



## On Translation Teaching From the Perspective of Chinese Modernity

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**Supported by** The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Program  
 of the Ministry of Education (No.19YJC880124); Planning projects of  
 Shaanxi provincial Education Sciences (No. SGH20Y1159) and Xi'an  
 International Studies University No.YK2019130).

Received 7 December 2022; accepted 19 February 2023  
 Published online 26 March 2023

### Abstract

By combing translation studies from the perspective of Chinese modernity and focusing on the broad understanding of translation teaching, this paper aims to point out the new understanding, characteristics and functions of translation teaching research from the perspective of Chinese modernity.

**Key words:** Chinese modernity; Translation and Chinese modernity; Translation teaching

Kou, F. R. (2023). On Translation Teaching From the Perspective of Chinese Modernity. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 19(1), 21-25. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/12843>  
 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12843>

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that different historical times endow education with different historical responsibilities. The changes of historical times inevitably require education to fulfill corresponding responsibilities and make necessary changes with different specific practices. Since China's five thousand years of civilization, the role of education cannot be ignored. Modern society has gone through historical changes, showing a different development trend. In addition to the rapid development

of globalization, foreign language teaching needs to make certain efforts. In the process of cultural exchanges and political exchanges, language conversion and collision are frequently displayed. In the process of Chinese modernization, translation has always shouldered an important historical responsibility. Therefore, the role of translation teaching in training translation talents should not be underestimated. Then, it is of great significance to study translation teaching from the perspective of Chinese modernity.

### 2. CHINESE MODERNITY AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

Alan Swingewood, the British cultural sociologist, believes that modernity is a whole concept, which is about the transformation of the whole society, ideology and culture. The premise is scientific rationality. Modernity points out the necessary road to social change (Luo,2017).

Translation is closely related to culture. In the process of China's modernization, translation, as a means of cultural construction, has played a certain role in promoting China's modern process. The social, national, political and complex nature of translation behavior fully reflects the unity of historical methods, interdisciplinary perspectives and translation theories in the study of translation history. The relationship between Chinese modernity and translation is self-evident. The rise of the May 4th New Culture Movement marked the awakening of Chinese modernity. Since then, various social activities have been building Chinese modernity. At the same time, the construction of Chinese modernity cannot be separated from translation to a certain extent (Luo, 2016).

Reviewing the domestic literature on translation and Chinese modernity, it shows diversity in general. There are both theoretical and applied researches. However, few studies have been made on translation teaching.

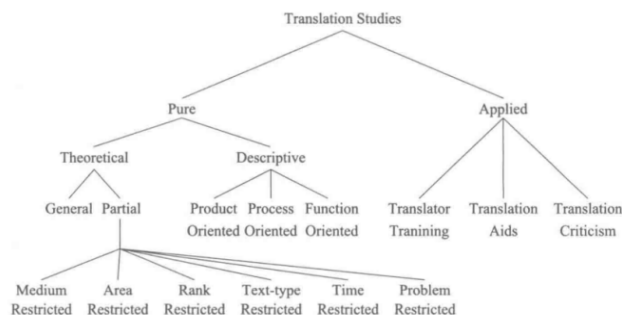
The existing researches can be roughly divided into the following categories: analyzing the influence of Chinese historical context on translation from a certain historical stage, emphasizing the great influence of translation as a means of cultural construction (Zhao, 2012, etc.); Research on the relationship between translation, periodicals and literary modernity (Duan.& Yao, 2021; Gao., 2001; Yang., Wang., 2019); Literature that generally outlines the modernity of translation (Song Da, 2006); Thinking about translation and Chinese modernity, he believes that “translation is not only a linguistic and artistic act, but also an ethical and social act controlled by the purpose, in which ideology plays an extremely important role.” (Luo, 2012:6). This paper discusses the relationship between translation and Chinese modernity from four aspects: translation and language innovation and social change, scientific research and educational behavior, cultural communication and cultural construction, and interdisciplinary theoretical construction (Luo, 2017); Modern exploration from a translator, such as Lu Xun (Luo, 2016; Ji, 2020), Qu Qiubai (Villard, 2008); There are also studies on the translation of specific literary works (Dai&Ren, 2010; Wang, 2002, etc.).

In addition, Professor Wang Ning of Tsinghua University pointed out at the international seminar on “Translating China and Rebuilding Modernity” that, in the context of globalization, the function of translation has undergone essential changes. The role of translation has gone beyond the role of interlingual transformation, but more with the role of cultural change. On the one hand, the formation of Chinese modernity has disintegrated the “single modernity” of Western centralism, on the other hand, it has made a unique contribution to the formation of a globalized discourse of modernity (Zheng, 2009).

