

Text and Culture: Equivalence in Translation between Chinese and English

Xu Zhen

College of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Fudan University

No. 220, Han Dan Road, Shanghai, 200433, China

E-mail: traceyxz@fudan.edu.cn

(Received: 28-7-15 / Accepted: 16-10-15)

Abstract

The issue of equivalence has been an essential part in the practice, assessment and study of translation. This paper aims at an elaboration on the role of text and culture of translation equivalence from the selected angle: the reader's response. I propose that any translation should aim to achieve equivalence to the Source Text (ST) in terms of the reader's reaction to the text as a result of interaction between the reader's schematic knowledge and the textual realization. The criterion of translation quality is then how to construct the closest sets of dynamic interactions among schemata in the Target Text (TT) reader's mind via the textual form. To further elaborate on the premise, I focus on to two of the most important elements or processes concerned: the analysis of the text and the role of culture. They can be discussed separately and together, both serving as crucial part if equivalence is to be achieved in terms of the reader's response. If we look at translation equivalence in terms of reader's response, rather than in terms of a discrete dichotomy of form and content, the final goal of translation should be equivalent to that of original literary communication. Then the analysis of the text should consist of several aspects, and the role culture plays should not be left unmentioned.

Keywords: Translation, Equivalence, The Reader's Response, Text, Culture.

1. Introduction

According to Peter Newmark's theory, a translational analysis of the Source Language text is essentially important in the translating process (Newmark, 1991). By the adjective 'translational' here, Newmark refers to the requirement on the part of the translator to read the text from a particular angle, namely, a 'translator's point of view', which is different from that of 'a linguist's' or 'a critic's'. You'll have to define the text type, determine the intention, observe closely the context, and decide which translation method to select. This process serves as the ground on which a complete, accurate, fine piece of translation is 'built'. Without this ground, the whole group of translation methods that demand comprehension and skills is rendered useless.

2. Translation Equivalence and the Reader's Response

Theorists have adopted different approaches to study equivalence in relation to the translation process. There are translation scholars who are in favor of a linguistic approach to translation and who seem to forget that translation in itself is not merely a matter of linguistics. Some theorists regard translation equivalence as a transfer of the message from the (Source Culture)

SC to the (Target Culture) TC and apply a pragmatic and semantic or functionally oriented approach to translation. There are other translation scholars who seem to stand in the middle, Baker for instance, and claim that equivalence is used 'for the sake of convenience—because most translators are used to it rather than because it has any theoretical status' (Kenny 1998: 77).

Catford had a preference for a more linguistic-based approach to translation and this approach is based on the linguistic work of Firth and Halliday. His main contribution in the field of translation theory is the introduction of the concepts of types and shifts of translation. Catford (1965) proposes very broad types of translation in terms of three criteria: The extent of translation (*full translation vs. partial translation*); The grammatical rank at which the translation equivalence is established (*rank-bound translation vs. unbounded translation*); The levels of language involved in translation (*total translation vs. restricted translation*).

The second type of translation is the one that concerns the concept of equivalence. And translation shifts, as elaborated by Catford, are based on the distinction between formal correspondence and textual equivalence. In *rank-bound translation* an equivalent is sought in the TL for each word, or for each morpheme encountered in the ST. In *unbounded translation* equivalences are not tied to a particular rank, and we may additionally find equivalences at sentence, clause and other levels.

One of the problems with formal correspondence is that, despite being a useful tool to employ in comparative linguistics, it seems that it is not really relevant in terms of assessing translation equivalence between ST and TT. For this reason we now turn to Catford's other dimension of correspondence, namely *textual equivalence* which occurs when any TL text or portion of text is 'observed on a particular occasion ... to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text' (1965: 27). He implements this by a process of commutation, whereby 'a competent bilingual informant or translator' is consulted on the translation of various sentences whose ST items are changed in order to observe 'what changes if any occur in the TL text as a consequence' (1965: 28).

