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Zhonggang Sang

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A Relevance Theory Perspective on Translating the Implicit Information in Literary Texts

Sang Zhonggang

Sang Zhonggang, a translation teacher in Tianshui Normal University, began his research into translation in the City of Lanzhou in China. He holds a B.A. in Applied Linguistics from Northwest Normal University of China, and an M.A. in translation studies from Lanzhou University. Sang has published a number of articles on translation both in China and in Hong Kong. Recently he has been doing research on the cognitive and pragmatic study of literary translation.

Abstract

As one type of cross-cultural communication, the literary translation is more difficult for the translator as he has to deal with a large chunk of implicit information. The implicit information has as its characteristics, such as graded communicability, context-dependence, the correlation among the implicit information, text and context, etc. These characteristics restrict the communicability of the literary texts in another context, so the translator of the literary texts often finds more difficulties in translating. Encouraged by Gutt's theory and his recent findings, this article adopts a relevance theory approach and attempts to present a cognitive study of the implicit information in literary texts. It experiments with building an explanatory framework for translating the implicit information in literary texts. The framework is based on a new notion: **translation is clues-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries.**

1. Introduction

Literary works, which are written texts, are characterized by "careful use of language, being written in a literary genre (poetry, prose fiction, or drama), being read aesthetically, and containing many weak implicatures" (Meyer 1997: 24). The weak implicatures are the implicit information in the literary texts. On the one hand, owing to the implicit information in the literary texts, the author of the source text often becomes more capable of communicating a richness of ideas, feelings and impressions that are not necessarily expressed in words. Meanwhile, by the implicit information, the author endows the literary texts with their unique density, as the texts rich in implicit information usually cost the reader more conceptual effort to process them. On the other hand, due to the unique density of the literary texts and the way in which the implicit information is conveyed, the translator of the literary text often finds more difficulties in translating the implicit information of the source texts.

Seeing the above factors related to the literary translation, and on the basis of Gutt's relevance theory framework of translation and his recent studies, this article attempts to build an explanatory framework for translating the implicit information in literary texts. It also aims at providing a natural basis for an account of evaluation and decision-making.

This framework seems to be an innovative one, as little research into translating the implicit information in literary texts has been undertaken ever since Gutt's study (1996). More importantly, the framework can give an explicit account of translating the implicit information in literary texts when the linguistic and contextual differences get in the way of translation. After an intensive study, the article comes up with a new notion of translation, that is, "translation is clues-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries." Some basic concepts in relevance theory such as "the degree of relevance" and "contextual effect" are adequately defined in the article.

2. Relevance theory

In exploring relevance theory, as well as Gutt, Zhao Yanchun and Li Yin's frameworks, this article aims at building an explanatory framework for translating the implicit information in literary texts. This section focuses on a review of relevance theory and the three frameworks.

2.1 Key concepts in relevance theory

2.1.1 Context in relevance theory

Within the relevance theory framework, the notion of "context" is of central importance. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), the context of an utterance is "the set of premises used in interpreting [it]" (p. 15). So it is a psychological notion: "A context is the psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world" (p. 15).

Here we can find that the notion of "context" is not the external physical factors. Nor is it limited to the immediately preceding utterances or text, situational circumstances, or cultural factors. It rather refers to part of the hearer's cognitive environment. As Sperber and Wilson (1986) point out, one's cognitive environment is "a set of facts that are manifest to him" (p. 39). It is clear that the cognitive environment is his mental environment when the hearer processes an utterance or a text, and the notion of "cognitive environment," which acts on the basis of the external environment, stresses the importance of the information available for processing the utterance or the text. A context is the part of cognitive environment that can be employed in the interpretation of a text. Thus "context" is not "given," but is "selected" (p. 132), and "the selection of a particular context is determined by the search for relevance" (p. 141).

Added to this, successful communication hinges on the potential context that is mutually shared by the reader and the communicator. That is, only when the communicator's intention and the receptor's expectation meet, can communication be a success; thus "a crucial part of the context are the audience's expectations" (Gutt 1996: 240). The expectations are those the audience has of the target language texts. These expectations are, in fact, part of the context which the target language brings to the text, and they are indispensable for the success or failure of the communication act as a whole.

