探讨古汉语译为英文的理解阶段

摘要:本文着重探讨古汉语译为英文三个阶段中的第一阶段 — 理解阶段:一,应该根据原文透彻 地理解古代的语言现象,即包括原文的词汇意义、语法句式和凝固结构的用法等;二,应该根据原文的内容,找出句子或句子间的逻辑关系;三,应该透彻地了解古代作品中所涉及到的事物,尤其是成语典故、典章制度、文化常识等。这是古汉语译为英文的重要前提。

关键词: 理解古汉语; 中英对译; 语言规范

Abstract: This paper deals mainly with the understanding stage - the first of three stages f rom classical Chinese into English. The focus in on: (1) a thorough understanding of classical Chinese, including it s vocabularies, phrases, and sentence pat terns; (2) the logical connection between sentences; (3) a thorough understanding of the allusions, decrees, and customs. These are the essential prerequisites for translation.

Key words: Understand ancient Chinese; from Chinese into English & vice versa; language standard

古汉语的翻译过程,是透彻理解原文和准确地用现代汉语表达原文的过程。它大体上可以分为理解阶段、表达阶段、核对阶段。古汉语翻译,首先要正确地理解原作,这是整个翻译过程中不可缺少的前提。没有对原文的理解,就谈不上翻译;理解不深不透,翻译就会出差错。翻译的理解阶段,主要是通过原文的一个句子或一段话,甚至一节或一章,在全文或全书中的上下文的内在关系来进行的。它可以凭借古注或有关工具书作为理解原文的重要辅助手段。为了能正确地理解原文,我们必须把握以下几个方面:首先,我们应该根据原文透彻地理解古代的语言现象,即包括原文的词汇意义、语法句式和凝固结构的用法等等。 词汇问题是古汉语翻译最重要的问题之一。王力在《关于古代汉语的学习和教学》一文中说:"我们在编《古代汉语》教科书的时候,有位同志提到,古代汉语的问题,主要是词汇问题,解决了词汇问题,古代汉语就解决了一大半问题了。这话我非常赞赏。"可是,为什么有人学习古代汉语时,在词汇问题上常常出差错呢?这就是因为他没有历史观点。他不知道古代,特别是上古时代,同样一个字,它的意义和现代汉语的意义不一样。兹举两例来说明:

- (1) 无参验而必之者,愚也;弗能必而据之者,诬也。故明据先王,必定尧、舜者,非愚则诬也。(《韩非子·显学篇》)3 [汉译文] 不用事实加以检验就对事物作出判断,那就是愚蠢;不能断定正确与否就引为根据,那就是诬蔑。所以,那种公开宣称依据先王之道,武断地肯定尧、舜的一切,不是愚蠢,就是诬蔑。3 [英译文] J udging without the facts is foolish.J udging without a criterion for right and wrong is slander2ous. Therefore, publicly declaring that one should rely onthe way the former kings ruled and arbitrarily affirming Yaoand Shunp s way is either foolish or slanderous.例一中的"非愚则诬"译为"不是愚蠢,就是诬蔑" (is either foolish or slanderous) 显然是错误的。因为"诬"字在上古汉语里不当"诬蔑"(slander)讲,而当"说谎、说假话"(lie)讲,而"非愚则诬"应译为"不是愚蠢,就是说谎。"(is either to be a fool or a liar),这样才符合历史的实际情况。
- (2) 一箪食,一豆羹,得之则生,弗得则死,尔而与之,行道之人弗受;蹴尔而与之,乞人不屑也;万钟则不辩礼义而受之。(《孟子•告子上》)3 [汉译文] 一筐饭,一碗汤,得着便活下去,得不着便死亡,呼喝着给与他,就是过路的饿人都不会接受;脚踏过再给与他,就是乞丐也不屑于要;[然而竟有人于] 万钟的俸禄却不问合于礼义与否,贸然接受了。3 [英译文] I f you can obtain a basket of rice and abowl of soup you can survive;if not,youp II die. Even a hungry passerby would refuse food offered rudely,and even abeggar wouldnp t look at food which had been trampled on. However,someone wouldnp t question whether or not it ac2cords with propriety,but hastily accepts the high salary.有人在"豆"下作这样注:"古代盛羹汤之具",将"一豆羹"译为"一碗汤"(a bowl of soup)。我们认为这样的注释和译文都不妥。古人只说,豆是古代盛羹之器,没有汤,把一个汤添上去就错了。"羹"是什么东西呢?"羹"就是煮熟以后,带点汁的,所以是带汁的肉。 "羹",一般都是加作料,即所谓五味羹,酸甜苦辣咸,有五种味道,但主要是两种味道:盐跟梅。穷人也有羹,那叫"菜羹",但"菜羹"不是"菜汤" (veg2etable soup),而是"煮熟的菜" (cooked vegetables)。可见"羹"字后加个"汤"字是错的。 "一豆羹",应译为"一碗羹"(a bowl of cooked vegetables),而不该译成"一碗汤"(a bowl of soup)。古代的语法句式与现代汉语不完全一样,因