As far as translation shifts are concerned, Catford argues that there are two main types of translation shifts, namely *level shifts*, where the SL item at one linguistic level (e.g. grammar) has a TL equivalent at a different level (e.g. lexis), and *category shifts* which are further divided into four types: *Structure-shifts, Class-shifts, Unit-shifts, Intra-system shifts* (1965: 80).

Catford was very much criticized for his linguistic theory of translation. One of the most severe criticisms came from Snell-Hornby (1988), who argued that Catford's definition of textual equivalence is 'circular', his theory's reliance on bilingual informants 'hopelessly inadequate', and his example sentences 'isolated and even absurdly simplistic'. She does not believe that linguistics is the only discipline which enables people to carry out a translation, since translating involves different cultures and different situations at the same time and they do not always match from one language to another.

House (1977) is in favor of semantic and pragmatic equivalence and argues that ST and TT should match one another in function. House suggests that it is possible to characterize the function of a text by determining the *situational dimensions* of the ST. In fact, she acknowledges that 'a translation text should not only match its source text in function, but employ equivalent situational-dimensional means to achieve that function' (1977: 49).

Central to House's discussion is the concept of *overt* and *covert* translations. In an overt translation the TT audience is not directly addressed and there is therefore no need at all to attempt to recreate a 'second original' since an overt translation 'must overtly be a translation' (1977: 189). By covert translation, on the other hand, it means the production of a text that is functionally equivalent to the ST. House also argues that in this type of translation the ST 'is not specifically addressed to a TC audience' (1977: 194).

House (1977: 203) sorts out the types of ST that would probably yield translations of the two categories. An academic article, for instance, is unlikely to exhibit any features specific to the SC; the article has the same argumentative or expository force that it would if it had originated in the TL, and the fact that it is a translation need not be made known to the readers at all. A political speech in the SC, on the other hand, is addressed to a particular cultural or national group that the speaker sets out to move to action or influence, whereas the TT merely informs outsiders what the speaker is saying to his or her constituency. It is clear that in this latter case, which is an instance of overt translation, functional equivalence cannot be maintained, and it is therefore intended that the ST and the TT should function differently.

House's theory of equivalence in translation seems to be much more flexible than Catford's. In fact, she gives authentic examples, uses complete texts and, more importantly, she relates linguistic features to the context of both source and target text.

An interesting discussion of the notion of equivalence can be found in Baker who seems to offer a more detailed list of conditions upon which the concept of equivalence can be defined. She explores the notion of equivalence at different levels, in relation to the translation process, including all different aspects of translation and hence putting together the linguistic and the communicative approach. She distinguishes between:

- 1) Equivalence that can appear at word level and above word level when translating from one language into another. Baker gives a definition of the term *word* since it should be remembered that a single word can sometimes be assigned different meanings in different languages and might be regarded as being a more complex unit or morpheme. (1992: 11-12).
- 2) Grammatical equivalence, when regarding the diversity of grammatical categories across languages. She notes that grammatical rules may vary across languages and this may pose some problems in terms of finding a direct correspondence in the TL. She claims that the difference in grammatical structures in the SL and TL may cause remarkable changes in the way the information or message is carried across.
- 3) Textual equivalence, when referring to the equivalence between a SL text and a TL text in terms of information and cohesion. It is up to the translator to decide whether or not to maintain the cohesive ties as well as the coherence of the SL text. His or her decision will be guided by three main factors, that is, the target audience, the purpose of the translation and the text type.
- 4) Pragmatic equivalence, when referring to implicatures and strategies of avoidance during the translation process. Implicature is not about what is explicitly said but what is implied. Therefore, the role of the translator is to recreate the author's intention in another culture in such a way that enables the TC reader to understand it clearly.

Nida and Taber introduced a reader-response based approach to translation equivalence under the name of dynamic equivalence. Dynamic equivalence is to be defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language. This response can never be identical, for the cultural and historical settings are too different, but there should be a high degree of equivalence of response, or the translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose. (Nida & Taber 1969: 24)

Significantly, their notion of audience response lies in an understanding of the 'correctness' of the message: Correctness must be determined by the extent to which the average reader for which a translation is intended will be likely to understand it correctly.

