers connected to the Internet.

3. Technical Environment

The software used for the delivery of this course was called "Centra", as developed by TAFE South Australia (2007). This is a Virtual Classroom for conducting lessons, professional development or meetings using VOIP (voice-over-IP), and includes features that provide live vision, live conversations and text chats. Centra can be accessed anywhere in the world as it is web-based.

Either IBM or Apple systems could be used by students attending the course. The former required Windows 2000 or Windows XP, Internet Explorer 5.5, Netscape 7.2, Firefox 1.5x, or later, 28.8 kbps or faster Internet connection, P350+ MHz, 128+ MB memory, and 800x600 16-bit colour display or better. The latter required Mac OS/X 10.4.4, Safari 2.0.1, Local Area Network or Broadband connection, G4

700 MHz PowerPC, and 384 MB memory.

Internet Voice (VoIP) required a sound card and speaker microphone, but if a telephone connection was used, VoIP was not required. Web cameras were used when necessary.

3.1 Access to Centra

Prior to the commencement of the class, both teachers and students received an email about user name and password used to access Centra (TAFE South Australia, 2007). Due to the fact that there could be more than one class run at the same time, the teachers and students also received a special code about the location of the class, such as KGG370640. After keying in the code, the teachers and students would enter a virtual classroom exclusively designed for this course.

3.2 Centra Classroom and Communication Tools

There are a number of functions in the Centra Classroom for teaching and learning purposes. Most functions are self-explanatory and user-friendly. For example, the "Hand" icon is for a student to raise his/her hand to ask a question. When this button is pressed, the student's name will flash in the "Participants" section. The teacher then needs to click the student's name on his/her screen to grant permission for the student to talk. "Yes", "No", "Laugh" and "Applaud" are functions that allow participants to express their opinions without speaking. In the virtual classroom, it is important that only one person speaks at a time, in order to avoid mutual interference. These functions are therefore useful in minimising the need for verbal communication. For instance, if the teacher wants to know whether everyone can hear him/her, the students can press "Yes" or "No". "Step Out" is used when a student leaves the class or is paying attention to something else. When this button is pressed, the icon will be displayed on the screen next to the student's

name, so the teacher and other participants will know that the student is not available. "Text Chat" is used for writing and sending messages, but these messages are not automatically displayed on the screen. Participants need to go to "Text Chat" to view these messages. There are also mechanisms for volume control and for activating the microphone. The microphone needs to be pressed when speaking.

When a participant logs in, his/her name will appear on the list of "Participants". There is an "Agenda" item which shows the teaching plan for the class. Included in the "Agenda" is a function called "Import", which the teacher can use to upload (import) teaching materials, usually in the form of Powerpoint, to the Agenda for teaching. Other functions include creating new events, adding users, Whiteboard, Internet surfing and recording. The Whiteboard function is used most often for teaching, especially for the discussion of translation exercises. There are different functions on the Whiteboard, including writing, highlighting, drawing, erasing, etc.

4. Conducting the Class

After all the participants had logged in, the teacher showed the pre-prepared slides on the Whiteboard and started to teach. He/she could also search the Internet and share information with the students. In a typical class on translation practice, a large amount of time was devoted to the discussion of students' translation exercises. A common practice was therefore to examine a slide containing a student's work. As in a conventional translation course, the translation exercises were collected by email the week before for marking. In order to provide feedback to as many students as possible, the teacher divided the translation passage into a number of slides, on each of which a student's

translation was placed, with his/her name underneath. If the teacher had not already collected the translation assignments, he could ask the students to upload their unmarked translation exercises onto the Whiteboard during the class. An example of a slide is shown below:

建立中澳自由贸易区的可能性
中澳双方关于建立自由贸易区的问题已经经过多个回合的商讨，并同意尽快完成建立自由贸易区的可行性研究。
Feasibility of setting up China-Australia free-trade zone
On many rounds of talk on setting up bilateral free-trade zone, China and Australia have concluded to complete the related viability research as soon as possible. (Becky)

The teacher then proceeded with a discussion of the translation exercises word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence where necessary. During this process, the teacher made comments on the translations, while the students raised questions and participated in the discussion. The communication was carried on verbally as well as in writing, with the aid of functions such as highlighting and text chat, until a satisfactory translation was reached. At the end of each section—for instance, at the end of the discussion of one slide—both the written text on the Whiteboard and the verbal discussion were saved using the "Save" function.

5. Research Questions and Methodology

The research was designed to explore the follow questions:

(1) What specific technical constraints would there be, particularly in terms of connection, in-class communication, as well as written and verbal discussion, and what cautions should be taken in future attempts at online teaching?

(2) What are the unique features and constraints of teaching translation *per se* in this special environment, and how effective is online teaching as compared with conventional face-to-face teaching?

(3) How is it possible to effectively and efficiently mark students' translation exercises and provide feedback?

The methodology employed in this research involves: (1) delivering the designed course as described in Sections 2, 3 and 4; (2) keeping a weekly teaching diary recording observations in detail; (3) giving a questionnaire to students about various aspects of learning at the end of the course; and (4) analysing data collected from the teacher's weekly teaching diary and feedback from the students' questionnaire.

6. Findings

The findings, in relation to technology, teaching and learning, are based on an analysis of the data collected from the observations in the main teacher's weekly teaching diary and the questionnaire consisting of 18 questions. It is worth noting that the discussion in this section covers both findings from a teaching perspective (seen in the teaching diary) and from a learning perspective (as indicated in the completed questionnaire).

6.1 Technical Aspects
6.1.1 Connection

The issue of connection concerns whether participants were able

to stay connected online, and it is considered from the perspectives of both teachers and students. Over the duration of the course, the main teacher was disconnected from his class at times. The first two instances occurred in Week 1. One case probably was caused by clicking the wrong button, which meant that the main teacher had to log in again. The second time, the whole class experienced a problem with connection and the system had to be shut down and restarted. No cause was identified. Of course we sometimes have similar experiences with our personal computers. At times the computer freezes for no reason, and we need to restart it. However, when this occurs in the middle of a class, it is disruptive. The third connection problem occurred in Week 3, again for unknown reasons. For the main teacher, apart from these, the connection was fine.

In Week 4, the teacher in Canberra took over. After about 10 minutes, he was suddenly disconnected for about 3 minutes. He said later that this was due to a problem with his network and his microphone was not working properly. This problem occurred a few times during class, although only for 5 to 20 seconds. It is interesting to observe that when the connection was re-established, there was a gap in the teaching. This indicates that the teacher was unaware of the disconnection and kept talking.

Sometimes the teacher was unable to show the slide he was referring to. For instance, Slide 5 was shown when the teacher was actually talking about Slide 2. This was very frustrating and inefficient in terms of teaching. At one stage, the teacher tried to show a website to the class, but none of the students could see it, even though the teacher claimed that it appeared on his screen. During the break, the teacher logged out and then logged in again, but he was still unable to show the website or his screen to the class. Only towards the end of the class did the connection improve, and the teacher then went back slide

by slide to explain what he had covered earlier. The teacher associated the connection problem with his network, as he was teaching from his home office. This indicates that not all Internet products are suitable for online teaching.

In the questionnaire that was administered to students at the end of the course, 80 per cent of the students said they had experienced disconnection twice during the course.

All this indicates that although teachers and students generally remained connected during class, the connection was not always stable, nor was it completely reliable. The problems that arose may have been associated with the Internet services. Although broadband connections are now commonly available, it is worth noting that there are different products such as cable connection and connection via the telephone line, which has two further options—ADSL1 and ADSL2. "ADSL" stands for Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line, which is "one form of the Digital Subscriber Line technology, a data communications technology that enables faster data transmission over copper telephone lines than a conventional voiceband modem can provide" (Wikipedia 2010). Different products may provide different speeds and quality, and sometimes even downloading and uploading speeds for the same product may differ. For instance, a particular product can download fast but upload slowly. Furthermore, the quality of the modem may also affect the connection. Therefore, any Internet products to be used in teaching translation need to be tested thoroughly in actual teaching situations to ensure their suitability. Providing a list of technical specifications may not always be sufficient.

6.1.2 Background Noise

Background noise, such as children crying and people talking, watching TV, washing dishes, or moving furniture, is usually an issue

for online programs (e.g. Ko 2008; Ko & Chen, forthcoming; Fors 1999; Macleod 2002). Students were advised to minimise background noise. Also, since the class was conducted in a computer laboratory, the background noise was generally under control. No major problems in this area were identified.

6.1.3 In-class Communication

In-class communication refers to verbal communication between the teacher and students. When the students were talking, the main teacher could hear them clearly and there was not any time delay or voice distortion. No specific data were collected on whether the teacher in Canberra could hear the students when he was teaching. However, given the problems described above, in-class communication did not appear to have proceeded entirely smoothly.

The following is a summary of students' responses to the statement, "The voices of both the teacher and students are clear and there is no time delay or distortion":

> Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neutral; Agree; Strongly agree
> Disagree: 40%; Agree: 60%

Thus, 40 per cent of the students were not particularly satisfied with the quality of in-class communication. It is important to note that none of the students ticked the "strongly agree" category. This is further indication that the sound quality was not optimal.

In one class, the coordinator mentioned that the main teacher's voice was slightly distorted, and suggested the volume be turned down a little. When that was done, the problem disappeared, but it is not known why the microphone on the teacher's computer affected sound quality.

The software used for the course was designed in such a way that if a student wanted to ask a question or to speak, he/she needed to raise his/her hand by clicking the appropriate button to ask for permission. This design was aimed to minimise the mutual interference that would occur if more than one student spoke at once. However, it was observed that it usually took 3-5 seconds for a student to get the permission required. Likewise, if the teacher asked a student a question, it also took 3-5 seconds to activate the student's microphone. That was time-consuming and annoying. During class discussions, there were usually a lot of questions, comments and other interactions, which ideally should take place instantaneously. The time lag slowed down the teaching.

6.1.4 Whiteboard

The whiteboard, used extensively in teaching, was suited to a number of activities, particularly the discussion of the translations. The teacher was able to upload students' translation exercises or ask students to paste their exercises onto the whiteboard, using the pointer or highlighter to indicate the relevant parts being talked about. Both the teacher and the students could also write on the whiteboard, and then save or erase what they had written at the end. However, there were a number of problems. Firstly, there was no track change function as there would be in a Microsoft Word document. As a result, when a change was made, the original text was replaced, making it impossible to compare the new version with the original translation or undo the change. Secondly, whereas in a conventional classroom the teacher would know who had written what on the whiteboard, with online teaching the student's name did not appear on the whiteboard. If the teacher wanted to know who had written a particular comment, he had to ask around. And in such cases, as described above, it would take 3-5 seconds for the students to respond.

The whiteboard was accessible to all the students, who were therefore able to write or erase anything on it. This created some confusion. For instance, during a discussion, if a couple of students had written on the whiteboard at the same time without giving their names, the teacher often had to ask who did it before making a comment, with the result that time would be lost. Sometimes, a student would erase something that the teacher had planned to discuss or refer to in later. In order to solve the above problems, it will be ideal if the whiteboard can display the user's identity. Failing this, there should be a protocol for using the whiteboard—for instance, the students should include their names at the end of the text, such as "xxxx—Peter".

6.1.5 Text Chat

In this program, Text Chat was used as a text communication tool to supplement the whiteboard. For instance, if a student wanted to send a text message to the teacher, or if some students wanted to have a separate discussion, instead of writing directly on the whiteboard they could use Text Chat. This was useful when the message was long and it was inappropriate to write directly on the whiteboard, when a student needed time to organise his/her ideas, or when a separate discussion with a fellow student was needed before a final decision was reached. Text messages are only shown automatically on the receiver's screen when both the sender and receiver are in Text Chat. When the teacher is conducting a class using the whiteboard, a message sent though Text Chat will not automatically be displayed on the teacher's screen. The sender needs to tell the teacher that a message has been sent to him, and the teacher then needs to go to the Text Chat box to check the message. This causes much inconvenience. For instance, several times when the course in question was taught, the teacher was about to wind up a discussion when a student suddenly said that he/she had sent the

teacher a text message. In checking the text, the teacher found that the message was related to an issue already discussed. However, in order to respond, he often had to go over certain points again. It could be argued that it will be more efficient to require all participants to use the whiteboard only when a discussion is being held.

6.1.6 Students' Opinions on Technical Aspects

The following are students' responses to the statement, "The features/functions of the software such as whiteboard, text chat box, highlighter and pointer are easy and convenient to use".

Agree: 85.7; Strongly agree: 14.3%

The feedback from the students and the experience indicate that students were generally happy with these features, and that most of the problems that arose were associated with teaching. Indeed, it is possible that only the teacher was aware of some of these problems.

6.2 Teaching and Learning

Discussion of translation exercises is a crucial part of teaching and learning. According to NAATI (2010), the standard length of a translation passage is around 250 words. Passages of around this length are also recommended for NAATI-approved courses. According to the author's experience in teaching translation in conventional classes, it is usually possible to cover 300-400 words in a two-hour class, including going over translation problems, taking questions, handling the discussion, making comments, and providing acceptable translations based on students' work. However, in this online teaching course, the author was only able to cover 160-250 words—generally, around 200 words. The author normally uploaded or pasted the English text along with one

student's translation on the whiteboard for discussion, paragraph by paragraph. The time spent preparing materials for discussion in the online classes was much shorter than in a conventional class, where a student might be asked to write out his/her translation on the whiteboard. However, the discussion of the translation exercises took a lot longer because:

(1) Each task, such as asking a student a question or giving a student permission to speak, lasted 3-5 seconds. As would be expected in a class discussion, there was a large number of these tasks.