此 , 正确的理解和分析古代的语法句式 , 也是古汉语翻译的重要方面。错误的理解古代语法句式 , 翻译 势必出差错。例如:

- (3) 孔子曰:"求!无乃尔是过与?夫颛臾,昔者先王以为东蒙主,且在邦域之中矣,是社稷之臣也。何以伐为?"(《论语•季氏》)3 [汉译文] 孔子道: "冉求!恐怕你是错了吧?颛臾,上代的君王曾经授权他主持东蒙山的祭祀,而且它的国境早在我们最初被封时的疆土之中,这正是和鲁国共安危存亡的藩属,为什么要去攻打它呢?"3 [英译文] Confucius said:"Ran Qiu!Ipm af raidyou are wrong. As for Zhuan Yu,the former king once au2thorized him to preside over the ceremonial sacrifices to an2cestors at Dongmeng Mountain. Furthermore its lands hadlong been within our national territory when it was initiallyconferred to Zhuan Yu. This is the very state which sharesthe same fate as the State of Lu,why would you ever at tackit?"例中的"无乃尔是过与",是古代的测度问句,其中的"尔是过"又是宾语提前句式,译文把这句译为"恐怕是你错了吧"(Ipm af raid you are wrong),是因为不懂得宾语前置式,结果译错了。正确的翻译应该是"恐怕要责备你吧"(Ipm af raid you are to blame)。可见,倘若对原作的古代词汇和句式缺乏正确的理解,则势必会造成翻译上的错误。这里还值得引起注意的是古代汉语中凝固结构的翻译问题。所谓凝固结构,就是文言文中某些词语经常结合在一起使用已经形成了的固定形式。这种凝固结构用在句中一般可当作一个整体来翻译。理解和掌握凝固结构的使用习惯,对古汉语翻译是有帮助的。例如"如何"、"若何"、"奈何"等,中间可以插入名词、代词或别的词组,构成"如 ……何"、"若 ……何"、"奈 ……何"的句式,意思是"对(把) …… 怎么办(怎么样)"(what if ...)。兹举一例来说明:
- (4) 丈人笑曰: "禽兽负恩如是,而犹不忍杀,子固仁者,然愚亦甚矣!从井以救人,解衣以活友,于彼计则得,其如就死地何? 先生其此类乎! ……" (马中锡《中山狼传》)3 [汉译文] 老人笑道: "禽兽这样忘恩负义,还不忍心杀 (它),你固然是仁爱的人,然而也太愚蠢了。下井去救(落井的)人,脱下自己衣服使别人活命,对于他人是有利的,他自己就象走向死地一样吧? 先生大概是这类人吧 ……"3 [英译文] The old man laughed and said: "Even if the beasts are ungrateful, you still wonp t have the heart tokill them. True, you are benevolent, but you are foolish aswell. For example, someone climbs deep into a well to rescuea person [who has fallen in] and then strips off his clothes tosave the otherp's life. Although he has done well for the oth2er,he finds himself on the verge of death. Maybe, you sir, are such as one……" .有人因不理解"如 ……何"的习惯用法,因而把"其如就死地何"译成"他自己就象走向死地一样吧"(he finds himself on the verge of death),和原文的意思完全相反。这是由于不理解古汉语凝固结构的习惯用法所致。此句正确的翻译应该是"把自己陷入了死地将怎么办呢"(but what if he sinks in and dies)。 其次,我们还应该根据原文的内容,找出句子或句子间的逻辑关系。这也是透切地理解原文的一个重要方面。