Based on this, the close relationship between Chinese modernity and translation is obvious to all, and it is also of great significance to study translation teaching as one of the contents of translation studies from the perspective of Chinese modernity.

### 3. TRANSLATION TEACHING

The two concepts of “teaching translation” and “translation teaching” were first proposed by Canadian scholar Delisle in 1981. The former is to use translation to let students learn a language and take translation as a tool for foreign language Teaching. The latter refers to teaching students the knowledge and skills of translation for the sake of translation itself (Luo, 2002). Holmes (1988) also proposed translation studies in his famous translation thesis “The name and nature of translation studies”, which is divided into pure translation studies and applied translation studies. Research related to teaching belongs to the category of applied translation studies. On this basis, Tuli formulated the following figure (see Figure 1) (Tour, 1995, p.10).



**Figure 1**  
**The disciplinary map of translation science in Tuli**

Domestic scholars have classified the domain of translation science into many categories, most of which subdivide the relevant teaching contents and put them under translation studies (Gui, 1986; Fang, 1988; Tan, 1988; Jin, 1989; Liu, 2005; Jin, 1991; Chen, 1991). Gui Qianyuan also proposed translation teaching methods, while Fang Mengzhi proposed translation teaching from a social perspective (Niu, 2016).

Since 1997, the Chinese translation community has discussed the distinction between “translation teaching” and “teaching translation”. It is generally believed that “translation teaching” refers to the teaching activities of foreign languages and translation majors. And “teaching translation” is a translation activity in the process of foreign language teaching. Most of them think that the former is the focus of translation application research.

Some scholars believe that teaching translation is also a field that cannot be ignored (Xu, 2006). The excessive distinction between these two concepts will narrow the scope of the study, which is a misreading (Luo, 2002). It is only limited to the objects of translation behavior, that is, translation majors and non-foreign language majors. In fact, no matter what kind of translation activity, it shows the relationship between translation and teaching, and the important role of any one cannot be ignored. There is no difference between “translation teaching” and “teaching translation”. The difference lies in the discipline orientation, training objectives, teaching objectives and teaching priorities (Xu & Mu, 2009, p.307).

Although most scholars believe that translation teaching has more research value than teaching translation, the differences between them are greater than the similarities. However, the author believes that the distinction between “translation teaching” and “teaching translation” is a narrow interpretation of translation teaching, which is not conducive to the study of applied translatology under translatology. It should be understood in a broad sense. Both of them have the same nature and research value. Acknowledging their common nature will help the applied research under the discipline of translation develop in the right direction?

History calls for the cultivation of translation talents. In the past hundred years, China has experienced a climax

in the translation of foreign documents into Chinese: the “May Fourth” period, the Yan’an period of the CPC, the founding of New China and the reform and opening up. At the same time, a large number of foreign documents from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the West have also been translated into foreign languages. Due to the special sense of social and historical mission, China’s translation community has a deeper demand for the construction of translation discipline than the West (Niu, 2016). It also pays attention to the training of translation subjects, namely, personnel training. Translation has become an independent first level discipline. In 2005, Shanghai International Studies University was the first to independently enroll a doctor of translation. Doctoral education in translation studies includes: theoretical research ability, frontier theory of translation studies, and theoretical research on translation teaching (Xu, 2009). It can be seen that the national level attaches great importance to translation studies and translation teaching.

The development of translation studies in China is closely related to modernity, showing a symbiotic state. Translation teaching needs to be studied from the perspective of Chinese modernity. As a teaching activity, translation teaching itself is more meaningful to study in the process of Chinese modernity.

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## 4. TRANSLATION TEACHING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHINESE MODERNITY

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Translation, as one of the means of education, lies in its unique role. Translation called for by modernity can be an activity or an educational act. Its “innovation” function is that translation is regarded as an important basis for educational behavior (Luo, 2017, p.94). In translation teaching, teachers should take translation as an educational activity rather than a language conversion activity.

In China, the vast majority of western classic works are translated by scholars in this field, who are both scientists at the academic frontier and translators, introducing western academic ideas and advanced technology (Luo, 2002). The college stage is an important stage to improve their translation level. Therefore, paying attention to college translation teaching will benefit more college students (Luo & Shao, 2009).

In view of the current situation of translation teaching in colleges and universities, combined with the modernity of China, the author believes that translation teaching should present a new understanding, with new features and functions, such as the modernity of translation teaching, education, expansion of ontological functions, new challenges to the subject, and the construction of academic discourse power.

