

A Review on the Book *Introduction to Chinese Translation Studies since China's Reform and Opening up (1978-2018)*

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Abstract. Introduction to Chinese Translation Studies (1978-2018) since China's Reform and Opening up is written by Xu Jun, the Chinese famous scholar and leading role in the field of translation studies. This book comprehensively and systematically teases out translation studies in the past 40 years of China's reform and opening up, introducing the achievements of Chinese translation studies since China's reform and opening-up, pointing out existing problems and the future research trend.

Introduction

In the 1980s, translation studies began in China as an independent discipline, and today it continues to evolve steadily and vigorously. The year of 2018 was the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening up. Xu Jun, the famous Chinese scholar and senior professor of liberal arts at Zhejiang University, wrote the book, Introduction to Chinese Translation Studies since the Reform and Opening up (1978-2018). This book comprehensively demonstrated all achievements of the Chinese Translation studies for 40 years. It debuted on the 40th anniversary of the reform and opening up, which inspired the entire Chinese translation circle. It has sorted out and analyzed China's translation studies in the past 40 years, and has demonstrated the great achievements of China's reform and opening up from a unique perspective.

At the same time, it also caters to the need to further promote domestic translation academic research and improve the construction of translation disciplines in domestic universities. It is the most comprehensive, systematic and authoritative combing of translation studies in the past 40 years of reform and opening up. In order to make more scholars at home and abroad know the history, achievements and the future research trend of Chinese translation studies, in the following part I will have a brief introduction to this book.

Introduction to the Book

The book is nearly 500,000 words, a total of 12 chapters, comprehensively combing the translation discipline construction of China, theoretical construction, translation history research, interpretation research development, achievements and trends in the 40 years of reform and opening up, Chinese literature going global and studies on works from Chinese translation, technical means and translation studies, translation career development in China, and translation of academic publishing, etc., with detailed facts, conclusive and powerful data, profound and thorough theoretical interpretation, and outlining the process of translation studies in China since the reform and opening up developing from nothing, from the weak to the strong.

The content of each chapter is written by the scholar with fertile achievement in this specific field. Xu Jun, the editor-in-chief, is responsible for planning as a whole for this book. At the same time, he finished the 12th chapter and postscript by himself and the introduction part with Professor Lan Hongjun. According to the content of each chapter, twelve chapters together with introduction and postscript will be divided into four parts and introduced respectively in the following part.

The Achievement of Chinese Translation Studies Since Reform and Opening-up. The introduction part, the first chapter and the eleventh chapter mainly introduce achievements of

Chinese translation studies since 1978.

The introduction part, written by Xu Jun and Lan Hongjun, summarizes the development characteristics of Chinese translation studies since the reform and opening up. The author summarizes the four developmental characteristics: 1) Expand the field of translation research with an open mind. The opportunities for international exchange brought about by reform and opening up have opened up the academic horizons of scholars and opened up a new research situation. 2) Actively explore and strengthen the infrastructure and theoretical construction of translation studies. The discussion on the subject orientation, the nature of the discipline, the discipline structure, and the branch of the discipline laid the theoretical foundation for modern Chinese translation studies. 3) Multi-dimensional interaction to promote the all-round development of Chinese translation and translation research. With the establishment of a number of translation research institutions such as the Chinese Translation Association, and the resumed publication or new publication of a number of periodicals such as “Chinese Translation” and “Shanghai Translation”, they provide a fertile ground for the growth of translation studies. 4) Constantly innovate and strive to build translation studies with Chinese characteristics. Translation is born with the birthmark of national culture. The results of research must be pursued with universal applicability, and the research object must be clarified.