In terms of requiring the reader's participation to fill the gap between the text structure and the realization of the meaning, there are a number of limitations in dynamic equivalence approach.

First of all, this approach carries a preconception as to suppose meaning or message as concrete, based on linguistic codes. Nevertheless, according to reader-response theories, the meaning is not fixed there in the text, so the reader's participation is required to realize the meaning of the text. The gap to be filled consists of the assumptions, not coded in the text, which the writer and the reader share.

Second, therefore, dynamic equivalence refers to the 'dynamics of original' in acquiring this meaning in substantially the same manner. Again, if the meaning is understood as interpreted from linguistic codes, the dynamics are nothing but interpretation. From the translator's point of view, then, the only way to promote the degree of equivalent response is to make explanatory additions for the implied meaning or figurative sense of the original. This approach basically is not concerned about the interaction of the reader's knowledge with the textual realization.

Third, concerning the reader's response, this approach does not take account of the reader's text processing effort. Without considering the intra-personal differences of the reader, this approach tends to regard a reader's response to text as if it were unchanging. On the contrary, the reader's response through the interactions between the reader and the text will be ever changing, since the reader's cognitive environment changes through the text processing.

In spite of a reasonable orientation which focuses on the crucial aspect of reader-dependency in translation, critics raise questions about the underlying premises of this position. According to Gutt (1991: 68), two basic objects of the approach are that: 1) a translation must convey to the receptor language audience the meaning or message of the original; and 2) it must do so in a way that is faithful, i.e. equivalent to the dynamics of the original. In other words, what the approach suggests is that a translation should convey to the receptor language audience a literal interpretation of the original or something closely resembling it.

Gutt (1991) argues that there is a certain amount of ambivalence to handling these problems in the dynamic equivalence approach. For the comprehension of the 'message' defined in dynamic equivalence as 'the total meaning or content of a discourse, the concepts and feelings which the author intends the reader to understand and perceive' (Nida & Taber 1969: 205), it is necessary for the translator to seek to overcome obstacles to comprehension arising from the different background knowledge between the old and the new audience.

Despite the quite clear demand that the target audience should be somehow supplied with the missing contextual assumptions, maybe by spelling out the implications, basically their linguistic premise does not allow this. It is that a faithful translation should also be a linguistic one: a translation in which only information which is linguistically implicit in the original is made explicit and in which all changes of form follow the rules of back translation and transformation and of componential analysis; opposed to cultural translation. Only a linguistic translation can be considered faithful. (Nida & Taber 1969: 205)

Contextual assumptions and implications are not a matter of linguistics but of inferences that have to do with people's beliefs. Consequently their explication is not warranted under linguistic translation. As such it is still rooted in the traditional semiotic communication model, and to reconcile the goal of dynamic equivalence with that of linguistic translation is very difficult. With significant differences in cognitive environment, it is almost impossible to achieve a high degree of equivalence of response under the limitations of linguistic translation. In fact, the reader's background knowledge evoked by the linguistically transferred story is quite different from that for the original audience.

Indeed, a more comprehensive approach of translation equivalence raised to account for the nature of reader-dependency of text requires a fundamentally different premise from that of any literary communication. An alternative model of communication is an 'inferential model' in which communication is achieved by producing and interpreting evidence rather than by encoding and decoding of a message. One implication of this is that the translator needs to

understand how the reader keeps coming up with refreshed schemata, and how this works when reading texts further and again.

To further elaborate on the premise, I will move on to two of the most important elements or processes concerned: the analysis of the text and the role of culture. They can be discussed separately and together, both serving as crucial part if equivalence is to be achieved in terms of the reader's response. If we look at translation equivalence in terms of reader's response, rather than in terms of a discrete dichotomy of form and content, the final goal of translation should be equivalent to that of original literary communication.