(2) In contrast to teaching a conventional class, where the teacher can talk about different versions of a translation and ask students to present their work verbally, most versions of the translation need to be written on the whiteboard for an online class. For example, in the case being examined, it was generally felt that a discussion about the translation of a sentence was not complete until a referential version had been written on the whiteboard. If students were not certain about a particular point, they often asked for it to be written down.

(3) All important instructions, especially those on assignments, had to be given in writing. Students tended to overlook or forget things that were not written.

(4) If someone sent a written message using Text Chat, it took time for the teacher to check the message, make a response, or provide comments. This could be dealt with more efficiently in a discussion using the whiteboard.

(5) It took time for the teacher to receive responses from students to even simple questions such as "Can you hear me?" and "Do you understand?" More complex questions such as "Can you tell me whether you have A or B on your screen?" took even longer to answer.

These factors slowed the discussion down, and to some extent compromised the effectiveness of the teaching. The following are

students' views on this issue as expressed in a statement in the questionnaire: "The class discussion of translation passages is effective and easy to follow".

Neutral: 42.9%; Agree: 42.9%; Strongly agree: 14.2%

Only slightly more than half the students were satisfied with the way the discussion of translation exercises proceeded. Therefore, a way to improve the effectiveness of the discussions needs to be developed.

The web camera was not always in use in this course, because it was believed that it would affect the bandwidth and cause time delays. It was also assumed that because teaching translation was largely a process of verbal and textual communication, visual interaction might not be as important as it would be for teaching interpreting. Our experience with this course, however, indicates that although teaching could be conducted without the web camera, the lack of visual contact did impose certain constraints. For instance, from the perspective of teaching, it was difficult to check whether students were actually present; at times the teacher felt like he was talking in a vacuum because he could not see the students. He therefore tended to ask "Can you hear me?" and "Do you understand?" at regular intervals. The following are the students' responses to the statement, "Lack of visual interaction with the teacher does not affect me in class".

Disagree: 14.2%; Neutral: 42.9%; Agree: 42.9%

Although the students seem to have had mixed feelings on this point, the results indicate that a great majority of the students either did not care about visual interaction or could cope without it. This suggests that while it would be ideal to have visual interaction, particularly from a

pedagogical perspective, the lack of it may not substantially affect online teaching and learning.

It was also found that in-class discussion tended to take place between only a small number of students who were out-going. Although such students are also more likely to participate in discussions in a conventional class, this phenomenon was more obvious in the online class. This is perhaps because in the online class environment, it was easier for the quieter students, not being seen, to remain silent. This was reflected in students' responses to the statement, "As compared with a similar face-to-face class, I can receive a similar amount of attention from the teacher".

Disagree: 85.7%; Agree: 14.3%

A great majority of the students felt they did not receive enough attention. This indicates that further consideration needs to be given to how to devote equal attention to all students.

Finally, with regard to two general statements about the effectiveness of online teaching, the students' responses were as follows:

"I feel that the class time is used as effectively as in face-to-face teaching."
Disagree: 57.1%; Neutral: 42.9%

"Online teaching is as effective as face-to-face teaching."
Disagree: 57.1%; Neutral: 42.9%

The two statements are interrelated: the first concerns the effective use of class time and the second relates to the general effectiveness of teaching. The students' responses were also the same. More than half

of them felt that the class time had not been used effectively and said they preferred face-to-face teaching. As discussed above, a number of factors may have compromised the effectiveness of online teaching. Of course, it can be argued that online teaching also has a number of advantages that are not offered by face-to-face teaching, such as the use of external expertise, access for students to a course that would otherwise be inaccessible, and saving travel time and costs (e.g. Ko 2006a). Nevertheless, according to feedback from the questionnaire, many students would prefer face-to-face teaching if it was available.

6.3 Marking

Marking can generally be considered to be a part of teaching. However, as there were some unique issues associated with marking for this online course, it is discussed separately here.

There were two ways in which students' translation exercises were marked—paper marking and electronic marking. For paper marking, the teacher had to:

- Print out students' translation exercises
- Correct translations and mark with symbols
- Deduct relevant marks, as shown on the left/right margin of the page
- Provide comments
- Scan and return the exercises to students by email

For electronic marking, the teacher had to:

- Use track changes
- Deduct marks next to mistakes and put them in brackets or at the end of a paragraph
- Provide comments
- Return students' work by email

Although the principles applied were the same in both cases, different

methods that were appropriate to each form of marking were used. For instance, in electronic marking, it was inconvenient to circle isolated errors, and underlining did not show up very clearly, so highlighting was used instead. It was found that, on average, it took 9 minutes and 7 seconds to mark a 250-word passage using the paper marking method, including scanning the marked paper and returning it to the student by email, while it took 14 minutes and 3 seconds to complete the task of marking a passage of approximately the same length electronically and return it by email. In other words, electronic marking took around 50 per cent more time than conventional paper marking. Electronic marking has certain advantages. For instance, it is quicker to type than to write, and it is therefore more convenient for the teacher to write comments when marking electronically. However, it is not as easy to indicate mark deductions such as -0.5 and -1 in electronic marking. Providing a list of the marks deducted at the end of each paragraph rather than deducting marks throughout the paragraph would save some time, but this would require the teacher to remember the marks that had to be deducted for each mistake or to re-examine the mistakes for which marks were to be deducted after they had finished with one paragraph, and then add them up. Furthermore, this did not allow the teacher to indicate to students how many marks had been deducted for each mistake and how serious each mistake was.

Interestingly, from their responses to the question—

"Which form of marking do you prefer?
1. Marking on paper and then sending the scanned copy to you by email.
2. Electronic marking—i.e. marking on the Word document with track changes. Why?"
Paper marking: 28.6%; Electronic marking: 71.4%

—it seems that most students preferred electronic marking. Students' comments include:

> "It's easier for me make some notes or corrections next to the track changes on the assignment."
> "Easy to trace back."
> "It is easier to read changes."
> "Comments are more relevant to mistakes."

Most of the comments concern the ease of locating the corrections in relation to the mistakes. This reflects the advantage of typing in a Word document, because the corrections or comments can be typed right next to the mistakes. This makes it easier for students to follow the corrections.

6.4 Other Feedback from Students

Other feedback from students concerns some other aspects of this online translation course.

> "I can concentrate well in class without feeling distracted by other things."
> Disagree: 14.3%; Neutral: 71.4%; Agree: 14.3%

It has been observed that, in both online and conventional classes where there is an Internet connection, students are often tempted to go online for purposes unrelated to the class, such as checking email and surfing the net. There are more distractions in an online environment than in a conventional classroom. Furthermore, since the teacher is not physically present in class to monitor students' movements, students are more likely to succumb to such distractions; this is especially so if the web

camera is not used. Concentration can therefore be an issue for online teaching.

> "I became used to online teaching from the beginning of the course. If not, how many weeks did it take to become used to this mode of teaching?"
>
> 1 week: 14.2%
> 2 weeks: 14.2%
> 3 weeks: 57.1%
> 4 weeks: 14.5%

In his research on teaching interpreting by distance mode, Ko (2008) points out that a distance program should last for at least 18 hours or 6 weeks (with 3 hours per week) in order to achieve optimal effectiveness. This is because it takes time for students to become accustomed to the new learning environment. The above findings are consistent with this observation. However, due to the fact that teaching translation by the distance mode requires less interaction than teaching interpreting, it took less time (8 hours over 4 weeks) for all of the students to feel comfortable with this teaching environment.

Towards the end of the questionnaire, students were asked the following two open questions and asked to list up to 5 points in relation to each question. The following is a summary of students' responses:

> What do you think are the most important factors for an online translation class?
> (1) Using external expertise
> (2) Fun
> (3) Learning new technologies

What do you think are the main disadvantages of an online translation class?
(1) Technical problems
(2) Lack of communication
(3) Less chance for group discussion
(4) Less vivid than a face-to-face class with the teachers
(5) Not effective

"Using external expertise" was acknowledged as the most important factor for an online translation class. This is certainly one major advantage of most distance education programs. The concern with "fun" and "learning new technologies" indicates that students found this learning environment novel. In fact, the new technology that students were actually exposed to in this course was very limited, as they were only required to log in and use a small number of functions. It is strange that "convenience" was not mentioned. That is probably because students did not take the classes from home.

As for disadvantages, students were dissatisfied with certain aspects of the technology used. Obviously, problems such as disconnection, the teacher being unable to show certain slides, and the 3-5 second delay when a student wanted to speak, need to be avoided. In terms of connection, an online class should, ideally, operate as smoothly as if it were being conducted face-to-face. Responses 2 to 4 all relate to the technical environment in which this online course was conducted. It can be argued that an online course has certain inherent features, such as isolation, less chance for group discussion, and lack of immediacy. However, it is believed that if a web camera was used consistently in teaching such courses, these problems could be minimised. Finally, the comment that the online teaching was "not effective" reflects students' feeling about this course. However, the fact that it appears at the bottom

of the list indicates that it was not a crucial concern for the students even though there is certainly room for improvement.

7. Conclusion

The main teacher's observations in relation to this course indicate that teaching translation online is generally effective and manageable from a pedagogical perspective. In most cases, teachers were able to effectively conduct their classes, organise discussions, take questions from students, provide feedback, and deliver the course content. External experts were successfully used to teach local students. There are some other obvious advantages to an online course, such as making a course available to students in remote locations and saving on travel time, although these advantages did not apply to this particular course.

The delivery of the course in question also generated a number of points that are worth further consideration and investigation:

(1) Although there are various broadband Internet products and online teaching software packages on the market, not all are appropriate for online translation teaching. A thorough investigation and test run are therefore necessary before deciding which Internet products and software packages are appropriate. Alternatively, tailor-made software should be developed to suit the particular requirements of a course. It would be ideal if a web camera could also be used.

(2) Pre-course training is necessary to familiarize all participants with the system and its features.

(3) Online technical support should be provided. For instance, an IT technician should be present when a class is being conducted, at least for the first few weeks, so that any technical problems could be solved immediately.

(4) Online teaching can be time-consuming, particularly in terms of class discussion, providing feedback and electronic marking. It is important to develop more effective teaching and marking strategies.

(5) Online teaching and communication have some unique features. It is necessary to develop an appropriate communication protocol.

An online translation course has certain features not found in a conventional course. At the same time, it has some inherent constraints by comparison. It should therefore be considered as a course in its own right. When considering whether to offer an online course in a particular situation, it is necessary to weigh its pros and cons.

Finally, there were two constraints in this research. Firstly, the students attended this course in a computer laboratory. If they had taken the course, say, from their homes or offices, the outcomes might have been different, both technically and pedagogically. Secondly, the results of this research are only applicable to the special technical environment studied in this project.

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Linguistic Relativity in *Rakugo* Translation

Rieko Matsuoka & Ian Smith

Abstract

When translating culturally-colored discourse, a great deal of effort is required to overcome the complexities of and problems caused by the uniqueness of the source text. In this study, rakugo, *which is the traditional Japanese performance art of telling comic stories, will be a source text for analysis. The culturally-specific features and the factors causing complications in the translation process will be explored, based on some excerpts from "*Himaraya no hokutoshichisei*: Septentrion over the Himalaya", the original* rakugo *script written by Sanyutei Kyoraku. According to linguistic relativity, differences in perspectives on reality often manifest themselves as specific features in language use in speech communities, and these differences seem to cause complications in translation because some words are specific to a particular language and cannot be translated literally. Translating the culturally-colored script, therefore, may necessitate the in-depth examination or exploration of given cultures or worldviews. As a more specific method for analyzing the translation process, the notion of high context vs. low context will be utilised. By examining the data*

with the notion of linguistic relativity in mind, the first and second person pronouns are highlighted as focal points. Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to examine the frequency of first-person pronouns uttered or not uttered in Japanese where they are uttered in English, and the frequency of second-person pronouns uttered or not uttered in Japanese where they are uttered in English, and to investigate the ways in which these phenomena are related to the linguistic relativity hypothesis, such as in Hall's notion of high-context and low-context societies. Furthermore, Japanese socio-anthropological characteristics are considered.

1. Introduction

Translating culturally-specific or culturally-colored discourse requires paying ample attention to overcoming the complexities and problems incurred by the uniqueness of the source text. In this study, *rakugo*, which is a form of Japanese comedy delivered sitting down on a stage (Oshima 2007), is the source text for analyzing the culturally specific features. *Rakugo* has been enjoyed by Japanese people as entertainment since the Edo era, when electronic entertainment devices such as televisions did not exist. Since 1998, when both Oshima (The Daily Yomiuri 2002) and Sanyutei Kyoraku (Sanyutei 2007) started to perform *rakugo* abroad, people in other countries have also enjoyed *rakugo*.

According to Oshima (1992), foreign audience responded to *rakugo* more favorably than she had expected. Oshima, who had her high-school and college education in the United States, can be roughly termed

bilingual, and performs *rakugo* in English. As she points out, word-for-word translation into English may not work sufficiently. In Oshima's case (The Daily Yomiuri 2002), she claims the process of translation involves reworking the stories into something that sounds interesting and funny in English, whilst trying to maintain the feeling of the original story in Japanese.

On the other hand, Sanyutei believes performing *rakugo* in Japanese with foreign-language subtitles should preserve the authenticity of the *rakugo* tradition (Sanyukei 2007), and the first author has been in charge of translating his *rakugo* scripts since he started to perform *rakugo* overseas in 1998. This study investigates the difficulties caused by differences in the languages and cultures of Japanese and English, in accordance with linguistic relativity, using material from a *rakugo* script. In fact, Katz (in Wong 2000) supposes that linguistic relativity jeopardizes universal inter-translatability.

In this study, using the *rakugo* script for data, the notion of linguistic relativity is examined, focusing on first and second-person pronouns. Therefore, the research questions are posited as follows:

(a) How often are first-person pronouns uttered or not uttered in Japanese where they are uttered in English?