### 4.1 Modernity of Translation Teaching

The modernity of translation teaching is reflected in the great influence of science and technology on translation teaching and the inevitable requirement of interdisciplinary development. Modern science and technology are challenging to translation teaching. The gradual popularization of translation machines, translation software, portable translation equipment, etc., and the continuous improvement of educational technology have put forward inevitable requirements for translation teaching. Modern means, such as translation software and corpus, can be used to organize teaching activities in teaching. Modernity should also include the constant updating of teaching means, research means and teaching facilities. Of course, in addition to teaching hardware facilities, it should also be supported by adequate technical support, such as setting up relevant workshops and training teachers and students.

Interdisciplinary development is an inevitable requirement of the modernity of translation teaching. In the era of artificial intelligence, the university paradigm is rebuilt (Guo & Jia, 2022). The integration of translation research, artificial intelligence and brain science is also one of the major trends. The basis of their integration is the study of translation process. In translation teaching, we should consider how to better present the translation process to students, rather than blindly pursuing translation results. Try to better serve the students’ translation ability through the process teaching method of translation, which inevitably requires the corresponding transformation of the teaching model.

### 4.2 Education of Translation Teaching

From the perspective of Chinese modernity, translation teaching is educational. As far as the relationship between modernity of translation and educational behavior is concerned, translation itself is an educational behavior. Teachers should analyze the specific intention of translation through their own translation practice, interpretation of the translation process, so as to realize the purpose of translation as an educational behavior. This is also a great challenge for teachers, who need to keep learning and polishing.

The function of education can be divided into positive function and negative function according to the objective results, and can be divided into explicit function and implicit function according to whether the form of function presentation conforms to the subjective intention of social members (Li & Wei, 2006). Since translation involves at least two kinds of language conversion, it is bound to be related to culture. As an educational act, translation plays an important role in the above four aspects.

The role of education in social development is reflected in the economic, political and cultural functions of education, among which the most important is to promote

individual development, and the most far-reaching is to affect cultural development (Li & Wei, 2006).

### 4.3 Function Expansion of Translation Teaching

It has to recognize the new expansion of translation functions from the perspective of modernity, such as the new adjustment of cultural translation orientation strategies, and the construction of international academic discourse. For example, as China's national strength becomes stronger, in cultural translation, the cultural orientation strategy of translation should also be adjusted to maximize the value of translation in the changing cultural context. Specifically, the strategies adopted in translation practice should also be improved accordingly. For example, in dealing with cultural related C-E translation practices, translators should use more alienation to preserve China's cultural characteristics, Students should have such a sense of change.

At the same time, the role of translation in the construction of international academic discourse should not be underestimated. China's academic "going global" depends on translation, so the new cognition of translation will certainly affect academic translation practice. Only the successful and effective translation of Chinese scholarship can we talk about building international academic discourse - which is a challenge to translation teaching. Now the country advocates the construction of international academic discourse, and more attention should be paid to the positive role of translation, making good use of translation teaching or teaching translation practice. There should be corresponding changes in curriculum and objectives. This involves a series of changes in school teaching content, methods and goals.

### 4.4 Challenges of Translation Teaching to Subjects

For translation teachers, translation teaching from the perspective of Chinese modernity is a new challenge. As the main body of translation activities, translation teachers have certain homogeneity in their source structure. The vast majority of foreign language teachers in colleges and universities, especially those majoring in translation, are non-normal graduates, lacking certain foreign language teaching concepts and practical experience, especially novice teachers. Their professional knowledge is generally undoubted, but having professional knowledge of disciplines cannot guarantee good teaching results. In addition to professional subject knowledge, teaching theory and practice are one of the necessary conditions to promote the teaching effect.

The subject of translation is dominant, authoritative, changeable and dynamic (Liu, 2007). We should attach importance to its development and give it certain educational resources. Increasing education investment will promote the main body and help to play its "function"

(Liu, 2007, p.51). The cognitive subjects of translation include translators, readers, listeners and audience (Niu, 2016). Teachers are not only translators, but also guides to help students consider readers, listeners and audiences. Have multiple identities. At the same time, in order to ensure the smooth progress of translation activities. The study of translation subject should be transferred to the study of intersubjectivity. "Intersubjectivity is to reveal the interactive thematic relationship of mutual generation, mutual penetration and interdependence between people, people and things, subject and object, self and object" (Zhang, 2018, p.296).

## 5. CONCLUSION

In general, translation teaching research is not placed in the perspective of China's modernization. This paper analyzes the new features and functions of translation teaching from the perspective of China's modernization. It aims to provide some reference for translation teaching.

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