3. Discussion of Text Analysis

According to Peter Newmark's theory, a translational analysis of the Source Language text is essentially important in the translating process. By the adjective 'translational' here, Newmark (1991) refers to the requirement on the part of the translator to read the text from a particular angle, namely, a 'translator's point of view', which is different from that of 'a linguist's' or 'a critic's'. You'll have to define the text type, determine the intention, observe closely the context, and decide which translation method to select. This process serves as the ground on which a complete, accurate, fine piece of translation is 'built'. Without this ground, the whole group of translation methods that demand comprehension and skills is rendered useless.

3.1 Reading

Understanding the text requires reading. As far as translation is concerned, the process of reading can be divided into two parts: general and close reading. General reading is for the brief overview of the text to catch the theme, while close reading focuses on the exact words both in and out of the context. Take 'The Story of My Life' by Helen Keller for example. To translate this autobiography of hers, we should first read over the book to obtain the knowledge of her life. Moreover, we even have to absorb ourselves in her feelings, her anguish and joy, her ups and downs. It is necessary for the translator to enter into the Keller's spiritual world, for this is an autobiography, and when we are translating, we are expressing on behalf of Helen Keller, or, rather, we are speaking her words with our pen. This is by no means an easy task. Only by reading the SL text can we transfer Keller's emotions precisely to the TL text.

For example, in *The Story of My Life*, one sentence reads,

- (1) Anger and bitterness had preyed upon me continually for weeks and a deep languor had succeeded this passionate struggle.

The word 'prey' literally means 'rob' or 'plunder'. If we combine the context with this expression, we can see this is the author's personal feeling of frustration and despair deriving from her inability to see and join the world. So 'prey upon me' can be seen as a description of her entrapment in the dilemma. Notice here the original subjective is not 'I', owing to the usual structure in the English language. When translating, we should convey in our TL text such feelings instead of word-for-word translating 'prey' into '扑向', because the sense of 'my conscious plunge into the spiritual predicament' will be diminished this way. Another key point in this sentence is the word 'succeeded', a positive word used in a reversed way here. All that being said, this sentence should better be translated into "几个星期以来, 我又气又恼, 深深地陷入苦闷中。这种感情上的激烈斗争过去之后, 我感到浑身无力。" Thus this sentence functions as a setback for the author's dramatic change from frustration to hope, from sorrow to joy, all brought about by love and education.

3.2 Intention of the Text

Besides analyzing through reading, the translator is also supposed to understand the intention of the text. Theodore Savory (1957) has pointed out that 'the translator's work may be

analyzed into the answering of three questions. Faced with a passage in its original language, he must ask himself: 1) What does the author say? 2) What does he mean? 3) How does he say it? Reading solves the first problems, while the second refers to the intention of the text. Look at this sentence

(2) The hen-pecked man was on tenterhooks when his wife scolded her way into the room.

The sentence carries an ironic overtone with it. It seems the picture is unfolded before our eyes. It is desirable that we create the graphic effect in our translation. First we should understand that the expression 'to be on tenterhooks' means 'to be in tension; to be upset'. And the handling of 'scold her way into the room', the translator has lots of choices. The key point lies in how to make it vivid and imposing. One of the better translation goes like this: “当老婆一路骂骂咧咧地闯进房间来时，这个‘气管炎’男人吓得直哆嗦。”Here the expression “气管炎” is a household equivalence for ‘a man who is in awe of his wife’, while the English expression ‘hen-pecked man’ plays the same role. The intention of the text, to present a real picture added with a bit irony, is realized.

3.3 The Translator's Intention

On the other hand, the translator, sometimes, has to pay attention to his own intention. He may be translating an ad, a notice, or a set of instructions or he may be translating for a less educated readership. For instance, in an article written to attract business partners, one sentence reads,

(3) We work hard to make sure that our clients' voice and data networks are designed flawlessly so that they execute the customers' critical applications and communications equally flawlessly.