(b) How often are second-person pronouns uttered or not uttered in Japanese where they are uttered in English?

(c) In what way can these phenomena be interpreted using the linguistic relativity hypothesis?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Linguistic Relativity

Although the linguistic relativity hypothesis (Sapir 1921; Whorf

1956) has failed to acquire sufficient support, as Davies (1998) points out, both theoretical (e.g., Slobin 1996, 2003; Lucy 1996) and empirical (e.g., Davies 1998; Ozgen & Davies 2002; Wassmann & Dasen 1998; Boroditsy 2001; January & Kako 2007) research has been conducted, in order to examine the degree to which linguistic relativity may apply. As Pinker (1994) states, the notion of language has gained people's attention, and the relationship among language, thought, culture and reality has been of great interest, and so a brief overview of this hypothesis should be provided.

2.1.1 Language vs. Culture

Wong (2000) states that cultural differences produce incommensurable conceptual frameworks, because language affects how people perceive their reality and language coerces thought. Lucy (1992) explains that language is a reflection of culture, citing Boas, the predecessor of Sapir, and argues for the psychic unity of mankind and a notion of distinct cultures. Boa's position is reflected in the following three propositions: (a) languages classify experience; (b) different languages classify experience differently; (c) linguistic phenomena are unconscious in character, apparently because of their highly automatic production. Boas's essential view is that linguistic classifications reflect but do not dictate thought.

2.1.2 Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Sapir (1924) postulates that language, race, and culture are not necessarily correlated but there must be some relation between language and culture, and between language and an intangible aspect of race, and that language and our thoughts are inextricably interwoven. Sapir also argues that human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor do they live alone in the world of social activity as it is ordinarily

understood, but they are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society (Spier 1941). In fact, the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. Sapir elaborates on Boas's arguments and claims we anticipate or read experience in terms of language categories which, by virtue of their abstraction and elaboration in the linguistic process, no longer correspond to experience in a direct way. According to Handler (1986), Sapir saw the dialectical interaction of creative personalities and cultural forms, of expression and tradition, and added that the human mind craves relationships.

Whorf extends Sapir's ideas, based on the work he carried out with American Indian languages. He suggests that the relationship between language and culture is not simply based on predisposition but is a deterministic one. In his view, the world is viewed differently by speakers of different languages because their languages differ structurally (Wardhaugh 1986). In Whorf's view, therefore, language determines how we perceive and organize the world around us. Whorf argued that language shapes culture and reflects the individual actions of people. Therefore, language shapes a person's view and influences thoughts. People who speak different languages may perceive reality and think differently, because categories and distinctions encoded in one language are not necessarily available in another.

2.1.3 Linguistic determinism vs. Linguistic relativity

Boas, Sapir and Whorf agree that language is classificatory, isolating and organizing elements of experience. Their theory posits that language determines the way people perceive the world and think, something that is called linguistic determinism. In a milder version, their theory may be interpreted as saying that people who speak different languages perceive reality and think differently, because categories and distinctions

encoded in one language are not necessarily available in another, which is so-called linguistic relativity. Indeed, this deterministic view of language has been criticized. However, their theory reflects the truth of language and explains the difficulties that translation work entails.

Bloomfield (1923), on the other hand, suggests that we should study people's habits of language—the way that people talk—without bothering about the mental processes that we may conceive of as underlying or accompanying these habits. Bloomfield adds that Sapir's presentation deals with the actualities of language rather than with any hypothetical mental parallels.

2.1.4 Empirical studies

Whorf argues that language manifests basic features that impact on human thought. This is based on research into the Hopi language, for example, into how it treats time. After long, careful study and analysis, the Hopi language is seen to contain no words, grammatical forms, constructions or expressions that refer directly to what we call "time", or to the "past", "present", or "future", or to concepts of being "enduring" or "lasting". Therefore, Whorf argues, it would be difficult for a Hopi and an English-speaking physicist to understand each other's thinking about time (Carroll E. J., in Spier 1941).

As another example, a case study of conditionals by Wong (2000) manifests Whorfian linguistic relativity. He concludes that abstract thought that springs from hypothetical exercises does not come easily to Chinese people, because of the lack of conditionals in the Chinese language (Wong 2000).

A more recent study on conceptions of time, by Boroditsky (2001), conducted experiments to examine the differences between Mandarin and English speakers, with results that supported the linguistic relativity hypothesis. However, her research was refuted by January and Kako's

study (2007), which replicated Boroditsky's. The discrepancy in their studies is due to the fact that Borodisky's participants were native speakers of English and Mandarin while January and Kako's were native speakers of English and bilingual speakers of Mandarin.

In the area of color recognition, Davies (1998) and Ozgen and Davies (2002) conducted a cross-cultural investigation on language and color perception and found that some differences exist in color perception associated with differences in language. This supports linguistic relativity with some universalism.

On the other hand, Lowie (1923) shows how the human mind has arrived at the same form of expression in two historically unconnected regions, using the example of some noteworthy parallels between Taklma and Greek regarding similar morphologies. In the same way, Tatara and Yagihashi (2007) argue that human recognition of physicality is universal and is beyond differences in language. Once it has been represented in the form of language, cultural factors then start to intervene. It is, therefore, effective to compare the cultural constituents, besides the linguistic homology, in analyzing humans. By the same token, Pinker (1995, 2007) has taken a position of opposing the notion that language shapes our worldview; instead our mind shapes and constructs our language.

2.2 High-context vs. Low-context

Hall (1976) dichotomizes societies based on the notion of high-context and low-context. As an example, in a high-context society such as Japan, very little is said to be coded in language messages because most of the information is believed to be already known, whilst in a low-context society, such as the USA, many more things may have to be explicitly expressed than would be the case in Japanese. If presuming how much needs to be uttered is also regarded as a linguistic activity,

this concept can be interpreted as a part of the wider framework of linguistic relativity. Based on this, the process of translating between Japanese and English works would require adjustment.

3. Data

3.1 *Rakugo*

The roots of *rakugo* date back to the end of the 17th century. *Rakugo* developed from short tales which were told among common people. The style of performance or presentation of *rakugo* was established in the late 18th century and has not changed. When some of the early artisans discovered that they could actually make a living as professional story tellers, they would rent a large room (*yose*) in a house and sit on a small mattress to perform *rakugo*. *Rakugo* performers are called *rakugo-ka* (Oshima 2007).

Rakugo consists of the conversations between characters in the story, and its performers, *rakugo-ka*, have to be able to play the role of different characters by changing their voices, facial expressions, manners, etc. (Oshima 1992).

3.2 The Script Writer: Sanyuutei-Kyoraku

Sanyuutei-Kyoraku (Kyoraku, hereafter) started to perform *rakugo* with English subtitles in 1998. Kyoraku became a *rakugo* performer in 1988 and was promoted to being a SHINKATA, a senior position where one is allowed to have apprentices, in 1992. He has written several *rakugo* scripts focusing on social issues related to aging, health problems, cultural sensitivities and the environment, has been awarded several prizes and appeared in newspapers because of his involvement in social welfare activities. The data dealt with in this study comes from the

latest script he has written, which was performed in several institutions, including Harvard University, in 2006.

3.3 The Text

"*Himaraya no hokutoshichisei*: Septentrion over the Himalayas" is the title of the *rakugo* script used in this study. In this story, the main character is a younger sister who was happy-go-lucky and did not like to get her hands dirty, but who changed her outlook on life through some experiences with warm-hearted people living at the foot of the Himalayan Mountains. Because of space limitations, only the lines of the text that are discussed in this study are shown, but the full text with an English translation is available on request.

4. Results

4.1 First-person Pronouns

In order to answer research question (a), the portions that include first-person pronouns were taken from the script. In the original Japanese script, there are 28 cases (51.8%) without explicit first-person pronouns and 26 cases (48.2%) with explicit first person pronouns, out of a total of 54 cases. This means that the first-person pronouns are omitted in more than half the cases in the given script.

The following is a list of the portions without first-person pronouns:

1. *Nanika norimononi nosetekureruno?*
   Can I take a ride in some vehicle?
2. *Nande konnanoni nonnnakya ikenainoyo.*
   Why do I have to do such a thing?
3. *Zutto tanoshimini shitetan desu.*

<u>We</u>'ve looked forward to it for a long time.

4. *Konna yuremakuttennno yadaa.*

   I don't want to ride on such a jolting vehicle.

5. *Norikaerannakya.*

   I have to change the vehicle.

6. *Soreja sou shiyou kashira.*

   In that case, let <u>me</u> do so.

7. *Zutto ofutariga irrassharunowo tanoshimini shiteorimashita.*

   <u>We</u> looked forward to seeing both of you.

8. *Hai, wakarimashita.*

   OK, I understand.

9. *Nee, onaka cho suichatta.*

   Hey, I am super hungry.

10. *Sonnani isoganakutemo ii to omounn desukeredomo.*

    I don't think you have to hurry so much.

11. *Anou, gyuufun dato omoimasu.*

    Well, I think they're cowpats.

12. *Negaigoto kakemakuritte yatsu …*

    I make lots of wishes.

13. *Un ima negaigoto shichatta.*

    Yeah, now I've made my wishes.

14. *Hoshiimono atte.*

    I wish to have something.

15. *Kore kiniitte moraeruka douka wakaranain desukedo.*

    I don't know if you like it or not, but …

16. *Dakara ne, imanara ne, nandemo katteagerarerunnda.*

    So, I can buy you anything.

17. *Ki wo kittara, kanarazu, motonoyouni chiisana ki wo ueteiku.*

    If <u>we</u> cut a tree, <u>we</u> should plant a seeding.

18. *Soshite sore wo sodatete iku.*

Then, <u>we</u> should grow them.

19. *Haitte ii?*

   May <u>I</u> come in?

20. *Nobotte kite tsukare chatta.*

   After climbing, <u>I</u>'m tired.

21. *Dakara saa, ammari otoosan tokatte yoku wakannnai dayo ne.*

   So <u>I</u> don't know what fathers are.

22. *Mama to oneechan to zutto sanninde kurashite kitajan.*

   Because <u>I</u>'ve lived with mum and my sister.

23. *Dakarasaa omoidette ammari nainda yone.*

   So, <u>I</u> don't have lots of memories.

24. *Demo papaniwa kaoga kaoga omoidasenain daa.*

   But <u>I</u> don't recall my Dad's face.

25. *Itsumo aitakkutte saa.*

   <u>I</u> do want to see him always.

26. *Aitakutte shouganai noni saa.*

   <u>I</u> really wish to see him but …

27. *Aitainoni sa, shinjimae nante icchaunnda.*

   <u>I</u> want to see him but <u>I</u> say, "You should die".

28. *Choo omoun dakedo ningen igai nomono mo aisanakya ne.*

   <u>I</u> really think we should love other things than humans.

In all the cases above, the English translation includes the first-person pronouns (underlined). In some cases, the first-person pronouns can be added in Japanese without changing the meaning in a drastic way (3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27), though the nuance may change a little. By adding the first-person pronouns, these portions are more assertive or emphatic. On the other hand, in other cases (1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 28), adding explicit first-person pronouns may make the utterance strange.

The following list shows the portions with explicit first-person pronouns.

1. *Atashisaa, sakkikara fushigini omottetan dakedo.*
   I had wondered a while ago.
2. *Moo, atashi sa*
   Well, I
3. *Moo atashi,*
   I
4. *Nee, oneechan atashi yadaa moo konnanotte*
   Hey, sis, I don't like this.
5. *Watashitachi wa zuibun omachi shite itandesu.*
   We waited long for you.
6. *Watashi, gakkaiga arukara ne.*
   I'll have to attend the conference.
7. *Atashi, mou kaeru*
   I want to go back.
8. *Atashi kaerumon ne.*
   I'll go back.
9. *Yappari kaeru, Atashii.*
   Yes, I'll go back.
10. *Boku wa izen nihonni, kankyo no benkyo woshini sannen hodo ryugaku shitakotog arundesuga.*
    I studied ecology in Japan for three years.
11. *Boku wa gakkouni ittekuru yo.*
    I'll go to school.
12. *Atashi konnani jagaimo gane oishiite shiranakatta wa.*
    I didn't know potatoes are so delicious.
13. *Boku mo ima kitatokoro desu.*
    I myself came here just now.

14. *Iyaa <u>atashi saa</u> kono sougen kono nohara konoaida ne maa-chan to isshoni kita noyo.*

    Well, I came to this prairie, this field, with Maya, the other day.

15. *<u>Atashi</u> daisuki nano.*

    I love this.

16. *<u>Boku mo</u> desu yo.*

    I love this, too.

17. *<u>Watashi</u>, docchikato iuto antano ho akkere kaette, hikkuri kaecchau youna kiga surukedo.*

    I rather feel you will be knocked over.

18. *<u>Atashi</u> imamade konnani kokorono komotta presidentte morattano hajimete nanda.*

    I've never had such a heartfelt present.

19. *<u>Atashi sa</u> konoaida chone baitode tammari okane moracchattan dayoo.*

    I got lots of money for my part-time job the other day.

20. *<u>Atashi mo</u> sa kawarini nanika katteageru yo*

    I can buy you something in return for it.

21. *<u>Boku no</u> hoshii mono?*

    What do I want?

22. *<u>Boku no</u> hoshiimono wa ne.*

    What I want to have is …

23. *Chiisai kedo <u>watashi</u> dairuki nanda.*

    It's small, but I love it.

24. *<u>Watashitachi</u> oneechan to mou ato mikkagoni kaeranakucha ikenaijan*

    <u>We</u>'ll have to be back in three days, so …

25. *<u>Boku ga</u> deattekita ookuno nihonjinno nakade ichiban shojikide soshite kokorono utsukushii hito desu.*

    You have the most honest and most beautiful heart that I've ever met.

26. *<u>Watashi</u>, kokonisa nokosashite moraouto omounnda.*

I decided to stay here.