The notion of context in relevance theory, as Gutt (1996) points out, is very comprehensive on the one hand; it is delimited and defined in each instance by the criterion of optimal relevance on the other hand. In other words, in order to make an utterance optimally relevant to its audience, certain contextual implications have to be taken into consideration.

2.1.2 Contextual effect and processing effort

Relevance is defined in terms of contextual effect and processing effort (Wilson, 1994). That is, the greater the contextual effects the audience achieves, the greater the relevance of the text; but the greater the processing effort the audience needs to obtain these effects, the lower the relevance. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), in relevance theory terms, a text is relevant to an individual only when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a *positive cognitive effect*. A positive cognitive effect is a worthwhile difference to the individual's representation of the world—a truth-content conclusion. False conclusions are not worthwhile, as they are cognitive effects, but not positive ones. These positive cognitive effects are referred to as contextual effects.

Gutt (1996) defines a contextual effect as "a change in one's awareness" (p. 241). More technically, a contextual effect in one's "cognitive environment" has been brought about by neither the new information in the utterance alone, nor the context alone, but by the new information and the context combined. Contextual effects are obtained when the new information interacts with a context of existing assumptions in one of four ways: by strengthening an existing assumption, by contradicting and eliminating an existing assumption, by weakening the existing assumption, or by combining with an existing assumption to yield a contextual implication. For instance, an erudite professor gives his graduate students a lecture and the students finds the lecture relevant, as it brings into their cognitive environment a lot of changes in their awareness. The lecture

especially helps to strengthen some of their strong and positive assumptions, and to weaken or discard some irrelevant assumptions. Therefore, to be relevant at all, a text must yield at least some contextual effects.

As it is, relevance depends on the interaction of two dimensions: contextual effects and processing effort. The more contextual effects an utterance yields, the more relevant it is; the less processing effort the reader spends, the more relevant an utterance is. As both of the factors are context-dependent, the notion itself is also context-dependent. This fact deals with the nature of translation which we shall discuss later.

In addition, relevance is a graded notion: the degree of relevance that an audience obtains varies according to the amount of contextual effects the text yields, plus the processing effort the text costs. We may classify relevance into optimal relevance, strong relevance, weak relevance, and irrelevance in terms of its degree. Note the following diagram:

Graded relevance

Relevance	Contextual implication	Processing effort
Optimal relevance	Fully comprehensible	Without unnecessary effort
Strong relevance	Relatively clear	With some necessary effort
Weak relevance	Implied	Considerable effort taken
irrelevance	Vague and unclear	All the effort is in vain

Relevance is graded by degree. (Zhou 2004: 236, my translation)

As the diagram suggests, relevance can be graded into four kinds. In processing a text, it is only when the audience acquires adequate contextual effects (the text /utterance is fully comprehensible to him/her) without making any unnecessary effort, that optimal relevance can be achieved. For instance, when a father is telling his four-year-old son a story, he would, at first, consider his son's interest and contextual assumptions. Then he would make the story informative, so that it could yield some positive contextual effects in the boy's context. He would also make it as comprehensible as possible to his son in order that the child could process it with minimal effort. In this way, the father makes his story optimally relevant to his son. In this sense, we may find that relevance theory may be identified with Krashen's (1985) "i+1" theory. We shall discuss that topic in 5.3.

2.1.3 Consistency with the principle of relevance

As Wilson (1994) points out, an utterance, being interpreted is consistent with the principle of relevance if and only if the speaker might rationally have expected it to be optimally relevant to the audience. That is, the audience is allowed to assume that the interpretation conveyed by the communicator is the first interpretation that a rational communicator might have expected to bring the hearer/audience adequate contextual effects, and to cost the hearer no unjustifiable effort in achieving those effects is the interpretation intended by the communicator. Such an interpretation, according to Sperber and Wilson (1986), is *consistent with the principle of relevance*

All the above presentation is focused on the basic concepts of relevance theory. A detailed presentation of relevance theory can be found in the book *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Sperber and Wilson 1986, and in a revised version in 1995).

The next section examines the relevance theory framework of translation and how relevance is integrated into translation.