The sentence is long and quite hard to comprehend. Knowing that the aim of the article is to introduce the business and invite partnership, the translator should bear in mind that the readership is professional people who specialize in the field concerned. Therefore his task is to convey the information faithfully in order to attract the people concerned. “我们全力以赴，确保客户的语音和数据网络在设计上无懈可击，从而使这些网络在执行客户通信任务过程中也同样无懈可击。”This is a preferable version of translation, for it has a strong sense of pertinence. The people who the original text is interested in are familiar with these terms in most case, making it unnecessary for the translator to add or adjust any elements. And the repeating use of the Chinese idiom “无懈可击” reinforces the sense of confidence on part of the related company and is quite punchy.

3.4 The Style of the ST

During translating, one also has to analyze the style of the SL text. If it is typed as 'science and technology', the translator should take the following points into consideration. 1) Many English words contain more than one shade of meaning, and the change of the meaning can be caused by the change of the word form. 2) There is less usage of passive voice in Chinese as there is in English. 3) English tends to use multi-layered structures, while Chinese uses single sentence more. 4) In English, the preposition and a variety of nonfinite phrases is used more frequently and their grammatical function stands out. 5) Great differences can be seen between the sentence order, emphasis, tense as well as tone of the two languages. The characteristics mentioned above exist also in other types of text, but it is possibly more obvious in the text on science and technology. Similarly, the translator should cultivate the intuition to differentiate the text styles and determine which method fits for the particular style. For example, in colloquial English, 'be stumped' means “被难倒”. If the translator is not familiar with the touch of colloquialism through the context, it is very likely that expression is translated into ‘被绊倒了’.

3.5 Context

Another essential part of the translator's work lies in his analysis of the particular word in a certain context. This work demands two types of qualities: the sound grasp of the word, and the profound scale of knowledge at large. It requires the translator to focus on the words 'both in and out of the context'. This is, if not the most, one of the most important elements in the translator's work. Take the word 'impose' for example.

(4) Don't impose your company on people who don't want you.

Here, 'impose on' means 'force one's company on sb.', so the sentence should be translated into "别缠着不欢迎你的人". But can we translate the phrase 'impose upon his good nature' into "缠着他的好个性"? It sounds awkward and inappropriate. Here it means 'take advantage of'. So it should be better translated into "利用他的好心肠". Different collocations bring about different meanings, and it is the translator's task to locate the fittest meaning by means of analyzing the context combined with the linguistic aptitude. It is same for the word 'imposing'. Its literal meaning is 'impressive; magnificent', however, in different context it should be translated accordingly. 'An imposing old lady' is "仪态雍容的老妇人", 'an imposing display of knowledge' means "在学识方面令人赞赏的表现". When one hears 'In the fall when the days became crisp and gray', he might be puzzled about the use of the word 'crisp' here. In fact, 'crisp' is used to describe the weather as freezing and dry. The word 'eligible' literally means "合格的; 符合条件的". Nevertheless, if the expression 'an eligible young man' appears in a text, it can't merely be taken as "一个合格的年青人", the reason being the this expression automatically refers to one who would be a satisfactory choice as a husband. Knowing this, one would not be surprised at hearing this dialogue—'I'm eligible'. 'But I'm already married'.

3.6 Research Out of the Context

Apart from the knowledge of the word in context, the translator is supposed to do much research out of the context. To make this point clear, look at the following example.

(5) Suddenly-in front of him-he put Maria on.

What does 'put Maria on' mean? '带来了玛莉亚'? '穿上了一件玛莉亚牌的衣服'? In this case, the research work plays a particularly important role. This sentence is from a film review on the well-known movie 'Philadelphia'. It is a story of Andrew, a gay lawyer's fight against the prejudice under the help of Joe, another lawyer, who at first holds fear even loathing toward homosexuality but later decides to stand out for justice. The scene described in the aforementioned sentence serves as a turning point of Joe's understanding of Andrew and psychological transformation. And the critical moment is led by Andrew's act of playing the aria by Maria Callas, the famous soprano. Now the answer is quite clear. Without research work, mistakes are inevitable. Here is another example. During the 74th Oscars, when receiving her trophy for best actress in a leading role, Halle Berry said,

(6) This moment is so much bigger than me.