In the above list, all the utterances include first person-pronouns, but thirteen (whose numbers are in bold print: 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23), which is 50% of the 26 portions, do not have to have the first-person pronouns, meaning the utterances are possible without them. These seem to have the pronouns in order to highlight the first-person nature of the utterances. On the other hand, the first-person pronouns are mandatory in the rest. In order to clearly differentiate among the cases where the first person pronouns are mandatory, or are not necessary, or cannot be placed, further examination will be necessary.

4.2 Second-person Pronouns

In order to answer research question (b), all the portions with second-person pronouns are listed below. There are 32 cases altogether and 18 cases (56.3%) have no uttered second-person pronouns, while 14 cases (43.7%) have uttered second-person pronouns.

The following is the list of portions without second-person pronouns.

1. *Nepal, tte gozonji desuka.*
   Do you know where Nepal is?
2. *Mou, norikaerareru kara.*
   Now you can change the vehicle.
3. *Sonnani nagakuwa noranaikara daijoubu yo.*
   You'll be fine as you don't have to take a ride for long.
4. *Hee, donna mono kauno.*
   Oh, what kind of thing will you buy?
5. *Kuichigirarechau wa yo.*

You'll be eaten.

6. *Are, Nepal no hito nandesho. Hee, nihongo shabererunnda.*

   Oh, you're a Nepalese, are you? Oh, you can speak Japanese …

7. *Korette mizutte iwanai.*

   You don't call this water.

8. *Oi, maya, maya, yokosan wo sorosoro okoshiteageta houga iinnjanai kana.*

   Hey, Maya, Maya. You should wake up Yoko.

9. *Oreini [niramekko] shitekurette?*

   As a thank-you, do you want me to play a staring game?

10. *Yooku warattekureru wanee.*

    You laugh a lot, don't you?

11. *Isshoni ikagadesuka.*

    Why don't you have them?

12. *Matta?*

    Have you waited long?

13. *Nanika negaigoto shitanndesuka?*

    Did you make some wishes?

14. *Kore kiniitte moraeruka douka wakaranainn desukedo.*

    I don't know if you like it or not, but.

15. *Moratte moraemasuka*

    Do you kindly receive it?

16. *Nanika hoshiimono aru?*

    Do you want something?

17. *Nani icchateru noyo.*

    What are you talking about?

18. *Crystal no koto, itomeyouto shitatte dame yo.*

    You cannot get Crystal.

In contrast to the cases of the first-person pronouns, explicit second-person pronouns are not acceptable as natural Japanese in any

of the cases above. In fact, there are different types of pronouns in Japanese which correspond to the English "you"; however, the most common pronoun *anata* or *anta* is sometimes regarded as derogative (Lydia Sugawara, personal communication, August 2007). Instead of pronouns, people's names or social positions or roles are used. Thus, all the cases above could accommodate names or social positions, such as *Oneechan* (big sister).

1. *Atashii, oneechanga*
   I, you, sis..

2. *Nee, annta annta*
   Hey, you, you.

3. *Yoko-san norikae masuka.*
   Yoko, do you want to change the vehicle?

4. *Anta sukinee*
   You really like it.

5. *Anta dokkani switch motterun janai no?*
   Do you have a switch or something somewhere?

6. *Anata wa subarashii hito da.*
   You're a really wonderful person.

7. *Demo Anata wa muraju no kodomotachi wo, otoshiyoriwo, keganinntachi made yorokobasete kuretaja arimasenka.*
   But you pleased the children, the elderly, and the injured people in the village.

8. *Anata no ikutokoro kodomotachi no akarui waraigoede michiteiru.*
   There are lots of happy laughing of children wherever you are.

9. *Anata wa nihonhe kaette wakarukotono dekinai otoshiyori ya keganinn ya kodomotachi ni*
   I'd like you to give your happy and beautiful heart to the elderly, the injured people and the children.

10. *Anata no akarui kokoro wo utsukushiku tadashii kokoro wo todoketeagete moraitain desu.*

    I would like you to convey your cheerful heart, your beautiful heart and just heart to them.

11. *Nani ittennnoyo annta*

    What are you talking about?

12. *Annta mitaina ne. wagamamana monoga kokoni nokotte doushiyoutte iuno yo.*

    What on earth are you, such a selfish person, going to do staying here?

13. *Anta nanka zotto kaeritai kaeritaitte wagamama bakkari ittete*

    You just said you wanted to be back all the time.

14. *Anta nankane nanka takuranndenn janai.*

    You're just planning something.

Just as the cases without uttered second-person pronouns cannot have second-person pronouns added, in the cases with uttered second-person pronouns there seems to be no option for omitting the second-person pronouns. In other words, all the cases in the above list need second person pronouns. In some cases, such as number 1, the social role or status is addressed instead of the second person. Watanabe (2007) points out that the deictic center moves to the social world by addressing the second person with his or her social role or status.

4.3 Discussion

The first and second-person pronouns in *rakugo* translation can be interpreted using the theory of linguistic relativity (Sapir 1921; Whorf 1956) and the notion of high-context and low-context society (Hall 1976). Japanese mores (Kuwayama 1992; Lebra 2004) may facilitate the interpretation as well.

Regarding the first-person pronoun omission, the first explanation may be made using the notion of high-context and low-context society (Hall 1976). Based on the idea of a typical high-context society, Japanese people may be economical with the length of the utterance when the information is regarded as obvious. In case of first-person pronouns, when the individual talks about him or herself, listeners should know about whom that individual is talking. Therefore, the first-person pronouns are not supposed to be uttered, especially in the culturally-colored *rakugo* script. Second, the theory of linguistic relativity may explain this phenomenon. Based on the idea of linguistic relativity, language may classify experience, reflect actions and shape a person's worldview. Thus, the linguistic system of Japanese that allows its speakers to omit first-person pronouns may classify their experiences, reflect their actions and shape their worldview (Whorf 1959). It is hypothesized, consequently, that Japanese people perceive their existence in a less self-centered and other-reference oriented way in Kuwayama's terms (1992).

In the case of the mandatory utterances of first-person pronouns in the *rakugo* script, *atashi*, the informal version of the first-person pronoun, is more frequently used than the formal version *watashi*. Yoko, the main character in this *rakugo* script, uses *atashi* and many of the utterances, including the mandatory first-person pronouns, are Yoko's. In this *rakugo* story, Yoko represents a different type of woman from traditional Japanese women who value reticence and are less self-centered. Kyoraku, the author of this *rakugo* script, seems to have the intention of projecting Yoko as an assertive and less typical Japanese. Yoko's language seems to successfully reflect her view of life, which is implied by the theory of linguistic relativity. In *rakugo*, where one person performs the roles of a number of characters, the language is expected to reflect the characters' actions and shape their outlooks.

The omission of second-person pronouns predominates in the interrogative utterances. As with the omission of the first-person pronouns, the notion of high context (Hall 1976) may provide an interpretation for this linguistic phenomenon. In the dialogic interaction, interrogatives are obviously directed towards the second person in general. Therefore, in Japanese, where fewer utterances are preferred and a lot of information is presumed to be known, second-person pronouns are unlikely to be used. The common pronoun of *anata* and *anta*, which are less formal versions of *atata*, are sometimes regarded as derogative, as has been pointed out by Sugawara (personal communication, August 2007), a Peruvian living for a long time in Japan. In the *rakugo* script used for the present study, in addition, the Nepalese characters show negative reactions when referred to as *anta*. Instead of using the second-person pronouns, Japanese people use the person's name or their social roles or statuses, such as *oneechan* ("big sis"). As posited by Watanabe (2007), using social roles in addressing the second person may change the deictic center to the social world. Lebra's (2004) notion of having two sides of being in one individual, that is, the "subject I" and "object me", may interpret the positionality of the interlocutors, which validates the theory of linguistic relativity. More specifically, using the person's name or social role reveals the way in which Japanese people situate themselves in dialogic interaction, which means that language influences perception.

5. Concluding Remarks

The present study, focusing on first and second-person pronouns in the process of translating a *rakugo* script in Japanese into English, clarified the research questions as follows:

(a) First-person pronoun omissions appear in more than half the cases where the English translation needs first-person pronouns. Moreover, half of the omitted first-person pronouns cannot be uttered in natural Japanese dialogic interaction. In the rest of the cases where the first-person pronouns are used, approximately half of them cannot be omitted.

(b) Second-person pronoun omissions appear more frequently than first-person pronoun omissions. Additionally, the second-person pronouns in Japanese are regarded as derogative and names or social roles are used instead to address the dialogic interlocutors.

(c) Linguistic relativity, including the notion of the high and low-context society, and Japanese mores seem capable of interpreting the linguistic phenomena of first and second-person pronoun-use revealed in the process of translating the *rakugo* script.

For further study, a more minute analysis regarding first and second-person pronouns in the context of the *rakugo* script could probe the in-depth mechanism of the linguistic system and clarify the inextricable relationship between human universality and linguistic relativity. This could be done through a thorough examination of the literature on linguistic relativity from multiple perspectives, such as Slobin (1996, 2003) and Gumperz and Levinson (1996).

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Naturalization as a Translating Strategy:
On Target Cultural Items in the Source Text

Zhou Jing & Yuanjian He

Abstract

This paper investigates how naturalization is adopted as a translating strategy across four Chinese multiple texts rendered from the same English source text. Naturalization is a method of translating target cultural concepts embedded in the source text by encoding them in their original target language forms. It is a domestication process which aims to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text to the target reader. It is found that naturalization is a prominent strategy for translating target cultural concepts from the source text, and that its deployment is determined by the relevant target context and the knowledge system of the translator.

1. Introduction

Since ancient times, different cultures have found ways of crossing into each other. It is more so than ever in contemporary times with the

rapid development of material culture. For example, books published in a foreign land may often refer to or describe Chinese cultures and customs. When these books are translated into Chinese, the issue arises of how to translate the Chinese cultural concepts therein. In theory, the "know-how" lies in the knowledge system of the translator and in the pragmatic factors in the translation process.

Naturalization is a translating strategy whereby target cultural concepts embedded in the source text are encoded back in their original target language forms. For instance, "人生行樂耳！須富貴何時！" is a Chinese folk rhymed saying in the Han Dynasty first quoted in an essay by Yang Hui (楊惲). Early last century, an American named Frederic B. Loomis (1873-1937) visited his friend in Beijing and saw an inscription of the rhyme in the friend's garden. He asked his friend to translate it into English for him and the English translation later appeared in his book *In a Chinese Garden* (Loomis 1942). The English translation is "Enjoy yourself. It's later than you think". When Hu Shi (胡適) was serving as the Chinese ambassador in the United States, he was asked to translate this English saying into Chinese. So he rendered it as "快活快活罷，別相信還早哩". According to Huang Wenfan (黃文範) (1993: 11-13), Hu's translation is only paraphrase, but a true Chinese translation (in this case) should restore the original Chinese rhyme. Such restoration in translation is one kind of naturalization.

Let us look at an example of naturalizing Chinese into Latin or English. "Ars longa, vita brevis" are the first two lines of a Latin translation of an aphorism by the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates (BC 460-377). The words have long being rendered in English as "Art is long, life is short". A literal Chinese translation would be "人生短暫，藝術長久", or a more metaphorical version "人生朝露，藝術千秋". [1] If the latter version is to be translated into Latin or English, no other strategy but naturalization would be appropriate. It proves

naturalization is indeed an important strategy in back-translating target cultural concepts from the source text.

In fact, naturalization can be found everywhere in translation. Toponyms and anthroponmys such as "the Great Wall/長城; the Yangtze River/長江; Mao Tse-tung/毛澤東; Chiang Kai-shek/蔣介石" are the best known examples. But for the less commonly used toponyms and anthroponyms, the translator has to engage in some research. In theory, naturalization should be an appropriate strategy to adopt when target cultural concepts appear in the source text. However, there has not been much attention paid to it in the literature. In the following I will first look into how naturalization is used in four sets of examples from parallel bilingual databases. I will then initiate theoretical discussions of how naturalization may be understood as a translating strategy in the translation process.

2. Naturalization in Multiple Target Texts

The parallel bilingual databases contain one English source text, *The Joy Luck Club* (Amy Tan 1989) and four multiple Chinese renditions by Yu (1990, Taipei), Tian (1992, Shenyang), Wu et al. (1992, Hefei) and Cheng et al. (1996, Hangzhou).

From the databases, a total of 145 passages describing Chinese cultural concepts are collected from the English original, together with four separate Chinese translations. The data in relation to how the target cultural concepts are translated produce the following statistics (where *Natur* stands for naturalization, *Trans* for trans-coding, *Para* for paraphrasing and *Dele* for deletion):

	Natur	Trans	Para	Dele
Yu	37/26.21%	106/73.10%	0	1/0.69%
Tian	50/34.48%	90/62.07%	4/2.76%	1/0.69%
Wu	38/26.21%	106/73.10%	1/0.69%	0
Cheng	58/40.00%	52/35.86%	11/7.59%	24/16.55%

As we see, naturalization and trans-coding are the two most predominant strategies. The deployment of naturalization varies from 26% to 40%, while that of trans-coding ranges from 35% to 73%. If counted as a whole, the four translations together show the strategies deployed as follows: [2]

	Natur	Trans	Para	Dele
Target cultural concepts (580):	184	354	16	26
Proportion (100%):	31.72%	61.03%	2.76%	4.48%

Naturalization across the four versions is 184 instances (31%) out of 580 (100%) in total. This shows that naturalization is a fairly frequent option for the translator, though it is still used less often than trans-coding.