2.2 The relevance theory framework and its problems

Translation is a cross-cultural event—it is part of cross-cultural communication (Bassnett 2001) and communication is an event in which people share their world of thought with others. It is "a part of human psychology" (Gutt 1998: 42). According to Gutt, the most comprehensive and explicit scientific approach to communication is the relevance theory approach. In addition, relevance theory provides a natural basis for an empirical account of evaluation and decision-making. Therefore, after examining the discussions above, Gutt (1991) proposes a relevance theory framework in which an explanatory approach is adopted, which he notes, can provide a unified account of translation, and we intend to reexamine the framework in 2.2.2.

2.2.1 Translation is interpretive use of language across language boundaries

Relevance theory distinguishes between two models of language use in which human minds process information: the descriptive mode and the interpretive mode. In relevance theory, a language utterance is said to "be *used descriptively* when it is intended to be taken as true of a state of affairs in some possible world," while an utterance is said to be "*used interpretively* when it is intended to represent what someone said or thought" (Gutt 1998: 44). Therefore, translation is an instance of interpretive use of language, and from the relevance theory point of view, a scientific definition of "translation" would be "interpretive use of language across language boundaries" (p. 44). In relevance theory, in cases of interpretive use of language, a text that is used to represent the original thought of the communicator *interpretively resembles* it; that is, two texts have interpretive resemblance because they share many explicatures and/or implicatures.

In relevance theory, the assumptions the writer intends to communicate can be expressed in two different ways: as explicatures and/or as implicatures. Explicatures are a subset of assumptions that are analytically conveyed by a text or utterance; more specifically, explicatures are those analytic implications which the communicator intended to communicate. Implicatures are a subset of the contextual assumptions and contextual implications of an utterance or a text—again, a subset which the communicator intended to convey. Both explicatures and implicatures are identified by the audience on the basis of consistency with the principle of relevance.

In Gutt's framework, the notion of *optimal resemblance* has to do with how many explicatures and implicatures the original text shares with the translated one. Thus, the more they share, the more closely two texts interpretively resemble each other.

2.2.2 Direct translation

In order to give a unified account of translation, Gutt (1991) comes up with the notion of "direct translation" and that of "indirect translation." "Direct translation" is defined as follows:

> "A receptor language utterance is a direct translation of a source language utterance if and only if it purports to interpretively resemble the original completely in the context envisaged for the original" (Gutt 2000: 177).

We may find that this defines translation with regard to the context anticipated by the author of the source text since the intended interpretation of a text cannot be freely communicated to any audience without regard to their cognitive environment. This means that the presumption of complete interpretive resemblance can stand only with regard to the original context. As for the receptor audience, it means that they can expect to work out an authentic interpretation of the translation only with regard to the original context; namely, if they expect an original interpretation, they should familiarize themselves with the cognitive environment of the original. Thus, it is possible in principle to communicate the originally intended interpretation by translation. The translator, therefore, should not adapt the translated text because if it is processed in the original context, such adaptations would lead to an interpretation different from that of the original. Thus, the term of direct translation presumes complete interpretive resemblance and excludes the explication of implicit information, summarizing, and any changes in explication.

Gutt argues, however, that in "direct translation," the notion of "communicative clue" is just this causal aspect of the stimulus; that is, its potential is to convey the intended interpretation of the original in the original cognitive environment. We may find that the notion of "communicative clue" has no theoretical status here, though it may well prove helpful to the translator as an auxiliary concept for his practical work—it may help the translator to evaluate his translation by a comparison of communicative clues. Gutt's definition of direct translation does not rest heavily on the notion of "communicative clue." Thus, it may pose some obvious problems: aren't the communicative clues in literary texts less important in conveying the implicatures and explicatures? Can the communicator (translator) understand the original cognitive environment accurately? Considering the linguistic and the cultural barriers, can we be sure that direct translation is really achievable? If not, what is the use of the notion?

As Gutt (2000) points out, while direct translation does not guarantee the success of translation, it does lay down the conditions for translation. Though linguistic and cultural differences may make it impossible to

achieve complete interpretive resemblance, the definition of direct translation provides the frame of reference for its own evaluation.

2.2.3 Indirect translation

In indirect translation**,** according to Gutt (1990), as in any other instance of interpretive use, the translator presents his translation on the presumption that its interpretation adequately resembles the original in respects relevant to the target audience, so indirect and direct translation turn out to be instances of interpretive use; in other words, the notion of interpretive use provides a unified account for both direct and indirect translation. The essential difference between them is that direct translation is committed to complete interpretive resemblance while indirect translation presumes only adequate resemblance in relevant respects.