The first chapter is the construction of translation studies, written by Mu Lei. The author comprehensively reviews the history of the construction and development of Chinese translation studies. Since 1987, Tan Zaixi has published more than ten papers such as “The Necessity of Constructing Translation Studies”, and has spoken out for the independent discipline of translation studies. In May of the same year, Xu Jun and others initiated the “China’s first graduate translation theory seminar.” In 2000, Tan Zaixi published a monograph on Translation Studies, which played a positive role in the creation and development of translation studies [1]. In 2006, the translation undergraduate was approved for enrollment. In 2007, the master of translation major was approved. In 2013, translation studies was included in the second-level discipline of the first-level discipline of foreign language and literature. After the initial realization of the system recognition, translation studies strengthened the connotation construction of the discipline and has achieved gratifying results. The book also specifically teased out the achievements of translation academic publishing since the reform and opening up, placed in the eleventh chapter considering the coherence of the book.

The eleventh chapter, written by Tu Guoyuan, is about translated academic publishing. Academic publishing is a platform for the display of academic research results and a medium for exchange of academic ideas. Translation academic publishing and translation discipline construction have a close relationship of mutual promotion. Since the reform and opening up, translation studies journals, foreign language journals, translation research columns, and many university journals have published 140,000 translation research papers. Major publishers have also published a series of translation studies, which have effectively promoted translation researches and development of discipline construction. There are also some problems behind productive achievements. Lan Hongjun opposed blindly transplanting other disciplines to construct a new theory [2]. Some works are based on the intersection of disciplines, the concept of paradox, the application of terms, and even misinterpretation and misuse, and rumors, leading to theoretical research confusion [3].

The Development of Basic Research Fields in Chinese Translation Studies. Chapter 2 to chapter 7 is mainly concerned with the development of basic research fields of Chinese translation studies.

The second chapter written by Lan Hongjun is the construction of translation theory. The author proposes that measuring a discipline or a field is only an important indicator of the degree of innovation, that is, the construction and development of its theory. After the reform and opening up, scholars of translation studies have gradually awakened their awareness of modern translation theory. “From basic theory, subject theory to branch discipline theory, from ontology, epistemology to methodology, from macro theory to micro theory to perspective theory, our theory system is gradually complete. Through inheritance, reference and innovative exploration, we have realized the transformation of the translation theory from traditional to modern” [4]. With the enhancement

of theoretical consciousness, a number of monographs and interdisciplinary explorations with the theme of “translation studies” are increasingly increasing, and translation theories have shown a systematic development trend.

The third chapter, written by Wang Hongyin, is the interpretation and research of Chinese traditional translation theory. Because the Western translation theory and the traditional Chinese translation theory are different in cultural context, if you take it with any careful consideration, it will inevitably lead to awkwardness. While drawing on the research methods and academic discourse of Western translation theories, we must pay more attention to the study of China’s own translation ecology and the reinterpretation of Chinese traditional translation theories. In 1997, Zhang Boran and Xu Jun clearly put forward the idea of establishing “Chinese translation studies.” In 2003, Wang Hongyin systematically expounded the creative value of traditional translation theories in the monograph *Classical Interpretation of Chinese Traditional Translation Theory-From Dao An to Fu Lei*. The author emphasizes that the study of traditional translation theory is a modern interpretation of it, developing a modern Chinese translation theory, and finally making a theoretical contribution to the study of world translation studies.

The fourth chapter, written by Liu Junping, introduces and reflects on foreign translation theory. The author divides China’s introduction of Western translation theory into three periods: 1) preliminary translation stage (1978-1988). It is apt to translate the technical and practical monographs or textbooks, as well as the translation ideas of linguistic schools such as Nida and Newmark. 2) the stage of drawing on and absorption (1989-1999). Because the scale of research at this time is far less than the depth and breadth of research on Nida, Balhударov and Newmark, it is also called the “adjustment period of translation theory research” [5] or “the theoretical silence period” [6]. 3) the stage of sorting out and digestion and integration and innovation (2000-2018). On the whole, this stage focused on critical reflection, integration and innovation, such as misreading and applicability, following the trend blindly and mechanical application, domestication and alienation, characteristic and universal, hysteresis and comparative studies of such opposite topics as internal and external research.