In addition, from the perspective of a strategy used at any one time, naturalization covers 60% of all cases, accounting for 87 cases out of 145 in total, as shown below:

	naturalization used in all 4 TTs	In 3 TTs	In 2 TTs	In 1 TTs	Total
145 cases:	12	18	28	29	87
Proportion (100%):	8.28%	12.41%	19.31%	20.00%	60.00%

Based the above statistics, it could be safely generalized that the prominent use of naturalization indicates that it is an effective strategy to translate target cultural concepts embedded in a source text. Let us now view some of the examples.

Examples of naturalization being employed in all four translations are:

(1)　"An-mei, we have made your <u>dying clothes and shoes</u> for you. (Tan, 47)
　　　"安美，我們已經做了妳的<u>壽衣壽鞋</u>，……"(Yu, 36)
　　　"安梅，我們為你做了<u>壽衣、壽鞋</u>，……"(Tian, 38)
　　　"安梅，我們為你做好了<u>壽衣和壽鞋</u>，……"(Wu et al., 34)
　　　"安梅，我們已替你準備好<u>壽衣壽鞋</u>了，……"(Cheng et al., 37)

(2)　They say this is what happens if you <u>lack metal</u>. (Tan, 63)
　　　他們說如果你<u>缺金</u>便是如此，……(Yu, 54)
　　　他說這就是<u>缺金</u>。(Tian, 56)
　　　他們說<u>缺金</u>的人就這樣，……(Wu et al., 50)
　　　或許他們講得對，<u>缺金</u>對我是個好徵兆。(Cheng et al., 55)

(3)　"This mirror sees that mirror—haule!—multiply your <u>peach-blossom luck</u>." (Tan, 147)
　　　"這面鏡子與那面鏡子對望——好了！集聚你們的<u>桃花運</u>。"(Yu, 151)
　　　"這個鏡子正對着那個鏡子，好了！<u>桃花運</u>不斷吶。"(Tian, 151)
　　　"這面鏡子能映着大衣櫥上的鏡子。好了！它能使你的<u>桃花運</u>成倍增加。"(Wu et al., 139)
　　　母親敲敲墙說，"用這面鏡子來反照那面鏡子就解掉了，運

氣保留了，還加上一點<u>桃花運</u>。" (Cheng et al., 140)

As we know, "dying clothes and shoes", "lack metal" and "peach-blossom luck" are not native English expressions. They originated from traditional Chinese culture and were borrowed into the English text. All four translators rendered those concepts via naturalization, though such uniformed cases are few.

Most cases of naturalization are found in one translation or another—namely, naturalization by at least one translator. Examples are:

(4)　… this was her fate: <u>to stay lost on the moon</u>, … (Tan, 51)
她的命運註定<u>要流放月宮</u>，…… (Yu, 75)
這就是她的命運：<u>自己迷失在月亮之中</u>，…… (Tian, 77)
這就是她的命運：形單影隻，<u>孑然一身呆在月亮上</u>，……
(Wu et al., 70)
她已命定將<u>永遠棲身在月亮上</u>與丈夫終生分離，…… (Cheng et al., 72)

(5)　Help us <u>stack the tiles and make four walls</u>. (Tan, 34)
幫我們<u>堆好牌，砌成四面牆</u>。(Yu, 21)
來幫我們<u>碼牌</u>吧，<u>擺成四排</u>。(Tian, 20)
幫我們<u>將牌碼起來</u>，<u>排成四長排</u>。(Wu et al., 22)
學着我們，喏，<u>把牌堆成四塊牆</u>。(Cheng et al., 21)

In (4), "her" refers to Chang'e (嫦娥), and in this context, "to stay lost on the moon" has a Chinese cultural connotation. Thus, "流放月宮" is a translation by naturalization, while the other translators use paraphrasing. In (5), only "將牌碼起來" is a case of naturalization, while the other translators use trans-coding. More examples are:

(6) "An earth horse for an earth shee," (Tan, 50)

"地馬配地羊，⋯⋯" (Yu, 40)

"一個屬馬，一個屬羊，⋯⋯" (Tian, 43)

"馬配羊，⋯⋯" (Wu et al., 38)

"看呀，就好比駿馬配上金馬鞍，多般配，⋯⋯" (Cheng et al., 42)

(7) No, it's not true what some Chinese say about girl babies being worthless. (Tan, 50)

(Deletion) (Yu, 40)

不，並不像一般中國人說的那樣，女孩子不值錢，⋯⋯ (Tian, 42)

一些中國人說，養丫頭沒有用，⋯⋯ (Wu et al., 38)

中國人所謂的女孩子是賠錢貨，其實也未必一概如此，⋯⋯ (Cheng et al., 41)

In (6), "屬馬屬羊" involves naturalization, "(地)馬配(地)羊" is a case of trans-coding and "駿馬配上金馬鞍" is a paraphrase in a metaphorical sense. In (7), "女孩子是賠錢貨" and "養丫頭沒有用" are cases of naturalization while "女孩子不值錢" involves trans-coding. Deletion is found in Yu's version. Further examples are:

(8) … except to say "Pung!" or "Chr!" when taking a tile. (Tan, 24)

只除了在拿牌時說一句"碰！"或"吃！"。(Yu, 10)

只有打牌時說"吃"啊，"碰"啊的。(Tian, 10)

除抓牌時嘀咕一二聲"乓"、"吃"外，⋯⋯ (Wu et al., 8)

除了吃牌時發出的一聲短促的"碰"或"吃"，⋯⋯ (Cheng et al., 9)

(9) "You are the son of a mother who has so little respect she has

become *ni*, a traitor to our ancestors. (Tan, 44)

　"你是忤逆女的兒子。她背棄了祖宗，⋯⋯ (Yu, 32)

　"你是敗壞家門的臊貨的崽子，你媽是造 nie（孽），我們家的敗類。(Tian, 34)

你母親是個不知恭敬、大逆不道、背叛祖宗的賤女人。(Wu et al., 31)

　"你這個狗娘養的。誰都看不起你媽，她糞土都不如。這個連祖宗都不認的女人。(Cheng et al., 33)

In (8)-(9), "pung", "chr", "ni" are Chinese pronunciations of the characters "碰", "吃" and "逆" respectively. Similar cases are found elsewhere in the source text and are considered to be the unique "Chineseness" of Tan's fiction (cf. Huntley 1998). Naturalization seems to be a spontaneous method to translate these Chinese pronunciations. As shown in (8), only "乒" involves trans-coding of the sound. In (9), "become *ni*" is naturalized in three texts as "忤逆女", "大逆不道" and "造孽", and only one text uses paraphrasing.

3. A Theoretical Discussion

In theory, naturalization is part of the domestication process which aims to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text to the target reader by transforming source cultural concepts into target cultural concepts (cf. Venuti 1995, 1998). An example close to home: in the 1980s, Shakespeare's plays like *Hamlet* and *King Lear* were translated into Cantonese and put on stage in Hong Kong. They were performed just like Chinese plays because the time and places of the plays were set against a Chinese historical background. The names of the characters were in Chinese too. The language they spoke and the costumes they

wore are all appropriately modified in a Chinese manner (cf. 方梓勛, 蔡錫昌, 1992; 陳善偉, 1992; 王宏志, 1992). The tendency toward a domesticated translation of English dramas into Cantonese is one of the most prominent features over the last three decades in Hong Kong (Fong 2009). Technically speaking, if the translator consciously or subconsciously uses naturalization in translation, the target text would be more domesticated than otherwise. In this sense, translating via naturalization has the effect of domestication.

The translator is a member of both the source and the target speech communities. When concepts in the source text originated in the target speech community, naturalization would be the most economical encoding option for the translator. But observations of real translations indicate, as we have seen above, that trans-coding is more often used than naturalization. The question is why there is such a discrepancy between theory and practice.

Translation can be seen as the result of the bilingual processing going on in the brain of the translator (Diamond and Shreve 2010). All components of the cognitive system (i.e. motor-sensor system, articulatory-perceptual system, language faculty, conceptual-intentional system, memory system, etc.) may be interrelated during the process. Input received by the motor-sensor system and the articulatory-perceptual system is first encoded from its linguistic carrier via the language faculty, and then interpreted accordingly by being given a "mental representation". In other words, something is interpretable to us because it is given a "mental representation" in our brain. This "mental representation" is then encoded in another carrier and verbalized. If only one language is involved in the process, the listener will understand the meaning received after decoding. But if the input needs to be translated, target encoding will follow the source decoding. In this situation, the act of "conceptual mediation" must take place in the brain of the

translator, whereby the mental interpretation given to the incoming source text is properly negotiated, shaped and projected, as it were, into one that is given to the outgoing target text as conditioned by the cultures of the target speech community and the pragmatic factors of target texts. The "mediating-encoding" process may go back and forth several times (de Groot 1997).

Though we cannot see the translating process in the translator's brain, the encoding data from the target texts provide cognitive evidence. Empirically speaking, naturalization appears to be a spontaneous strategy for the translator (87 cases out a total of 145). But it does not mean that every target cultural concept in the source text can be naturalized. Whether or not the source text can be naturalized is conditioned by two factors: the knowledge system of the translator and the contextual factors of the target text.

The knowledge system puts limits on the translator's encoding options. This system, varying from one person to another, is reflected by the performance of memory systems. The prerequisite for verbalizing target cultural concepts via naturalization is that the translator has to have a stock of source-target form pairings in his/her memory. Such concepts are ethnically unique, including idioms and allusions, literary quotations, proverbs, colloquial expressions and so on. It takes time for the translator to stock a sufficient number of concepts in memory via language performance. Once the concepts become part of his/her knowledge system, they could be retrieved when needed. If the translator does not have a performance-viable stock of necessary concepts in memory, without doubt he/she cannot retrieve anything at the time of need. In theory, we could assume that the translator's bilingual grammar is fairly good, but his/her bilingual performance may be restricted by the memory stock. During the translating process, if a target cultural concept is stored in the translator's memory, it can be retrieved in the

use of naturalization. If not, other strategies will have to be used, like trans-coding, paraphrasing or deletion. For example, "把麻將牌碼成四垛" has become "stack the tiles and make four walls" in the source text. If the translator does not know or cannot remember the Chinese expression, it is likely he/she will trans-code the English text into "堆好牌，砌成四面墙" as shown in (5). In a strict sense, language is simply the linguistic vehicle of concepts. If the translator does not know an encoding option, it implies that he/she does not have the corresponding concept. In this case, trans-coding becomes the most economic method. More examples are (10)-(11):

> (10)　"Your sisters have already gone to <u>see Old Mr. Chou</u>," my mother would whisper in Chinese. (Tan, 186)
>
> "妳的姊姊已經<u>去會周公了</u>。" 我媽會用中文咬着我耳朵說。(Yu, 200)
>
> "姐姐們已經<u>見周公去了</u>，" 母親用漢語低聲對我說。(Tian, 198)
>
> "你姐姐都已<u>去見畫公了</u>，你還不想去啊？" 母親常常輕輕地用漢語對我說。(Wu et al., 183)
>
> (Deletion)　(Cheng et al., 185)

"Old Mr. Chou" is translated into "周公" in both Yu's and Tian's texts. Both translators recognize that "Old Mr. Chou" is a target cultural concept. On the other hand, Wu's text renders it as "畫公", which involves transliteration (i.e. a trans-coding based on sound). There is no translation in Cheng's text. It is clear that the last two texts have ignored the cultural dimension of "Old Mr. Chou".

> (11)　They were jobs held by families from Canton and <u>Toishan</u> and the Four Districts. (Tan, 261)

這些工作是由廣東、<u>唐山</u>和四大區域的家族們設置的，……
(Yu, 287)

這些工作都攬在廣東、<u>舟山</u>和四大區一些家族手裏，……
(Tian, 283)

因為它們由從廣州、<u>潮汕</u>、四區來的家庭，…… (Wu et al., 262)

而其他職業，大多由廣東人和<u>台山人</u>壟斷着，…… (Cheng et al., 255)

Only one translator naturalizes "Toishan" as "台山", and the others are mistranslations. In fact, if the translator knows anything about the Cantonese immigration to the West coast of the United States and is familiar with the Cantonese language, the name of the Romanized Cantonese city can be easily rendered as "台山".

Now, with regard to the contextual factor that conditions the use of naturalization, it is well known that the target text has its own context, which is very different from that of the source text. This leads to re-contextualization in translation (Nord 2006; House 2006). For this reason, if translating via naturalization fails to create semantic coherence within a particular context, the translator may have to seek an alternative strategy.

As we know, the Chinese cultural concepts described in *The Joy Luck Club* are supposed to be alien to the intended English-speaking reader. In many places, the author simply explains those Chinese cultural concepts in English, creating a context of its own, and this makes it difficult for the English text to be naturalized. Alternatively, trans-coding is the option, for example:

(12) Later I would see him at <u>red-egg ceremonies when one-month-old boy babies were given their real names</u>. (Tan, 52)

其後，我會在別的男孩滿週月命名的分紅蛋儀式上看到他。
(Yu , 43)
後來，我又見過他，那是在為滿月的男嬰起名的 "紅蛋節"
上。(Tian, 45)
這以後，在人家給一個月的小男孩取名字、發紅蛋、做滿月
時，我也常見到他。(Wu et al., 40)
再一次見到他，是在某家的滿月酒席上，(Cheng et al., 44)

(13)　… then to a whole assortment of what I've always called finger
goodies—thin-skinned pastries filled with chopped pork, beef,
shrimp, and unknown stuffings that my mother used to
describe as "nutritious things". (Tan, 32)
而後則是各式品味的小麵點——薄皮裏豬肉、牛肉、蝦和我
媽常稱做 "營養成分" 的一種不知名的餡。(Yu, 18)
繼而又被顏色各異的小吃所吸引，其中一種我總是稱之為
"動手吃的美味" ——薄皮餡餅，裏面有豬肉、牛肉、大
蝦。還有一些東西，雖裏面有餡，我叫不上來名字。我媽媽
說這是 "營養食品" 。(Tian, 19)
接着又品嚐了一種用許多材料製作的點心，我稱之為 "手食
美味品" ，它是一種薄皮糕點，裏面包着剁碎的豬肉和牛肉
餡，還有叫不出名的被母親稱為 "滋補品" 的肉餡。(Wu et
al., 17)
還有那種被我稱為 "手指" 的好東西，一卷一卷的，麵粉製
的皮子很薄，裏面的餡子是各不相同：有豬肉糜、牛肉糜、
蝦仁，還有些我叫不出名字，那是我媽常常加工的 "營養
品" 。(Cheng et al., 18)

In (12), only "滿月酒席" is a case of naturalization and the explaining
English text becomes redundant. The other three translations are cases
of trans-coding, literally delivering the source text in the target form. In

(13), all translators use trans-coding, but if one is familiar with Cantonese cuisine, one knows that "finger goodies" simply refers to a type of dim sum (點心) called "腸粉" (rice noodle rolls or cheong fun). But if the translator naturalizes it in that way, he/she has to delete the explanation in the text, and this changes the relevant context. It appears that naturalization is very concise, but a little short of giving the full context. In comparison, trans-coding offers the full context but misses the precise point. It remains to be better understood how the knowledge system of the translator and the contextual factor condition the use of naturalization. In addition, whether there are more factors at work needs to be further studied.