Nevertheless, from the above discussion, we may find that the notion of "communicative clues" or the intended "textual properties," which is assumed to be "causal aspect of the stimulus," has no theoretical status within Gutt's framework. Thus, two more problems with the framework come into our sight: Can a translator achieve direct translation or indirect translation without paying too much attention to the communicative clues in the original text? Can the notion of interpretive use provide an adequate unified account for both direct and indirect translation? Encouraged by the questions, we may come up with an hypothesis: translation is clues-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries.

2.3 Zhao Yanchun and Li Yin's frameworks

Zhao (1999) defines translation as "an act of ostensive-inferential intralingual or interlingual interpretation of source text" (as cited in Li and Luo 2004: 41), and translation is "a process of an act of interpretation" to build up a "grammar of translation" which is used to measure the "translation validity" and "fidelity." Zhao (1999) argues that "translation validity" depends on how much the communicator's intention satisfies the audience's expectation. In translation, relevance would be achieved via the pragmatic, pragmatic-semantic and semantic strata of the text to be translated.

On the basis of Zhao Yanchun's framework, Li and Luo (2004) claims that in translation the translator is to translate the text into one that is as relevant to the target text reader as the source text is to its reader. The translator should also make the strata of the translated text via which relevance is achieved (the pragmatic, pragmatic-semantic and semantic strata) equivalent to the source text.

Evidently, we may find that both Zhao Yanchun and Li Yin's frameworks can only serve as criteria to evaluate translation, as neither of them takes into account the linguistic and contextual differences in translation.

3. A cognitive-explanatory approach

This article, as we have claimed in 2.2.1, assumes the relevance theory framework of translation, whose method is a shift away from the traditional descriptive-classificatory approach and Snell-Hornby's (1988) integrated approach. The relevance theory perspective of translation does not start from the phenomena of translation to build a theory around them. Instead, it focuses on the communicator's competence rather than his behavior (Gutt, 1991, p. 21). In other words, the relevance theory study of translation does not attempt to describe the phenomena of translation by grouping them into categories. It aims at providing an explanation of translation in terms of cognitive pragmatics and a "natural basis for an empirical account of evaluation and decision-making"(Gutt, 1991, p. 22). Therefore, the relevance theory study of translation is a shift from the descriptive-classificatory approach to an explanatory one.

We may find, however, that the domain of the framework is "mental faculties rather than texts or processes of text production" (Gutt 1991: 22). Obviously, the text does weigh heavily in Gutt's framework. This is another limitation of the framework.

Therefore, in order to find out whether Gutt's relevance theory framework can give an adequate unified account of translation, we introduce Ingarden's (1973) conceptions of literary work which are based on ontology and cognitive philosophy. In his works, the philosopher emphasizes that a literary work depends on

its mode of being and its formal structures, and both of which are purely intentional. Secondly, a literary work is an entity with intentionally stratified structures and the origin of a literary work is in the creative acts of consciousness on the part of the author. Building on Ingarden's theory, we justify the position of literary text and its properties in the framework with a hypothesis: **translation is clues-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries.**

As relevance theory is mainly about cognitive pragmatics, and Roman Ingarden's theory is also based on cognitive philosophy, the approach this article adopts is a cognitive and explanatory one.

4. A relevance theory framework for translating the implicit information in the literary text

4.1 Translation is clues-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries

As Gutt (2005) argues, the core of relevance is based on cognitive science. Therefore, to find an adequate answer to the questions in 2.2., we need to discuss the issue of literary work with Ingarden, whose works concern the cognition of literary texts.

In his books *The Literary Work of Art* and *The Cognition of Literary Work of Art,* Ingarden (1973) analyzes the basic structures of literary work as follows:

> "Literary work is a many-layered formation. It contains (a) the stratum of verbal sounds and phonetic formations and phenomena of higher order; (b) the stratum of semantic units: of sentence meaning and the meaning of whole groups of sentences; (c) the stratum of schematized aspects in which objects of various kinds portrayed in the work come to appearance; and (d) the stratum of the objectives portrayed in the intentional states of affairs of projected by the sentences" (p. 12).