It is better to have some background knowledge to catch the essence of this expression. Halle Berry was the very first African-American actress ever to be honored in this category. Her exclamation was more of a tribute to the past black actresses that have been overlooked and the many efforts seen and unseen to reach her success than of an expression of ecstasy over her win as one actress. So it is misinterpreting to translate this sentence into '这一时刻好盛大, 远远超过我所想'. Rather, it should be translated into '这一时刻远不仅仅属于我一个人'.

4. Discussion of the Role of Culture

4.1 The Term 'Culture'

Peter Newmark (1991) defines culture as the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression. As a famed linguist, he naturally observes 'culture' from the perspective of language. He distinguishes 'cultural' from 'universal' and 'personal' language. For universals, usually there is no translation problem there. When one expresses himself in a personal way, there is normally a translation problem. For cultural words, there will be a translation problem unless there is cultural overlap between the source and the target language and its readership.

The term 'culture' addresses three salient categories of human activity: the 'personal,' whereby we as individuals think and function as such; the 'collective,' whereby we function in a social context; and the 'expressive,' whereby society expresses itself. Language is the only social institution without which no other social institution can function; it therefore underpins the three pillars upon which culture is built.

4.2 Culture in Translation Studies

Translation studies are essentially concerned with a web of relationships, the importance of individual items being decided by their relevance within the larger context. Translation, involving the transposition of thoughts expressed in one language by one social group into the appropriate expression of another group, entails a process of cultural decoding, recoding and encoding. As cultures are increasingly brought into greater contact with one another, multicultural considerations are brought to bear to an ever-increasing degree. Now, how do all these changes influence us when we are trying to comprehend a text before finally translating it? We are not just dealing with words written in a certain time, space and sociopolitical situation; most importantly it is the 'cultural' aspect of the text that we should take into account. The process of transfer, i.e., re-coding across cultures, should consequently allocate corresponding attributes vis-à-vis the target culture to ensure credibility in the eyes of the target reader.

Multiculturalism, which is a present-day phenomenon, plays a role here, because it has had an impact on almost all peoples worldwide as well as on the international relations emerging from the current new world order. Moreover, as technology develops and grows at a hectic pace, nations and their cultures have, as a result, started a merging process whose end is difficult to predict. We are at the threshold of a new international paradigm. Boundaries are disappearing and distinctions are being lost. The sharp outlines that were once distinctive now fade and become blurred.

Translators are faced with an alien culture that requires that its message be conveyed in anything but an alien way. That culture expresses its characteristics in a way that is 'culture-bound': cultural words, proverbs and of course idiomatic expressions, whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned. So we are called upon to do a cross-cultural translation whose success will depend on our understanding of the culture we are working with.

4.3 Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions

Proverbs and idiomatic expressions are the most common problem we encounter in translation from one culture to another. Here is an example. “..... 可我从头道脚成了落汤鸡了。” The expression “落汤鸡” is a typical Chinese idiom. In Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, it is paraphrased as 'As wet as, or like a drowned rat', meaning 'soaking wet; looking exceedingly dejected'. This explanation is in conformity with our intended effect. Besides, 'a drowned cat' is an English idiom. Thus it is appropriate to translate the sentence into '...I was drenched from head to foot like a drowned cat.' There is an English proverb 'Do not put all your eggs in one basket'. We might know its meaning simply by literal translation.

But in Chinese we have an idiom to better sum up the essence of this expression and why don't we translate it into “不要孤注一掷”? In the first example, the ‘cultural’ word is easy to detect, since it is associated with a particular language and cannot be literally translated. In the second example, we have to make a choice between literal translation and a functional equivalent.