The fifth chapter written by Qu Wensheng and Wang Kefei is the study of translation history. Qian Zhongshu’s *Translation of Lin Shu* (1981), *On Yan Fu and His Translated Masterpieces* (1982), Luo Xinzhang’s *Translation Theory*, and the Chinese Translation Association’s *Translation Research Papers* (1894- 1948/1949-1983) and Ma Zuyi’s *A Brief History of Chinese Translation: The Part of the May 4th* (1984) are the masterpiece of Chinese translation history research, and the subsequent studies of Chinese translation history are basically developed in terms of topics covered in these five works are unfolding [7]. The author believes that translators of translation history should integrate natural sciences with social sciences and literary translations in order to expand research themes and research methods. Translation history researchers can also be experts outside the translation discipline, because the study of translation history in a particular discipline must have a considerable understanding of the subject to be competent [8:202].

The sixth chapter written by Liu Yunhong is about translation criticism research. As an important branch of translation studies, deepening the research of translation criticism and promoting the practice of translation criticism is not only the inherent need of translation discipline construction, but also the inevitable description of standardizing and guiding translation activities to promote the maximum translation value [9]. With the development of the translation discipline, translation criticism has got rid of the pattern of sole comments, and has gradually become systematic and theoretical. In 1992, Xu Jun’s monograph “*Literature Translation Criticism Research*” pioneered the study of domestic translation criticism theory. In the 21st century, Yang Xiaorong, Wen Jun, Hu Dexiang, Wang Hongyin, Wen Xiuying, Lv Jun, Xiao Weiqing, Zhou Lingshun, Liu Yunhong and other scholars have successively published works related to translation criticism research. However, compared with other fields of translation studies, “translation criticism has not only started late, but also developed slowly. It is still a young subject research field that needs more attention from the translation community” [8:212-213]. Translation criticism should be based on an open mind and take up the responsibility of establishing translation standards and expanding translation

possibilities.

The seventh chapter written by Wang Binhua is the development, achievements and trends of Chinese interpreting research. The author divides Chinese interpreting research into four phases: 1) the “emergence period” from the late 1970s to the late 1980s; 2) the “preliminary development period” in the 1990s; and 3) the emerging period: the first decade of the 21st century; 4) multiple development period in the second decade of the 21st century. Since the reform and opening up, the quality of interpreting research has been significantly improved, research topics have been diversified, and research methods have become more diverse. So far, the 11th National Interpretation Conference has been held, and more than 300 interpreting materials, 30 monographs and 10 papers have been published. The research topics cover many aspects. After 40 years of development, the theme of Chinese interpreting research tends to be diversified. The content tends to be concrete. The path tends to be interdisciplinary. The method tends to be scientific and empirical and the exchange tends to be international. Moreover, in the future efforts should be devoted to theoretical construction, research methods, industry attributes and research team building.

The Breakthrough of China’s Translation Studies in the Emerging Field. Chapter eighth to chapter tenth mainly focus on the breakthrough of Chinese translation studies in the emerging field.

The eighth chapter written by Hu Anjiang is about Chinese literature going global and research on translations from Chinese. Translation is an inevitable choice for Chinese literature to going global. Reviewing the history of translation from Chinese in literature, analyzing gains and losses of translation strategies, obstacles to communication is conducive to “telling Chinese stories well.” Based on Bourdieu’s field theory, Casanova proposes a world literature field level analysis model. According to the language-owned “language-literature capital”, the language is divided into “dominant” and “being dominated” relationships. Translation from the dominant language (e.g. English) into the dominated language (e.g. Chinese), translation is the means by which the latter accumulates literary capital; and from the dominated language to the dominant language, the translator is considered as an important means of recognition to obtain the world literature field as for the writer of dominated language. After the reform and opening up, major projects such as Panda Books and Library of Chinese Classics were successively established. A number of ancient, modern and contemporary works have been translated into English, French, German, Japanese and other languages. Although the communication and influence are limited [8:294], it is of great strategic significance in constructing Chinese literary values and cultivating excellent translators [10].