As Ingarden notes in *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (1973)*,* a literary work of art has two kinds of valuable qualities: those of artistic and those of aesthetic value. The qualities of aesthetic value are in a potential state (p. 13). The valuable qualities of a literary work are developed via the four strata of the structures. These structures of a literary work are hierarchical so we find that the first stratum in a literary work of art is the phonetic stratum, which is of the highest order. According to Ingarden, the stratum which functions as the transition to the meaning intention is of great importance for the aesthetic value of the work. The stratum of meanings makes it possible for the author/poet to infuse a literary work with his intentions and for readers to infer the meanings of the work. In addition, understanding a sentence means actualizing the meaning intentions in that sentence. Each sentence meaning projects a state of affairs as its intentional correlation. The states of affairs project the objects which form the world of the work. If one wants to obtain an aesthetic experience of the work, he must concretize the portrayed objectivities contained in the objective stratum of the work. As to the stratum of schematized aspects, Ingarden points out that the objects portrayed are a mere aspect of genuine reality so the literary work is a schematic formation as some of its strata; the objective stratum in particular contains a series of "place of indeterminacy." The aspects or parts of the portrayed objects which are not determined by the text are called "place of indeterminacy." Each object, event, etc., portrayed in the literary work of art includes a number of places of indeterminacy. However, the presence of a "place of indeterminacy" is not accidental: it is necessary in all works of art. So, "it is impossible to establish clearly and exhaustively the infinite multiplicity of individual objects portrayed in the work with a finite number of words or sentences" (Ingarden 1973: 51). In addition, not everything needs to be determined. Literary texts can usually reveal themselves indirectly by the explicit determination in the text. Lastly, one individual reader, whose aesthetic perspectives, life experiences, reading skills, etc. vary from those of other readers, is in a cognitive environment different from that of any other.

After analyzing the basic structures of literary work, Ingarden (1973) points out that in our treatment of literary work we can use all these features of the work to discover the "spirit" and the "idea" of the author and to explore the valuable qualities of the text and the psychological world of the author. Moreover, he emphasizes that the way we read a literary work of art depends on its mode of being and its formal structures, and both its mode of being and its formal structures are purely intentional. Thus, textual properties of literary texts play an essential role in the reader's cognition of literary texts.

In *The Cognition of Literary Work of Art,* Ingarden (1973) holds the view that a literary work is complex, with intentionally stratified structures in it, and the origin of a literary work is in the creative acts of consciousness on the part of the author. As to the text in translating, Baker (2000) points out that: "In translating, a text is a semantic unit, not a grammatical one… Meanings are realized through wordings; and without a theory of wordings… there is no way of making explicit one's interpretation of the meaning of a text" (p. 6). From the above discussion we may find that an author's intention in his work is closely bound with the text and textual properties, in other words, for a literary work, its mode of being and the textual properties are integral.

To sufficiently answer the question in 2.2.2, we need to examine the process of translation which is a part of cross-cultural communication.

First, we can start with the notion of translation as **metarepresentational**: "translation is an instance of metarepresentational use of utterances where the metarepresented and the metarepresenting utterances happen to be in different languages…" (Almazan 2002: 175). According to Wilson (2000), a metarepresentation is a representation of a representation: "a higher-order representation with a lower-order representation embedded within it" (p. 411). The idea of resemblance means that the relevance of the lower-order representation lies in its resemblance of communicative clues to another representation, rather than its being true of the state of affairs which it represents. The higher-order representation is devoted to representing the intention of the communicator as well as the communicative clues in the text. As Gutt (2004) notes, translation, which is a part of cross-culture communication, would be higher-order communication. However, in terms of literary translation, a literary work, which is a stratified structure, depends on its mode of being and its formal structures and both are purely intentional. Therefore, translation, which is higher-order communication, embraces the lower-order communication.

As Gutt (2004) suggests, translation is a higher-order of communication which embraces lower-order communication. Higher-order communication has two modes: i-mode and c-mode. (I-mode is based on meaning intention and c-mode is based on communicative clues or stimuli.) However, c-mode is the only mode of lower-order communication. Generally, i-mode informs the audience of the intended meaning of the communicator. When the communicability of a text is restrained due to the linguistic and contextual differences, i-mode helps the translator bridge the barriers and enable the communication to proceed smoothly. C-mode informs the audience of communicative clues by reproducing another representation of the clues which interpretively resemble that of the original text. In most cases, i-mode is achieved on the basis of c-mode as the audience generally infers the intention of the original communicator by the intentional communicative clues. Therefore, c-mode should be the basis of higher-order communication and translation.