4.4 Several Solutions

In context, when facing ‘cultural’ problems, we have several solutions. 1) Literal plus paraphrase. Here is a sentence: “腊月二十三灶王爷上天, 后台封上戏箱, 要等年初一开戏”。 How to deal with this “灶王爷”? We do not have a ready equivalent. In the translated version, it is translated into ‘the kitchen God’. It is preferable in terms of lexical, form and communicative effect. The foreign readers shall understand that it is the God Chinese people worship in the kitchen. 2) Zero Translation. The words “包子” and “馄饨” refer to the traditional Chinese food. They used to be translated into ‘steamed stuffed bun’ and ‘dumpling’. Gradually people of different cultural background understand what both look like and taste like respectively, furthermore, they accept the translation of both into ‘baozi’ and ‘wonton’. This is a positive change, however, for it shortens the gap between two cultures and at the same time enriching the vocabulary. 3) Adjustment. The expression “春节” is formerly translated into ‘spring festival’. Anyway, this translation is not so fit for it somewhat distorts the original meaning. A more acceptable way of translating is ‘Chinese New Year’s Day’, which is closer in meaning to the original.

4.5 The Importance of Knowledge

Culture is the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term. The things people say and do, their social arrangements and events, are products or by-products of their culture as they apply it to the task of perceiving and dealing with their circumstances. The extent to which a text is translatable varies with the degree to which it is embedded in its own specific culture. Culture can be seen as a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception. Britain is an island country, being highly advanced in its seafaring in history, while the Hans live and multiply on the land—they can't go by without the land. To describe someone as lavish with money, the English people use the expression ‘spend money like water’, whilst in Chinese we have this set expression “挥金如土”. Anyway we do have the equivalence “花钱如流水” nowadays. This may be viewed as a kind of cultural merging. Still there are plenty of expressions for which we do not have equivalence in Chinese. Like ‘to rest on one’s oars’ (暂时歇一歇), ‘to keep one’s head above water’ (奋力图存), ‘all at sea’ (不知所措), etc. In the Chinese cultural atmosphere, we use the word “东风” to describe “春天的风”, while summer is often linked with torridity, “赤日炎炎似火烧”, “骄阳似火” being the universal words to portray summer. Nevertheless, Britain, located in the western part of the earth, enjoys the maritime climate. It is the west wind to bring about the arrival of the spring. The famous poem ‘Ode To the West Wind’ justifies the position of the west wind in the English culture. “西风” will automatically bring along undue effect as it is more associated with winter, with frigidity and depression. So it is suggested that the title be translated into “春风颂”. Summer in Britain is a warm season, thus more linked with words like ‘lovely’, ‘gentle’, ‘graceful’ and so on. Shakespeare, in one of his sonnets, likens his lover to summer: ‘Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? / Thou art more lovely and more temperate’.

4.6 Attitude

Culture can be reflected through the attitude toward the same object. There is so much discrepancy existing in the attitudes toward the dog of people from Chinese and English culture. In Chinese, the dog is a mean animal. About all the expressions related with the dog carry a derogatory meaning: “狐朋狗党”, “狗急跳墙”, “狼心狗肺”, “狗腿子” and the like. In western countries, the dog is considered the most faithful friend of human beings. Except for the few ones influenced by other languages, most of the expressions concerning the dog are derogatoriness-free. The dog is often used to describe the behavior of the man. We have

expressions like 'You are a lucky dog' (你是一个幸运儿), 'Every dog has his day' (凡人皆有得意日), 'Old dog will not learn new tricks' (老人学不了新东西). When Americans say 'Americans love underdogs', they say it with a light and somewhat proud tone. They also describe "病得厉害" as 'sick as a dog', and "累极了" as 'dog-tired'. To set up a sharp contrast, the Chinese people take a liking to the cat. They use the word "馋猫" to show a person is edacious, but this usage bears some resemblance to the usage of 'underdog' mentioned above, both carrying a sense of intimacy and amiability. Nevertheless, in the western culture, the cat is used to portray 'a woman with bad intentions'.

