A LITERATURE REVIEW OF RELEVANCE THEORY AND NEWS TRANSLATION

News translation is the communication between news writers and target audience and the latter only process relevant information as suggested in relevant theory. I want to make a tentative endeavor to study C-E and E-C news translation from the relevance-theoretical perspective.

Under the framework of relevance theory, translation process consists of two ostensive-inferential processes involving three communicators: the source text writer, translator and target text reader, in which the translator plays a double role of both communicator and audience.

In the process of news translation, the translator can only achieve optimal relevance between original text and translated text by taking into account the writer and audience’s background, preferences and comprehensive abilities and making correct evaluation of their expectation of translation.

Some specific translation approaches are also put forward such as direct translation, addition and deletion, and recreation. Hopefully, the findings of my entries may enlighten and facilitate the C-E and E-C news translation practice and promote the communication between China and the rest of the world.

1. Previous Studies on News Translation
It is obvious that news translation is one of the most important activities in the world. What is news translation? Liu Qizhong once defined news translation as “news in Language A (ST) is translated as into Language B (TT) and broadcast again; information is transferred to Language B readers and these readers may enjoy being informed, directed and enlightened almost the same with Language A readers.” (Liu Qizhong, 2004) Please note “almost the same”. Due to different backgrounds, education, cultures and cognitive environment, the responses between ST readers and TT readers are never exactly the same.

In 1986, Liu Xinlin proposed four characteristics of news translation: ① Accuracy. News is informative and translators must convey information as accurate as it is in the original text. ② Rapidity. News needs to be translated very quickly, otherwise, news is no longer new. ③ Variety. News translation should cover as many aspects of daily life as possible to meet different demands of readers. ④ Neologism. Many news words are usually introduced in the news translation.

2. Previous Studies on Relevance Theory

In 1975, Grice proposed a theory of cooperative principle and conversational maxims. The main idea of Grice’s principle is that if a behavior is communicative, it must be assumed that the communicator is trying to meet certain standards and Grice called these standards maxims: the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relevance and the maxim of manner. On the basis of maxim of relevance, Sperber and Wilson proposed the relevance theory in their book Relevance: Communication and Cognition in 1979.

On the developing stage, in 1981, Sperber and Wilson published an
article entitled *On Grice’s theory of conversational implicature*, and pointed out the relevance theory can subsume Grice’s cooperative principles as well as all maxims under the principles. They also made comparisons between each maxim of cooperative principles and the relevance theory.

However, relevance theory doesn’t oppose to Grice’s theory. In comparison to Grice’s theory, relevance theory is brief and clear, that’s why Sperber and Wilson used the word “subsume” instead of replace. During this period, relevance theory was defined by Sperber and Wilson as “The speaker has made the minimal efforts to achieve the maximal relevance”. (Sperber & Wilson 1981)