Example

Source text

> Perhaps some infatuated swain has ere this mistaken insensibility for modesty, dullness for maiden reserve, mere vacuity for sweet bashfulness, a **goose**, in a word, for a swan (Thackeray 2000).
>
> 有些着了迷的情郎看心爱的女人样样都好；她麻木不仁，只说是端庄；她痴呆混沌，只说姑娘家腼腆贞静。总而言之，明明是一纸呆雁，偏要算是天鹅。(Translated by Yang Bi)

From the source text, we may find the associative meaning of the word "goose" and that of "swan" are contrastive: the former is derogatory, while the latter is complimentary. In Chinese, "天鹅" (i.e. "swan" in English), has the similar associative meaning, but "雁" (i.e. "goose" in English), does not often convey a derogatory meaning. Seeing this, by adding an adjective "呆" (i.e. "blunt and inactive"), the translator explicated the meaning intended by the source text author since the meaning might be lost in the clue-based communication. It is clear to us that both i-mode and c-mode have found their way into the process of translation. So the translator made his version consistently relevant to its source text.

Therefore, translation embraces two modes of communication: i-mode and c-mode. Specifically, c-mode is the basis of i-mode as well as the basis of the cross-cultural communication.

Now we have the answers to the three questions in 2.2.2: from the above discussion, we find that the literary text and its properties are the physical foundation of the author's intention, so it is impossible to interpret a

literary text into another language without regard to its text properties. As Blackmore (2000) argues, one of the important characteristics of natural language expression is that such expression can influence interpretation by guiding the search for relevance. So it is justifiable that text properties play an important part in the notion of translation. In reference to this, Gutt (2004) himself admits that translations rely on "partial resemblance in linguistic properties." Furthermore, in most cases, in translating, c-mode is always the basis of i-mode. Therefore, literary translation should also be based on the intentional textual properties/communicative clues, and translation would be "**clues-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries**." This notion unifies that of "direct translation" and "indirect translation," as both turn out to be instances of interpretive use of language. As previously mentioned, the difference between them lies in that direct translation is committed to complete interpretive resemblance, whereas indirect translation presumes only adequate resemblance in relevant respects. Of course, the difference is brought about by the linguistic and the cultural barriers.

4.2 A cognitive study of implicit information in literary texts

As we have discussed in the first section, literary translation features the density of the literary texts, which results from the implicit information inherent in the texts. This article concentrates on the discussion of translating the implicit information in literary texts. Here we mainly explore the nature and origin of the implicit information, in addition to how the implicit information in the literary texts is conveyed and processed.

4.2.1 A relevance theoretic look at "implicature"

Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance theory framework of human communication covers an explanation for the existence and nature of implicit information. They contend that human communication rests on inference. The information communicated is processed on the basis of the inferential combination of the text with a context. The information left implicit in the conversation/text is recovered in the search for optimal relevance. After a close study of implicit information in the light of relevance theory, Gutt (1996) points out that the strength with which the implicit information can be communicated covers the full range from very strong to very weak. Basically, the less evidence the communicator provides the audience, the weaker the strength of the information will be. Because of this, the different degrees of strength will naturally lead to situation in which a wide range of ideas can be communicated. The responsibility of how to communicate the ideas successfully should be undertaken by both the communicator and the audience; in fact, in processing the implicit information, the audience will make more effort than usual.

Sperber and Wilson (1986) explain another property of implicatures: "Let us give the name poetic effect to the peculiar effect of an utterance which achieves most of its relevance through a wide array of weak implicatures" (p. 222). As they claim, the wider the range of potential implicatures and the greater the hearer's responsibility for comprehending them, the more poetic the effect, the more creative the utterance.

Based on his discoveries, Gutt (1996) proposes some general principles for translating the implicit information in literary texts:

1. In his sense, any act of communication should be consistent with the principle of relevance.
2. In translating a text, the translator will anticipate whether the source text to be translated is communicable in the given context of the target audience.
3. In translating, the translator will predict the potential context of the audience. The essential part of the context should be the audience expectation of the target language text.
4. No matter what difficulties the translator has in translating, his central concern is to maintain a successful communication.