Besides naturalization and trans-coding, which account for 92.75% of the strategies used, paraphrasing (2.76%) and deletion (4.48%) occupy a very small percentage. This can be easily explained. Firstly, the Chinese cultural concepts in the source text are already paraphrased in English in the first place. And translating the relevant source text becomes either trans-coding or naturalization, as illustrated in examples (12)-(13). In other words, because the source is ready a paraphrased text, trans-coding it in Chinese is in a sense backward "paraphrasing". Secondly, deletion in translation is as a rule the last resort, and it often happens when the translator adopts the strategy of rewriting. This is in fact the case with Cheng's text (see 程乃珊, 1999: 285), which has a significantly higher proportion of deletions (16.55%) than the other three texts.

4. Concluding Remarks

Modern translation studies are empirical and descriptive in nature and offer explanatory benefits for researchers and translators alike. In

theory, patterns or tendencies shown by translating strategies can be viewed as cognitive signatures of the translator (cf. de Groot 1997; Bell 1998; Paradis 2002, 2004; Alves and Magalhaes 2004; de Groot and Christoffels 2007). In this regard, the present study on naturalization as a translating strategy has two findings. Firstly, naturalization is a prominent strategy for translating target cultural concepts from the source text. Secondly, how the translator may deploy naturalization as a translating strategy depends on his/her knowledge system and the contextual factors of the target text. These findings can be beneficial to translation teaching since we are in the era of information technology and cultures are interacting ever so much more closely with each other than before through online translation and so on.

Notes

[1]   It was translated by Guo Moruo (郭沫若), but this still has to be ascertained.

[2]   4 x145＝580 examples are collected.

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Socio-cultural Contexts in Translation:
A Case Study of the Singapore Prime Minister's Public Speech

Susan Xu Yun

Abstract

If one were to investigate socio-cultural contexts and their impact on translation strategies and quality of translation in an age of globalization, there is probably no better place to delve into this topic than Singapore. Multilingual texts are an integral part of everyday life in this multi-cultural and multi-racial society. This paper enquires into a National Day Rally speech by the Prime Minister of Singapore and analyses its text type, text function and translation. The script and its translation are closely examined and categorized according to their functions and topics. House's "analytic framework for analysing and comparing original and translation texts" is adopted to examine the sample texts. The theoretical basis of this project is Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar. Through a contrastive analysis of the source text and its translation, this paper aims to examine the interconnectedness between the surface-level linguistic descriptions and the socio-cultural context at three levels: genre,

register and discourse. It will consider how the socio-cultural contextual values affect the way the translation is being carried out. The paper will end with a discussion of how to use the insights from this study as parameters to explain the phenomenon of translation and assess the quality of translations.

Introduction

Singapore is well-known for its bilingual education policy and harmonious multi-racial environment, coupled with its economic success. Multilingual texts are an integral part of everyday life. The city-state boasts a large pool of bilingual and cross-cultural communicators, many of whom have experience in translation or dealing with translation (e.g. editing, reading or proof-reading translations). Nonetheless, there has been constant public outcry over the poor quality of translations in many aspects of the society, including the public service, media and newspapers. While such criticism may be subjective and intuitive, interestingly there has hardly been any study done by translation scholars to investigate what constitutes a good translation in the unique socio-cultural context of Singapore. Given Singapore's demographic composition, which consists of a large bilingual population who may share a common socio-cultural background but differ socio-politically, it is important to develop a translation evaluation model that enables us to examine the interconnectedness between surface-level linguistic description and the socio-cultural context for both the original text and the translation.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

There are three major approaches to translation evaluation (Colina 2008: 99-101). **Experience-based and anecdotal approaches** "tend to be ad-hoc scales developed for the use of a particular professional organization or industry" and evaluate the translation mainly based on the experience of the language users. **Reader-response approaches** "assess the quality of translation by determining whether readers of the translation respond to it as readers of the source would respond to the original". **Functional pragmatic approaches** made a breakthrough by "shifting the focus from counting errors at word or sentence level to evaluating texts and translation goals, giving the reader and communication a much more prominent role". Apparently, the functional pragmatic approaches fit better into the research goal of this paper than other two approaches as they "explicitly take account of the interconnectedness of context and text because of the inextricable link between language and the real world in meaning making and in translation" (House 2001: 247). In particular, House's "analytic framework for analyzing and comparing original and translation texts" has been adopted as the research procedure. When proposing this discourse-oriented approach to evaluate translations, House (2001: 243-244) argues that "translation is essentially an operation in which the meaning of linguistic units is to be kept equivalent across languages" and that "meaning is seen as emerging from larger textual stretches of language in use, involving both context and (situational and cultural) context surrounding individual linguistic units".

House's analytic framework is conceptualized on the basis of Systemic Functional Grammar, which "is geared to the study of language as communication, seeing meaning in the writer's linguistic choices and

systematically relating these choices to a wider socio-cultural framework" (Munday 2008: 90). Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFG) is one of the main functional theories of language developed in the twentieth century. Unlike traditional linguistic theories and framework, SFG is fundamentally concerned with meaning and places great emphasis on the relationship between language and context. The major SFG architect, M. A. K. Halliday (2004), argues that one cannot understand the meaning of an utterance without any knowledge of its social and cultural context. The relationship is bi-directional: one learns a language and learns to use it through his participation in the cultural context in which the language is embedded; he learns about the culture through learning to use the language. In other words, the more you understand the culture, the easier you understand the text of that culture. "Culture is therefore a means of transmitting language and language is a means of transmitting culture" (Wignell 2010).

Introducing two terms, namely, **Context of situation** and **Context of culture**, Malinowski argues that text can only be understood in relation to both these contexts (Wignell 2010). Context of situation refers to both the verbal and non-verbal environment associated with an instance of a text. Context of culture refers to the broader social context which generates and validates/invalidates a text. Context of situation determines the pattern of an individual text and Context of culture determines the overall pattern of the text in relation to other texts. In other words, "If you are not a member of the culture, you cannot understand what it meant" (Coffin, Lillis & O'Halloran 2010: 16).

Martin (1984) proposed an Ideology–Genre–Register model to illustrate the relationship between language and its social and cultural context.
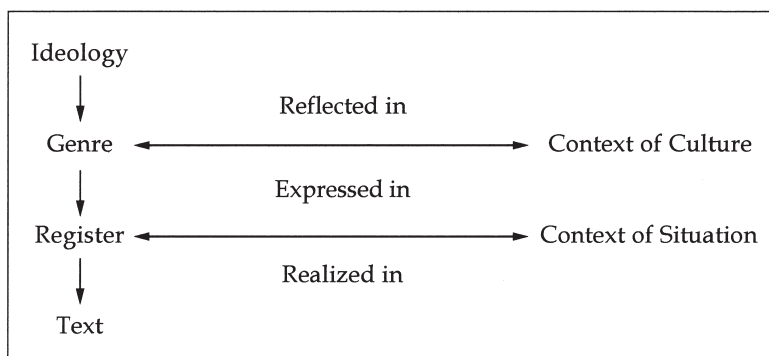
```
Ideology
   │
   ▼                    Reflected in
Genre     ◄─────────────────────────►    Context of Culture

   │                    Expressed in
   ▼
Register  ◄─────────────────────────►    Context of Situation
   │                    Realized in
   ▼
Text
```

Figure 1: Ideology–Genre–Register model

According to this model, any text involves selections of ideology, genre and register. The selection might be specific to that text but is generated by meaning systems within a culture. **Ideology** refers to the "prevailing system of belief within a culture (or sub-culture)". It can be reflected in the choice of genre. **Genre** relates to "the cultural purpose of a text" and is expressed in different text types with characteristic schematic structure and lexico-grammatical patterns. **Register** refers to variations in language according to use, whereby each type of text is defined by its distinct linguistic feature. Register is closer to Language than Genre and Ideology. While Register corresponds to Context of Situation, Genre corresponds to Context of Culture.

Register comprises three variables: Field, Tenor and Mode. **Field** deals with "what" type questions such as "what is this text about" and "what is going on". It refers to both the subject matter of a text and the social institutions/activities which make the text relevant. **Tenor** answers "who" type questions such as "who are the participants", "who has the right to speak". It focuses on social relationship between/among interactants. **Mode** addresses "how" type questions such as "how is the text communicated" and "how distant are the interactants". It refers to

the channel of communication, such as speech, writing, blogs, SMS message, e-mail, telephone, radio, television, film, to name a few. The three variables work together to contribute to a systematic description of the Context of Situation concerning where a text is produced, communicated and understood.

In the late 1960s, Halliday and his colleagues discovered a striking parallel between the three register categories and the three broad areas of meaning potential: ideational, interpersonal and textual as outlined below:
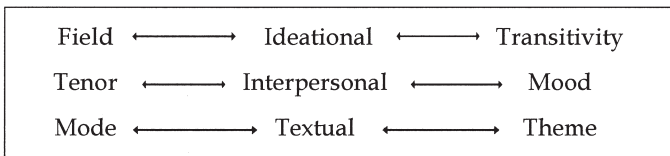
Field	⟷	Ideational	⟷	Transitivity
Tenor	⟷	Interpersonal	⟷	Mood
Mode	⟷	Textual	⟷	Theme

Figure 2: Register Variables and Metafunctions

All languages are organized around three broad areas of meaning potential, known as metafunctions: "**ideational**" for meaning related to the world of human experience, "**interpersonal**" for meaning related to the interrelationship between the interactants, and "**textual**" for meaning relating texts to one another and to their context. Ideational meaning is realized in thematic structure; interpersonal meaning in mood structure; and textual meaning in transitivity. The three metafunctions are linked to register categories: field is associated with ideational meaning because of the connection between the social institutional activities they are involved in and the topics they are discussing; tenor is related to interpersonal meaning in view of the power relation implied in the process of exchange of goods and services or information; mode matches up with textual meaning, for the channel of communication influences the relationship between language and its

context.

In summary, as Malinowski argued, one cannot understand a text unless he knows about the context in which it occurs. The social context involves people engaging in social activities (field), interacting with one another (tenor) and using a channel of communication to do so (mode). Above the social context is the cultural context which involves "purposeful goal-oriented activities" or "culturally determined communicative events" (genre).

When a translator translates a text into the target language, he not only needs to understand the socio-cultural context of the Source Text (ST) but also the socio-cultural context of the Target Text (TT). This paper taps into the concepts of ideology, genre and register and the interaction between register variables and meaning potentials and adopts House's Analytic Framework to analyze the ST and the TT. It aims to assess the functional equivalence which characterizes the phenomenon of translation.

Research Method and Design

The study constitutes the first part of a research project examining the role of socio-cultural contexts in translation in Singapore. Based on House's analytic framework, we adopt a bottom-to-top, or micro-to-macro comparative analysis of the source texts and the target texts in terms of their functional profiles. First, we examine the functional equivalence between ST and TT in terms of the three register categories by scanning the sample ST and TT for instances of equivalence or difference. We then move on to compare the genre of ST and TT by identifying features representing the cultural context, in order to ascertain whether generic equivalence is achieved. Finally, with insight yielded by

the register and genre analysis, we hope to understand the ideology behind the ST and ascertain whether it is captured and upheld in the TT.

The ST chosen is a transcript of National Day Rally Speech (in English) by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on 29 August 2010. The National Day Rally is an annual national event through which political visions are conveyed and important policies are announced. The speech was telecast live via all four official language channels and interpreted simultaneously. The TT is the Chinese translation published in *Lianhe Zaobao*, the leading local Chinese-medium newspaper with the second largest readership in Singapore. The selection of ST and TT texts is motivated by my observation that the NDR speech is a major milestone in the social and political scene in Singapore and has a profound impact on almost everyone living in Singapore. More importantly, both sample texts exemplify the application of House's Analytic Framework.

The ST is divided into four parts, labeled as Economy, Immigration, Education and the Singapore Spirit. The TT is divided into 12 segments, to each of which a headline is attached.

Comparative Analysis of Source and Target Texts

We shall start with a register analysis of the ST and TT to understand their functional profiles.

Field

The ST text is a transcript of the speech and covers a wide range of political and social issues on economy, immigration, housing, transport, national service, education and the Singapore Spirit. Some of the issues,

such as economy and education, are often discussed in NDR speeches. Some topics, like the large influx of foreigners which has swamped Singapore since 2000, are the latest hot topics which incur negative feelings among a number of Singaporeans. The Singapore Spirit is a new concept being introduced publicly for the first time. In general, the speaker favours the use of a plain language and prefers easily understood layman terms to a specialised lexicon. The TT retains almost all the content of the ST but is divided into smaller chunks (i.e. 17 topics). Its language is formal and precise.