The ninth chapter written by Hu Kaibao is about technical means and translation studies. Translation has interdisciplinary attributes, corpus, keyloggers, eye trackers, nuclear magnetic resonance and other technologies to provide technical support for translation studies. The results of the combination of translation studies with computer technology and artificial intelligence have also begun to appear. In recent years, Hu Kaibao, Wang Kefei, Hu Xian Yao, Dai Guangrong, He Fei, Li Dechao and other scholars have worked hard in the field of translation research based on corpus, and have achieved fruitful results. At present, the field of translation research using corpus technology mainly includes creation and application of translation corpus, translation commonality, translator style, translation norm and translation teaching, etc. With the application of eyesight, near-infrared spectroscopy, nuclear magnetic resonance and other medical and psychology technologies and instruments in recent years, translation process research has entered the experimental demonstration stage [11]. The author points out that most of the domestic translation cognition research is still limited to the introduction of relevant foreign theories and methods, and the empirical research results are still rare.

The tenth chapter written by Wang Chuanying is about Chinese translation career development. Since the reform and opening up, with the rapid development of the economy and the continuous deepening of Sino-foreign cooperation, the professionalization of translation has become unstoppable. In line with the development needs of the translation service market, it is particularly necessary to study the implementation and management measures of translation projects and the cultivation of top translation talents under the professionalization of translation. After the undergraduate-level

translation major was approved in 2006, Chinese scholars really began to pay attention to the trend of translation professionalism. In order to better standardize the translation market, China has promulgated a series of translation standards, established professional organizations such as industry associations, set up a master's degree in translation undergraduate majors and graduate majors, and launched various translation qualification certificates, which provides the necessary institutional foundation and talent guarantee for the smooth development of translation professions.

Prospects for Chinese Translation Studies in the New Era. The twelfth chapter written by Xu Jun presents some problems worthy of consideration and prospects about translation studies in the new era. According to Xie Tianzhen, he said in the new era, scholars in the academic field of translation should fully understand the profound changes in the context of translation, and rethink about some outdated concept of translation [12], and respond to the new situation and new challenges with new translation concepts. Rethinking translation is not to deny the past, but to respond to people's confusion in the nature of translation, translation value, and translation ethics in the new era. The translation of any era has the social value of promoting social exchange and development, the elimination of the cultural value of cross-cultural communication barriers and conflicts, the linguistic value of changing symbols, the creation value of defusing difference and the historical value of inheriting civilization [13]. Translation studies have been around for a long time. The author emphasizes that the existence of translation studies as an independent discipline must clarify its own research objects, overcome the pan-cultural tendency, and return to the translation itself. Translation theory should develop around translation activities. The author points out that translation studies should not only be open to western translation theories, but also focus on the inheritance of traditional translation theories.

Conclusion

This book takes the 40 years of reform and opening up as the grand background, comprehensively demonstrates the status quo and achievements of Chinese translation studies, and expounds the major contributions of translation studies in the cultural exchange, and its intermediary role in the process of China's reform and opening up. In the 40 years of reform and opening up, translation studies have also achieved remarkable results, but there will be more arduous challenges waiting for translation researchers to tackle the problem. The scholars of translation circles cherish the translation career that several generations of translators have done step by step, and this book is such a great work in the great journey of exploring translation.

All in all, this book comprehensively sorts out and authoritatively summarizes the translation studies in the past 40 years of reform and opening up. Whether it is academic value or ideological quality, it will become a classic work of translation studies, and it will surely leave a strong color in the history of translation studies. Through my introduction to this book, I hope our scholars have a clear understanding of what we have achieved in the translation studies in the past 40 years, and also let the foreign scholars of the same circle understand our translation history and achievements since the reform and opening up of our country.

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