4.2.2 The implicit information in literary text

As Larson (1984) claims, the implicit information is that information "for which there is no form," but which is "a part of the total communication intended or assumed by the writer" (p. 38). As regards the source of the

implicit information, Larson suggests that some information is left implicit because of the structures of the source language, because of the shared information in the communication situations, or because it has been included somewhere else in the text or utterance. Very naturally, we may sense that the implicit information presumed in literary texts is brought about by attributes of their own. A study of literary texts is therefore necessary. As Luberda (1998) suggests, compared with the non-literary text, the literary text has its characteristics as follows:

1. Radical ambiguity of the language.
2. It is abundant in poetic metaphor and connotation of meaning.
3. The ideas, feelings, and images are open and indeterminate.
4. It may convey more information and potential messages.
5. It is polysemic.

The term "radical ambiguity" is used to identify an ambiguity that is not resolvable by an "expert" reader. Generally, radical ambiguity is based on the literary text and no amount of skill or knowledge will enable a reader to disambiguate it. As a literary text must bring its reader some immediate logical/psychological conflicts, the difficulty to disambiguate the implied meaning comes directly from the literary text itself and resides in the reader's mind.

Secondly, a literary text may be rich in poetic metaphors and the connotation of a literary word is large. A metaphor always makes a comparison between two unlike elements and the comparison is implied rather than stated. In the literary text, a metaphor is a statement that does not "make sense." Due to the radical ambiguity of the literary language and the poetic metaphors, a literary text is able to convey more information and potential messages than a non-literary text. Furthermore, since the portrayed objectives and schematized aspects in the work contain a number of "places of indeterminacy," the ideas, feelings and images a literary text conveys are open and indeterminate. This enables the literary text to depict a panorama of social life as well as a metaphysical world.

Naturally, all the above characteristics of the literary text contribute to the polysemy of the literary language. "Polysemy is used to refer to these cases of multiple meaning, out of preference for the term's brevity as well as its greater currency" (Luberda 1998: 15). In other words, a literary work has "an indefinite reserve of meanings" and the meanings are indeterminate. Implied relevant information requires more work on the part of the reader; he processes the text on the basis of the inferential combination of the text with a context. The extent to which a text demonstrates polysemy, including ambiguity and metaphor, is a measure of its complexity. Apparently this polysemic complexity allows the literary text to convey more implicit information.

4.2.3 How the implicit information is processed

As Gutt (1996) points out, since contextual effects are by nature beyond the information expressed explicitly in an utterance, they need to be implicit. To be relevant at all, an utterance in any human communication must convey some implicit information. Thus, in human communication the implicit information presupposes relevance. The implicit information is processed on the basis of the inferential combination of the text with a context and is recovered in the search for relevance. Because the author can express a wide range of ideas with the presumption of implicit information, the reader must expend more effort to process such information. To be relevant, the translator needs to provide adequate contextual effects that the reader can perceive in the translated text. Moreover, only when the readers perceive adequate contextual effects can the implicit information be processed. To analyze the way in which the implicit information is processed, we can employ Figure 1 as follows:

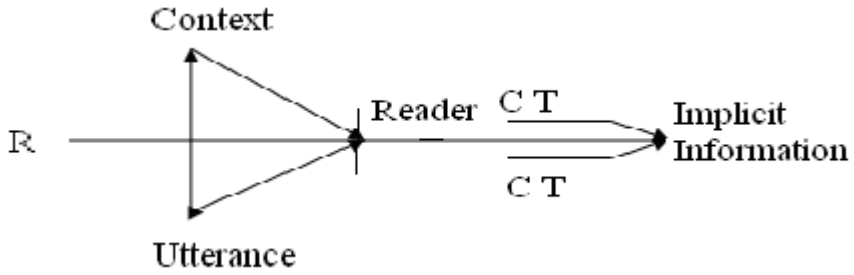

Figure 1. How the implicit information is processed

In Figure 1, R is relevance and CE signifies contextual effects. As it suggests, in processing a text, a reader's potential context is modified by the text; that is, the text can bring some cognitive changes to the reader's context. Guided by the principle of relevance, the reader processes the text combined with the modified context. In this way, the reader would perceive adequate contextual effects without expending unnecessary effort. As is discussed above, the positive contextual effects help to strengthen the relevant implicit information and eradicate the information of weak relevance.