4.7. Translation Process

Translation can be viewed as 'recoding' or change of surface structure in representation of the—nonlinguistic and ultimately universal—deep structure underlying it (Chomsky's deep structure). Taken to its extreme, this principle means that everything is translatable. Language is an integral part of culture. In both Chinese and English, there are a large number of expressions requiring decoding and encoding. For example, "东施效颦", "名落孙山", "叶公好龙" in Chinese, in English there are expressions from Bible and Greek and Roman mythology such as 'Achilles' heel' (唯一致命弱点), 'meet one's Waterloo' (一败涂地), 'Penelope's web' (永远完不成的工作), 'a Pandora's box' (潘多拉之盒, 灾难、麻烦、祸害的根源). None of these can be comprehended and translated literally.

If the concept of culture is a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception, if language is an integral part of culture, the translator needs not only proficiency in two languages, he or she must also be at home in two cultures. Finally, attention is drawn to the fact that among the variety of translation approaches, the 'Integrated Approach' seems to be the most appropriate. This approach follows the global paradigm in which having a global vision of the text at hand has a primary importance. Such an approach focuses from the macro to the micro level in accordance with the Gestalt-principle, which states that an analysis of parts cannot provide an understanding of the whole; thus translation studies are essentially concerned with a web of relationships, the importance of individual items being decided by their relevance within the larger context: text, situation and culture.

4.8 SC and TC

Is it the translator's task to focus primarily on the Source Culture or the Target Culture? The answer is not clear-cut. Nevertheless, the dominant criterion is the communicative function of the target text.

Let us take business correspondence as an example: here we follow the commercial correspondence protocol commonly observed in the target language. So 'Estimado' will become 'Dear' in English and 'Monsieur' in French, and a 'saludo Ud. Atentamente' will become 'Sincerely yours' in English and 'Veuillez agréer Monsieur, mes sentiments les plus distingués' in French.

Considering different levels of schemata, it is important to know whether or not certain themes or plans found in ST readers are common in the target language culture. The priority given in conflicts between themes varies both within individuals and groups. For example, when asked what is the most relevant emotion associated with the speaker's attitude that 'I'll send you off without a word, no fuss' in a poem, a group of people think that to send off the loving one without a word represents the speaker's consistent love while others consider the same attitude as hatred or resignation? Why does the scattering flowers identify the agent as a male for some people, whereas for the others the same action may be a female's? Accordingly, conditions for recognizing a certain plan or theme are often very complicated and sensitive to context: for the meaning of scattering flowers on someone's parting steps, depending on the flowers, it could represent the scattering of a person's sorrow as the lilies or roses of a funeral, but with azaleas people hardly imagine such a scene. Rather, when they are imagined as trodden by someone who leaves the beloved, the soft and delicate petals evoke something of the fragile and delicate emotional situation of the speaker.

5. Conclusion

The notion of equivalence is the most problematic and controversial areas in the field of translation theory. The term has caused, and it seems quite possible that it will continue to cause, heated debates within the field of translation studies. This term has been analyzed, evaluated and extensively discussed from different points of view and has been approached from many different perspectives. The difficulty in defining equivalence seems to result in the impossibility of having a universal approach to this notion.

However, in whatever situation, the translator needs to understand how the reader keeps coming up with refreshed schemata, and how this works when reading texts further and again. A reading process is somehow the mirror image of writing, to set up certain themes, plans and scripts is of the same importance for a text producer as it is for the reader to work out them. The consideration of levels of schemata now should be top down, rather than the bottom up of the reader's understanding. Each word or phrase will be carefully chosen in accord with the criterion of how well each of them serves the whole theme and plan of the intended text.

It can be pointed out that the transcoding (decoding, recoding and encoding) process should be focused not merely on language transfer but also—and most importantly—on cultural transposition. In short, as an inevitable consequence of the previous statement, the translator must be both bilingual and bicultural, if not indeed multicultural.

Therefore, the setting up of themes and plans equivalent to the ST reader's response is always culture and context-bound, as well as language bound. It means that reproduction of sentences bearing equivalent dynamics should be free from any clashes of language and culture which are all included in the reader's schematic assumptions.

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