

# CULTURAL TURN OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

Traditionally, translation is treated as a rule-bound technique for the transfer between languages. With the author and the audience inviolable, a translator is put in the dilemma of imitating the original and satisfying the readers. In the devoted pursuit of equivalence and fidelity, such external parameters as history, society, economy are ignored as if they were equal.

Since a culture is subject to constant changes and the existence of cultural factors has preceded many misunderstandings and reconstitutions, a translation is irredeemably partial in the interpretation and representation. Besides, a translator need not necessarily “surrender” to the rhetoricity of the foreign text in that he or she is inevitably influenced with his or her personal capacity, habits, beliefs, interest, values, and etc. The conventional linguistics-centered controversy about freedom and fidelity is therefore subject to many criticisms.

The last two decades have witnessed flourishing translation studies, with more and more awareness of the relevance of linguistics, philosophy, psychology, aesthetics, archaeology, literary criticism, anthropology and so on with translation studies and practices, the scopes of translation studies are widened with more in-depth perception of the nature and patterns of translation activities.

Correspondingly, sociocultural factors are taken into account in

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translation studies. The cultural oriented translation studies, which focus on the external elements influencing translation process, have provided a firm theoretical basis for current study.

## **Researches on Translation Ethics**

With traditional prescriptive translation studies going out of date, there appears the necessity to explore translations cross cultures and disciplines. Correspondingly, researches on ethics in translation become a trend.

More explicitly, increasing concerns about ethics in translation can be ascribed to the following major factors. Firstly, ethical researches may contribute to more considerations about cultural roles a translator plays for the development of his or her native group and intercultural interaction in a globalized era.

Secondly, cultural turn of translation studies brings about more emphasis on and respect to a translator's freedom and right, but overdue subjectivity can engender patchwork, mistranslation and plagiarism. As a consequence, ethical topics about the plausibility of a translator's activity are involved.

Thirdly, a translator alone does not complete a translation process. He or she is economically, politically and linguistically relevant with other subjects. Therefore translation activities need to be properly realized with responsible cooperation with subjects, hence the necessity to study translation ethics.

We should not hesitate to acknowledge that the current study has benefited a lot from former and current researches on translation ethics,

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though there exist remarkable differences between intercultural ethics and other ethics.

Culture is an important concept we should know, which is normally divided into three categories:

1. Membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting
2. The discourse community itself
3. The system of standards itself

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