Tenor

The speaker, the Prime Minister, is undoubtedly endowed with the highest power and authority in Singapore. He is here addressing a selected group of audience face-to-face in a formal conference setting. His face-to-face audience comprises ministers, government officials, business leaders, grassroots leaders, community and industry delegates, student representatives, etc. However, his main audience consists of millions of TV viewers who watch the live telecast of his speech. They come from all walks of life with diverse social status, education and even languages. Seemingly aware of the power gap as is typical in a political context, the speaker makes many attempts to step down and connect with his audience by adopting a friendly and chatty tone tempered with witty humour. The objective is to close the gap and appeal to the attitudes and emotions of the audience.

Though the identity of the speaker of the TT remains unchanged, there seems to be a change in the relationship between the parties concerned. The most striking change takes place with respect to the readership, which consists of mainly Chinese-speaking citizens and new immigrants from Greater China.

Mode

The address was delivered in English in a university conference hall and lasted about two hours. The speaker spoke in a relaxed manner instead of reading from the script, occasionally referring to the written pointers. The transcript captures every utterance with a total of 14,440 words. Powerpoint slides and other multi-media devices were used to supplement his presentation. The "smaller" group of his audience listened to him face-to-face and responded to his speech with facial expressions, applause and laughter. But the "larger" group watched the live telecast and there was hardly any interaction. In both scenarios, due to the spatial distance, the interaction between the speaker and the audience was mostly one-way.

The translation is fundamentally different from its source text in that it is written, as contrasted with its spoken original. It was published as a news report with a total of 24,000 characters in Chinese. Hardly any interaction took place between the speaker and the reader due to the written and asynchronous nature of the text.

Analysis of ST and TT
A. "On the Economy: To inform and encourage"

Starting with a positive outlook on economy, the speaker intends to inform the audience of the country's economic development and encourage them to work harder. Evidence for this can be found in the opening paragraph of the speech:

> Example 1a:
> **Our** economy has shaken off the recession and it is now booming. *In the first half*, our GDP grew by 18 per cent year on year, one-eight. Lots of jobs have been created, unemployment has gone down, **Singaporeans** can look forward to higher wages and good bonuses.

> *Last year*, **Singaporeans** were very worried about the future, but we have come through the crisis much better and much faster than we expected. Everyone contributed, the unions, the workers, employers and the Government as well did a little bit. So, thank you all for a job well done. While we have come through, we should not forget what has happened. We better learn some lessons from how we managed the downturn because despite all our preparations and precautions, sometime, somewhere, something will happen again and there will be future crises and we should be ready for them.

In the first part of Example 1a, abstract nouns such as "our economy", "our GDP", "lots of jobs", "unemployment" take the theme position, giving prominence to the topic of the economy. In the second part, "Singaporeans", "everyone" and "we" dominate the theme. The sustained use of "we" imparts the idea of inclusivity and emphasizes the relevance of the topic to the audience. Most thematic structures are unmarked. The marked themes such as "in the first half" and "last year", together with conjunctions such as "while" and "so", organize the texts in a temporal and sequential order. These are the typical textual patterns in an informative speech.

It is evident that the speaker eschews arguments on the macro-economy and focuses on issues that concern the individual in order to engage the audience and make the subject matter comprehensible. A few rhetorical devices such as "preparation and precaution" and "sometime, somewhere, something" accentuate his message.

Let us now examine the Chinese translation:

Example 1b:

新加坡經濟已擺脫不景氣陰影，現在已欣欣向榮。今年上半年國內生產總值比去年增加了 18%，職場也一片興旺，出現了許多新的就

業機會，失業率也下降了。**新加坡人**將可得到更高的工資和更多的花紅。

國人去年對前景感到非常擔憂。幸好在工會、工人、雇主和政府人員的<u>齊心配合</u>下，我們已比預期還要好地渡過了<u>難關</u>。在此，我要感謝大家的<u>努力</u>。

我們應吸取處理這次危機的經驗。因為<u>無論我們做了多少的準備和預防工作，都難以避免危機在將來出現。我們應做到能隨時應付危機</u>。

The translation appears to be formal and concise. Textual coherence is achieved lexically and through the use of different paragraphs. Phrases that are most commonly found in written texts replace the original spoken components. For example, "不景氣陰影" (shadow of recession) is a more abstract expression as compared to its ST counterpart (i.e. recession 不景氣); "努力" is more formal than "a job well done"; "就業機會" (i.e. employment opportunity) is more conceptual than the ST phrase (i.e. "jobs"); "齊心配合" sounds more rhetorical and positive than the ST phrase (i.e. "contributed", "did a little bit"). Of particular interest is the use of the translation strategies of addition and repetition to strengthen the positive outlook of the job market. For example, "職場也一片興旺" was added before "出現了許多新的就業機會" to reiterate the point.

There seems to be an attitudinal shift: while the ST sounds persuasive and affirmative through alliteration, the TT appears concise and neutral in its matter-of-fact style. This is typically exemplified in the last sentence:

> ST: Despite all our <u>preparations and precautions</u>, <u>sometime, somewhere, something</u> will happen again and there will be future crises and we should be ready for them.

TT: 無論我們做了多少的準備和預防工作，都難以避免危機在將來出現。我們應做到能隨時應付危機。

Back-translation: No matter how much preparation and precaution we've taken, it is impossible to avoid future crises. We should be able to cope with them anytime.

In general, the TT covers the same subject matter as the ST but presents the ideas more factually and objectively than the ST does.

We shall now proceed to examine the last paragraph of the first part of the speech (Example 2a) and its translation (Example 2b) to determine whether the above-mentioned shift can be seen.

Example 2a

Productivity has to be the responsibility of all of us, to keep learning and upgrading, to increase our value and contribution and that is the way Singapore can stay ahead of the competition. Our firms can do well and all of us can improve our lives.

Example 2b

生產力必須是我們大家的責任，我們要不斷學習和提升，提高我們的價值和貢獻，這樣新加坡才能走在競爭的前頭，我們的企業才能表現出色，我們的雇員才能改善他們的生活。

Back-translation: Productivity has to be the responsibility for all of us. We must keep learning and upgrading, and increase our value and contribution. In this way Singapore can stay ahead of the competition. Our firm can then excel, our employees can then improve their lives.

The ideational meaning in Examples 2a and 2b is identical and clear: to enhance productivity. But the two texts differ in terms of personal interaction. 2a is informal, with incidental grammatical flaws, which are commonly found in spoken language. For instance, "to keep learning and upgrading … and that is …" may be considered ungrammatical in written texts. The sustained use of "and" serves as the main cohesive device. 2b is obviously more sophisticated in its syntactic structure, with the use of lexical variety: it rectifies the grammatical errors by inserting a subject (e.g., 我們要不斷學習和提升), omitting unnecessary conjunctions (e.g., "and") and opting for repetition strategies (這樣⋯才能⋯才能⋯才能) to re-organize the text. Some words that differ in meaning from the ST (e.g., "我們的雇員" instead of "我們所有人" for "all of us") are chosen. Perhaps this is evidence of the translator's mediation and interference. While the speaker in 2a makes an effort to step down and adopts a cordial and friendly tone, he sounds formal and condescending in 2b. The speaker in ST often uses "we" to instil a sense of belonging and tries to persuade the audience. But the power disparity is evident and distinct in the TT and the speaker commands rather than persuades.

The perceived differences may have partly arisen from the different situational contexts in the ST and TT: the ST is a transcript of a speech whereas the TT is a report in a newspaper. They could possibly be caused by the socio-cultural contexts in which the two texts are embedded. The target audience of the ST consists of the English-speaking citizens who are influenced by the Western culture of "freedom and equality" and they place greater emphasis on equal treatment. The target readers of the TT are Chinese-speaking citizens who follow Confucius moral values and who tend to show greater respect to their leaders.

B. *"On Immigration: To explain and exhort"*

As stated by the speaker, immigration is a controversial issue that divides the otherwise united and integrated society of Singapore. The speaker switches to an extremely cautious tone and adopts a narrative style when discussing the issue of immigration. His main objective is to explain the current policy and exhort his audience to accept the facts. Evidence for this can be found in the beginning paragraph of Section 2:

> Example 3a
>
> This year, with the booming economy, we will definitely need more foreign workers so that we can create more jobs in Singapore. A few months ago, I mentioned to the press that we could need more than 100,000 foreign workers more this year. There was a big ooh which you could almost hear. **Well**, since then, we have recalculated. Maybe, we will get by with a few less, perhaps 80,000 workers. **But** I said this to highlight the trade-off which we face and which we cannot avoid. You want higher growth which will benefit our workers. That also means accepting more foreign workers to come and work in Singapore. You choke off the foreign workers, the economy is stifled, growth is not there, our workers will suffer.

Acknowledging that immigration has been "a very hot topic in Singapore", the speaker adopts a conversational and informal tone in order to establish a close relationship with his audience. He first states his belief explicitly and then corrects a mistake in his earlier statement in a deliberately casual manner, in a move to alleviate the audience's anxiety so as to make them more receptive to his ideology. Colloquial expressions such as "a big ooh", "maybe", "growth is not there" and "choke off" also help soften the tone, lighten the atmosphere and shorten the distance

between the speaker and the audience. The use of marked topical themes (e.g., "This year", "A few months ago", "Since then") highlights the temporal development of the matter. Furthermore, the textual components (e.g., "well", "but") make the ideational expressions cohesive and coherent.

The most noticeable point about Example 3a is a sudden change of tone in the second half of the paragraph, achieved through the use of the "we-you" approach. This is in contrast to the dominant features of inclusivity in Section 1, where "we" is used abundantly to implant the idea of inclusivity. The speaker seems to deliberately widen the gap between "we" (i.e. the government) and "you" (i.e. the audience who disapprove of the influx of immigrants and foreign workers). While the language remains informal and chatty, the relationship between the speaker and audience is altered: the speaker assumes the role of exhorter. A trace of gravity can be detected in his speech. The underlying motivation seems to imply that "your" view is mistaken.

> Example 3b
> <u>今年</u>經濟蓬勃發展，<u>因此</u>我們肯定需要更多外國客工，這樣才能為新加坡創造更多工作。
> <u>幾個月</u>前我告訴媒體，我們今年可能需要額外 10 萬名客工，大家都發出驚訝聲。<u>之後</u>我們重算一下數字，<u>也許</u>可以少一點，<u>大概</u> 8 萬人左右。
> 我這樣說是為了強調我們必須權衡代價問題，這是無可避免的。你要更高經濟增長，因為這能讓我國工人受惠，那就意味着你必須接受更多客工到我國工作。
> 你排斥客工，經濟受到擠壓，沒有增長，我們的工人也會受到連累。

The translation, more formal than its source text, generally captures the

motivations behind the original speech but in a more concise way. It retains most of the textual components such as the marked structures (e.g., "幾個月前" "之後") and conjunctions (e.g., "but") in order to make the ideational expressions cohesive and coherent.

The TT adopts a similar we-you approach but the bi-partisan characteristics are not as conspicuous as that in the ST. This could be due to a careful linguistic choice of the singular pronoun "你" instead of the plural "你們", in an effort to signify that the speaker is segregating himself from a small group of people. On the contrary, "you" in English can be either plural or singular, and may leave an impression that "you" includes all of the audience. The translator seems to be aware of the subtlety and interferes with his judgment by choosing "你" over "你們", implying that the speaker is only targeting at a smaller group of people rather than all the readers or the entire audience. The sensitivity and interference detected in the TT may be the result of the translator's knowledge of the kind of "face value" as emphasized by Chinese-speaking readers, who tend to avoid confrontation.

In the same section, if we examine how the new policy is being introduced by the speaker, another interesting phenomenon surfaces.

> Example 4a
>
> Tonight, I would like to propose a new initiative, the National Service Recognition Award. What will it do? Two things. First, help with the cost of the subsequent education of National Servicemen and secondly, also to help them to buy a house. What is this going to be? A meaningful sum, in total, S$9,000 for soldiers, a little bit more for commanders, and we will pay this in tranches at major milestones of the National Servicemen's service. It will go into his Post-Secondary Education Account, it will go into his CPF account and it is a significant tangible recognition of the sacrifices and the efforts and the

contributions of our National Servicemen. It is for citizens only. The PRs who do National Service, when they take citizenship later, they can get it too. I think this will be a significant token of appreciation and I do not want to go into all the details tonight. MINDEF will announce the details very soon. I hope it will be well-received.

As the new initiative is being introduced here as a good news to pacify the disgruntled citizen, the speaker staggers the release of details in a lively way through the frequent use of marked thematic structures in the beginning of the paragraph (e.g., "tonight", "what", "help"). This reveals the attitude of the speaker who seems to believe that the initiative will receive positive feedback. The interaction between the speaker and the audience resembles that between an announcer and his recipients. The interpersonal relationship is relaxed, as reflected in the chatty style. The language remains consistently informal, the structure loose, and lexical choices mainly plain and simple. Though the word "I" appears only once in the text, the presence of speaker can be strongly felt.

The close examination of the translation reveals a shocking mismatch in all the three metafunctions:

Example 4b

為感激國民服役人員在國家安全的貢獻，政府將推出"國民服役獎賞計畫"，為每個服完國民服役的公民分階段派發總共 9000 元的獎勵金。已履行國民服役義務的永久居民，成為公民後也能受惠。對國家的效忠和義務與履行國民服役有密切聯繫。國民服役對公民來說，要求很重，他們不僅要全職服役兩年，過後還得履行很多年的戰備服役義務，而這正當他們成家立業的時候。

要外勞和成年新移民履行國民服役義務是不切實際的，但他們的孩子須履行這個義務，很多永久居民和第一代新移民已履行國民服役。儘管如此，人們還是認為公民承擔着更大的負擔。

The translation is very formal, with omissions of colloquial expressions (e.g., "I think", "two things") and WH questions. Information is scaffolded in a very structured and coherent way. The speaker is completely invisible and the tone sounds serious. The distance between the speaker and the readers is increased, resulting in an absence of emotional appeal. Perhaps the reason for the mismatch has something to do with the situational context. As the TT is presented as the official announcement of a new government initiative, perhaps the translator deems it unnecessary to convey the emotive elements and seeks to concentrate on the facts.