在翻译实践中,如果我们没有彻底地分析词与词、词组与词组、句子与句子之间的逻辑关系,古汉语翻译同样会出差错。例如:

- (1) 魏其已为大将军后,方盛,虫 分为诸郎,未贵,往来侍酒魏其,跪起如子女 至。(《史记•魏其武安候列传》)3 [汉译文] 魏其已经拜为大将军,正在盛时,田虫 分只是郎官,尚未显贵,来回给魏其侍宴把盏,时跪时起,好像是窦家的晚辈一般。3 [英译文] Wei Qi has already been appointed a se2nior general and is presently at the peak of his career. TianFen is only a Lang and has not yet achieved high status.Rushing to and f ro, he serves Wei Qi his food and wine.Sometimes kneeling and sometimes standing, he seems quitelike the Doup s junior.例中的"往来侍酒魏其"并不是一般的动宾结构。译文中"来回给魏其侍宴把盏" (Rushing to and f ro, heserves Wei Qi his food and wine),实际上将"往来"作为"侍酒"的状语,表示修饰。这样理解是错误的。从这句上下文的逻辑关系看,"往来"和"侍酒"不是修饰与被修饰的关系,而是并列关系,它们所表示的动作行为都涉及到"魏其"。因此,"往来侍酒魏其"应该译为"田虫 分往来于窦婴府中,并且陪侍窦婴饮宴"(Tian Fenwent f requently to Dou Yingp s home, and served him foodand wine)。
- (2) 故善用兵者,屈人之兵而非战也,拔人之城而非攻也,毁人之国而非久也,必以全争于天下,故兵不顿而利可全,此谋攻之法也。(《孙子·谋攻》)3[汉译文] 所以善于用兵的人,屈服于人家的兵力,

就不能战斗了,夺取敌人的城邑而不靠硬攻,灭亡敌人的国家而不需久战,务求以全胜的谋略争胜于天下。这样,军队就不至于疲惫受挫,而胜利可以完满地获得,这就是谋攻的法则。3 [英译文] Therefore if those well versed in the artof war yield due to their oppositionp s overwhelming militarystrength,theyp II no longer have the drive to fight . To cap2ture the enemyp s cities without a fight and destroy theircountry without a prolonged war,be sure to follow a thor2oughly thought - out strategy. And hence youp II gain a com2plete victory over all under heaven. In this way,the army isunlikely to tire and suffer setbacks on its way towards a tri2umphant victory— — —this is the law of strategic at tack.译者把"屈人之兵而非战也"译为"屈服于人家的兵力,就不能战斗了"(……yield due to their oppositionp soverwhelming military strength,theyp II no longer have thedrive to fight),不仅不合乎上下文的逻辑关系,而且译文与原文的意思截然相反。原文的意思本应该是"使敌军屈服而不用进行交战"(to force the enemy to yieldwithout belligerency)。这样才合乎原文的意思。再次,我们还应该透彻地了解古代作品中所涉及到的事物,尤其是成语典故、典章制度、文化常识等。如果对这些事物不理解或一知半解,则势必译不出来,或硬译出来别人也看不懂。请看下面诸例:

- (1) 所赖君子见几 , 达人知命。老当益壮 , 宁知白首之心; 穷且益坚 , 不坠青云之志。酌贪泉而觉爽 , 处涸辙以犹欢。北海虽赊,扶摇可接;东隅已逝,桑榆非晚。(唐•王勃《滕王阁序》)这段话用了四个较 难懂的典故: 第一 , "酌贪泉",出自《晋书•吴隐之传》:"未至州二十里 , 地名石门 ,有水曰贪泉 , 饮 者怀无厌之欲。隐之至泉所 ,酌而饮之 ,赋诗曰: '古人云此水 ,一歃怀千金 ,试使夷齐饮 ,终当不易 心',清操愈厉。"第二,"处涸辙",出自《庄子•外物篇》:"周昨来,有中道而呼者,周顾视 车辙中有鲋鱼焉。周问之曰: '鲋鱼来 , 子何为者耶 ?'对曰:'我东海之波臣也。君岂有斗升之水而活我 哉?'周曰:'诺,我且南游吴越之王,激西江之水而迎子,可乎?'鲋鱼忿然作色曰:'吾失我常与,我 无所处, 吾得斗升之水然活耳。君乃言此, 曾不如早索我于枯鱼之肆。'"第三, "北海虽赊, 扶摇 可接",出自《庄子• 逍遥游》:"北冥有鱼,其名为鲲; ……化而为鸟 , 其名为鹏;…… 鵬之徙于南冥 也,水击三千里,抟扶摇而上者九万里。"第四,"东隅已逝,桑榆非晚,"出自《后汉书•冯异传》: "始虽垂翅回钬纟 谷 , 终能奋翼黾池; 可谓失之东隅 , 收之桑榆。"找出每个典故的来龙去脉以后 , 还 应根据上下文的内在联系,才能透彻理解作者的本意。这段话应这样翻译:[汉译文] 好在君子能预见事物的 动向 , 旷达的人会知道自己的命运。越老越应该健旺 , 哪能有衰老的想法; 越穷困越应该坚强 , 不能丧失 高尚的节操。喝了贪泉中的水 , 反而觉得清爽; 处在涸辙般的困境 , 却仍然心情欢畅。北海虽然很远 , 凭 藉着旋风还是可以达到;早上的时光错过了 , 傍晚的机会能利用也不算晚。(摘自王力《古代汉语》第四册)[英 译文] Fortunately, the gentleman can foresee fu2ture trends and the broad - minded man understands his des2tiny. The older you are , the healthier and more vigorous youshould feel . How could you feel feeble ? The poorer you are ,the stronger you should feel , never forfeiting your ennobledsense of moral integrity. After drinking the water f rom TanSpring , you will feel cool and ref reshed. Having fallen intodire straits , you will maintain a joyous state of mind. Al2though the North Sea is far away , you can let the whirlwindtake you all the way there. I f you truly fail to utilize the timein the morning, you can still make use of the opportunity atdusk without it being considered late.
- (2) 臣少多疾病,九岁不行;零丁孤苦,至於成五。既无伯叔,终鲜兄弟。门衰祚薄,晚有儿息。外无期功强近之亲,内无应门五尺之僮。茕茕独立,形影相吊。(晋•李密《陈情表》)例二中的"期功",都是古代丧服名称。期,服丧一年。功,指大功小功。大功服丧 9 个月,小功服丧 5 个月。古代服丧的不同,是按亲属关系的远近来规定的。这些都是古代丧服的特定名称。不搞清楚"期功"的含义,就会给翻译带来困难。请看这段话的译文:[汉译文] 臣在幼年的时候常多疾病,9 岁还不能走路,过着孤单困苦的生活,直到长大。上面既没有叔伯,下面又缺少兄弟,门庭衰微,福祚浅薄,到了晚年才有子息。外面没有期服功服的可以勉强亲近的亲威,里边没有应门五尺的童子;单身孤立,只有形体和影子,互相怜惜。(摘自姚稚翔译注的《考正古文观止》)[英译文] I was often sick in my childhood and still un2able to walk by the age of nine,living a hard and lonely lifeuntil growing up. I had neither brothers nor uncles,and lwatched my

family decline and with it, our fortune. I had noson of my own until growing old. I had neither a relative tolean on when in mourning, nor a page boy to greet theguests. I was alone, with only body and shadow to pity eachother.

总之,翻译的理解阶段,必须透彻理解古代的词汇、句法以及凝固结构的用法,弄清楚原文上下的逻辑关系,以及原文涉及到的成语典故、典章制度、文化常识等事物,才能进行翻译的第二个阶段 — 表达阶段。表达是理解的具体化、深刻化,也是检验理解是否正确的一个标准。

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