C. *"On Education: To inform and inspire"*

When the subject matter changes to education, there are many instances of big political argument delivered in an expressive style. The speaker's motivation is mainly to inform and inspire his audience. Let us examine the following example:

> Example 5a
> Every child is different, every child has his own interests, his own academic inclinations and aptitudes and our aim should be to provide him with a good education that suits him, one which enables him to achieve his potential and build on his strengths and talents. Talent means talent in many dimensions, not just academic talent but in arts, in music, in sports, in creative activities, in physical activities. It is a system which must work not just for a few top students but catering to all our students. Stretch the brilliant ones but also help those less academically inclined and all those in between. Give each one a tailored and holistic upbringing, so you get academic education, moral education, physical education, art and a sense of belonging and identity. We aim to build a mountain range with many tall peaks but with a

high base, not just a single pinnacle where everybody is trying to scramble up one single peak. (Paragraph 52)

The most striking feature of Example 5a is its attitude, which is very expressive and enthusiastic. To soften the tone of political argumentation and add a personal touch, the speaker continues to adopt a simple discourse structure and use plain lexicon. He frequently resorts to rhetorical devices and metaphors to express his passion (i.e. "commitment to education"). For instance, repetition (e.g., "every child", "his own") makes the sentence more catchy and memorable, and there is a recurrence of the image of our children. The concatenation of imperative clauses strongly appeals to the emotion of the audience. The metaphors (i.e. "mountain range", "peaks") convey the motivation vividly and reveal the ideational meaning of the message: our education system does not just work for a few top students but caters to all our students. The absence of conjunctions (e.g., "and", "but", "or") does not seem to violate the coherence of the text, as the text is mainly unified by lexical and logical means.

Example 5b

每個孩子都不同，有不同的個人喜好、學術偏向和天資。我們的目標應該是為他提供良好和適當的教育，協助他發揮內潛能。

才能可以是多方面的，不只涵蓋學術，還有音樂、藝術、體育、創意等。我們的教育體系不能只為少數的精英着想，也要考慮所有人。我們想讓最突出的學生挑戰自我，但我們也不會忽略一般的學生。我們要因材施教，給予每個學生德、智、體育都重視的全面教育，培養他們的認同感。

我們的目標是創造群峰連綿的教育景觀，讓學生有機會攀越各種高峰。我們不願看到學生為攀爬一座高峰而爭先恐後。

> Back-translation: Our objective is to establish a mountain-range
> education scene, enable students to climb different types of peaks. We
> do not wish to see that students scramble up one peak.

The narrative and matter-of-fact style of the translation contradicts the
expressive style in the ST. At the textual level, the personal pronoun
"我們" (we) dominates the topical theme, implanting a sense of
inclusivity, unlike the ST where there is a variation of topical themes.
The repetition in the ST is omitted, and the imperative clauses in the ST
are converted into parallel statements starting with "我們" (we) (e.g., 我
們想…, 我們要…), so there is a less appealing effect. This probably
represents a characteristic typical of the genre of political speeches in
Chinese. There has been a prevailing culture in the Chinese-speaking
community, where one believes in shared social value instead of
individualism. With this in mind, the translator seeks to get its reader
involved through the addition of the subject "我們" (we). Thanks to
the translator's intervention, the interpersonal relationship between the
speaker and readers is enhanced.

Though the metaphor in the last sentence is retained, the meaning
is made specific and explicit through the inclusion of domain words
(e.g., "教育景觀" [education scene]) and choice of words (e.g., "學生"
[students] instead of "everybody"). One can easily detect an omission:
"with a high base". This omission is fatal as it gives an incomplete or
even twisted meaning: the ST implies that our education standard is
high and there are many targets to aim for instead of just one; the TT
omits the former idea but retains the latter. Perhaps the translator has
his attention fixed on cohesion and coherence, not the underlying
motivation in the ST.

D. "On the Singapore Spirit: To energize and empower"

The last part of the speech functions as a departure point from the focus on social-political issues. The speaker's intention is to instil an ideology of the Singapore Spirit into its audience so as to energize and empower them and make them move in the direction set by the leaders. Fully aware of the abstract nature of this concept, the speaker counts on multimedia presentation, cites anecdotal evidence, and deploys rhetorical devices to conjure up a forward-looking vision. The communication strategies are mainly expressive and operative. Instances of recurrence (repetition), parallelism and contrast can be found in Example 6a:

> Example 6a
>
> But this Singapore Spirit <u>is not based on</u> a common race or language or religion. It <u>is based on</u> deeper things which we share, <u>shared</u> values like multiracialism or meritocracy or respect for every talent; <u>shared</u> loyalty and commitment to Singapore; <u>shared</u> responsibility for each other and pride in what we have done together; <u>shared</u> memories as well as dreams and aspirations. <u>It is</u> the determination that makes us press on when things are tough, <u>like</u> in the recession last year, the trust that keeps us together when forces try to pull us apart, <u>like</u> when we encountered extremist terrorism after 9/11. <u>It is</u> the competence and the quiet pride and discipline that make sure that things go right, like when we hosted the YOG. <u>It is</u> a confidence that we will prevail come what may. <u>It is</u> this spirit in each of us <u>which makes</u> Singapore work the way it does and <u>which makes</u> Singaporeans special.

The contrastive strategy (i.e. "is not based on", "is based on"), the repetition of words (e.g., "shared") and patterns (e.g., "…, like") and the parallel structures (e.g., "It is") reveal the ideational meaning of the

passage, reflect the speaker's passion, and appeal powerfully to the audience's patriotic emotions. As a matter of fact, these strategies work together to facilitate the acceptance of the ideology. Despite the absence of conjunctive words, the text remains highly cohesive and coherent through the various rhetorical devices.

> Example 6b
> 不過，新加坡精神並非以一個共同的種族、語言或宗教為基礎。它應該是根據我們共同的理念，如多元種族主義、任人唯賢和對人才的尊重；另外還有共同對新加坡的效忠與奉獻；共同對彼此的責任感，為我們一起建立的一切感到自豪；以及我們共同的記憶、夢想和抱負。
> 新加坡精神是：讓我們在逆境中堅持下去的毅力——好比去年經濟衰退的時候；當外力試圖分裂我們的時候，把我們緊緊維繫在一起的信任——就如當我們在911之後遭遇極端恐怖主義的時候；確保我們完成任務的能力、謙虛和自律——正如我們主辦青奧運的時候；我們堅信不管在任何困難之下，我們都能成功。是我們各自擁有的新加坡精神讓新加坡能如現在般運作，也使新加坡人獨一無二。

The translator seems to have noted the motivation behind the use of lexical repetition and syntactic parallelism, and therefore makes an effort to retain some of them (e.g., "共同" [shared] and "——好比——就如——正如" [like … like … like]). These textual components contribute to good emotional correspondence between the TT and ST. The careful choices of positive idiomatic expressions (e.g., "任人唯賢", "效忠與奉獻") in correspondence with their ST counterparts (i.e. "meritocracy", "loyalty and commitment") reinforce the emotional appeal for the TT readers. Except for a minor slip in the insertion of conjunctive words (e.g., 另外, 以及), which are redundant, the translator has done a good

job in translating this section.

Evaluation and Conclusion

The above comparative register analysis of the ST and TT enables us to examine the functional equivalence between the ST and TT in terms of register, genre and ideology, and thus to assess the quality of the translation.

Register

The ST is a speech delivered to inform, exhort, inspire and empower the audience with respect to key social political issues in Singapore. The subject matter is highly relevant and easy to understand. There is a strong interpersonal quality and ideational belief but a relatively loose textual structure. With regard to field, one of the three register variables, the TT is in the category of newspaper writings with an objective to report to its Chinese-speaking readers. It seeks to convey the ST's ideational meanings in an impartial and objective way. With regard to tenor, there is a mismatch (in terms of interpersonal elements) between the ST and TT to a certain extent. While the ST aims to elicit participation from the audience through an informal style, the TT is formal and lacks the engagement of the readers. With regard to mode, the ST consists of mainly spoken components delivered in front of the audience. The TT is a written report published in a newspaper, lexicalizing politically correct and journalistically appropriate words. Nevertheless, given the socio-textual context combining the three register variables that govern the TT, we consider the translation effective on the whole and the translators' intervention necessary, in spite of a few mismatches.

Genre

Drawing on the above register analysis, we shall now evaluate the functional equivalence and difference between the ST and TT in term of genre with reference to their socio-cultural contexts.

The ST belongs to the genre of the transcript which records a political speech delivered in a spoken mode. Unlike many other audio-medial speeches which are primarily written to be spoken, this text was spoken to be written, characterized by its conversational, impromptu and informal nature. The most distinctive feature is the mix of genres in the ST. In accordance with Reiss's text types and text varieties model, the generic characteristics shift from informative in the beginning (on Economy) to narrative in the middle (on Immigration), and then to expressive (on Education) and finally operative (on the Singapore Spirit). The shifts generally correspond with the changes in subject matter.

With regard to genre, one observes two major differences between the ST and TT. The first lies in the text type: the TT is a translation published in a mainstream Chinese newspaper and functions as a sober report on the government's stance instead of an official translation. The second is associated with a communication strategy: the TT consistently adopts an informative or narrative style while the ST activates shifts from informative to narrative, then to expressive and finally to operative styles.

Ideology

Each generic shift represents a change of motivation embedded in the relevant text. To be specific, beginning with the positive outlook for the Economy, the speaker intends to generate an optimistic emotion within its audience. Such an emotion helps lighten up the atmosphere which is conducive to the in-depth discussion of more sensitive and less popular issues. When he dwells on the challenging issue of Immigration,

there is visible cautiousness and tactfulness. Fully aware of the sensitivity of the issue, the speaker switches to a chatty manner, hoping to buffer the dissatisfaction with his frankness and friendliness. Citing other countries as examples and introducing new incentives that benefit the citizens, he aims to elicit empathy from the audience. On Education, he deploys a common strategy often adopted by political leaders to showcase their achievements and inspire his audience with exemplary activities and behavior. His leadership role gradually surfaces at this stage and is finally highlighted when he ends his speech in high spirits. His key motivation is revealed at the end of his speech: calling on Singaporeans to embrace "The Singapore Spirit" and work together to take the nation to the next level.

This strategy is culturally determined in view of the unique socio-cultural environment in Singapore, where the highly efficient government plays a proactive role in solving every social-political problem and takes good care of its citizens. Interestingly, this role resembles that of a traditional Asian parent, whom their children count on in almost every aspect of their lives. Like the children brought up in such families, the citizens are generally obedient, respectful to and remarkably dependent on their government, but sometimes they become critical and cynical. One can liken the relationship between the government and citizens to that between parents and children. In this regard, the expressive and operative communication strategies adopted in the ST are deemed appropriate and effective.

In an effort to determine whether the ideology of the ST is captured in the TT, we have to highlight two unique factors in the TT situation. The first relates to genre. Though the TT serves the readers of the Chinese-medium newspaper, there is an overlapping between TT target readers and ST target audience. In other words, some TT readers are probably part of the ST audience as they are bilingual and

are already the "insiders" of the culture represented by the ST. This is a very unique socio-cultural phenomenon in the sense that most other translations serve completely different target readers. The second is associated with the identity of translators, who are journalists *per se*. The journalist translators' reaction to such a discourse sample may be contrasted with that of translators who are engaged as language service providers.

Driven by their own objective or subjective calculation of readers' response coupled with their professional instinct, the journalist translators opt to modify the TT genre into a news report, adhere to the cultural norm of the ST and preserve most of the ST cultural reference (e.g. 歌台文化 [Getai Culture], 中元節 [Hungary Ghost Festival]. In addition, they opt for a consistently formal text, leave out colloquial components and ignore the fluctuations in mood and emotion. This decision is considered congruent based on socio-cultural contextual factors including social acceptability, political correctness and vague emotional commitment, as long as the key ideologies are preserved and the motivation is mostly captured. Under such circumstances, the occasional attitudinal mismatch between the ST and TT (e.g., informal versus formal, personalized versus impersonalized, expressive versus narrative) are generally acceptable.

In conclusion, the above analysis proves that three semiotic systems are involved: text, register and genre. Texts "concatenate to form a discourse which is perceived within given genres" (Hatim & Mason 1990: 73). A genre is conditioned by the socio-cultural environment and determined by three variable elements of register: field, tenor and mode. These variables are associated with three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The metafunctions are realized through choices of words and syntactic structures. The three elements of the triad interact with one another and provide a useful theoretical framework to explain

the phenomenon of translation. Drawing upon the Systemic Functional Linguistics Model, we adopted House's analytic framework for analyzing and comparing original and translation to carry out the case study of a National Rally Speech and its translation through a comparative analysis, whereby their functional equivalence is examined and the effectiveness of the translation is assessed. We argue that "the role of the TT is not simply to recast the ST in another language but to function as an effective medium in the TL environment". While the ST is manipulated to achieve ideological goals and serves as an informational core for the TT, the latter is also a product of a different set of semiotic systems. The extent of difference between the two socio-cultural contexts determines the degree of adaptation and amendment in the TT.

Along these lines, a follow-up study of a greater variety of parallel texts will be undertaken to further investigate the validity of this model in the field of translation studies.

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