4.2.4 How the implicit information in literary text is conveyed and processed

In 4.1, Ingarden's (1973) view of a literary work is introduced: a literary text is multi-layered formation which contains phonetic formations and phenomena of higher order, the stratum of semantic units, the stratum of schematized aspects and the stratum of the objectives portrayed. Every one of these strata is intentional. Therefore, it is sensible that in a literary text the author expresses every intended meaning via either one or all of the four strata. As we know, implicit information communicated is a subset of the contextual assumptions and contextual implications of an utterance or a text—again, that subset which the communicator intends to convey, and they are, of course, purely intentional. Thus, we may find that the implicit information is also conveyed via the four structures in a literary text.

In *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art,* Ingarden (1973) proposes that a literary work of art has two types of qualities: the qualities of artistic value and those of aesthetic value. The qualities of aesthetic and the artistic value are in a potential state (p. 13), so they are not explicated, and the information relevant to them should be implicit information. It is evident that the qualities of the literary text can bring about aesthetic and the artistic changes in a reader's cognitive environment; thus the aesthetic and artistic contextual effects are at least two layers of the contextual effects. So what are the other layers of the contextual effects? As Nida (2001) points out, "the most obvious function of language is informative, the use of speech or writing to influence the cognitive content or state of other people" (p. 11). In other words, in an informative layer, a text does, basically, bring changes in the reader's cognitive environment, so one layer of contextual effects is informative. Thus, my notion of contextual effects can be presented: the contextual effects that a literary text yields can be analyzed in **three layers: artistic, aesthetic and informative layers.**

To explicate the process in which the implicit information in literary text is conveyed and processed, it is necessary to introduce my Figure 2 as follows:

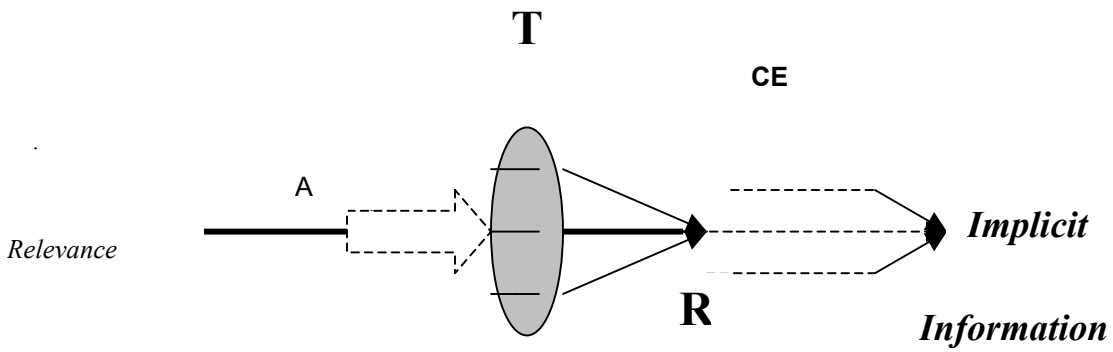

Figure 2.
How the implicit information in literary text is conveyed and processed

In Figure 2, A is the author, the original communicator; T signifies the literary text; R is the reader and CE is contextual effects. The literary text T is divided into four parts which signify the four strata of the literary text: word sounds and phonetic formations, meaning units, schematized aspects, and the stratum of portrayed objects. During the process in which the implicit information is communicated, the "natural law" followed is that the communication should be consistent with the principle of relevance. In the beginning, the author conveys his thoughts, feelings, and images in the literary text via the four strata mentioned above. The intentional text of artistic and aesthetic value would bring into the reader's cognitive environment quite a few cognitive changes, which are contextual effects. The contextual effects can be analyzed in three layers: the artistic, the aesthetic and the informative layer. These layers help to strengthen the reader's assumptions of adequate relevance, and erase the assumptions of weak relevance or those of no relevance. The process results in the processing of implicit information.

Example

Spring

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then bloom each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
Spring! The sweet spring!

By Thomas Nash (1989)

In his poem, Nash presents his reader with a picture of the season of spring alive with life and sounds. Branches of flowers are blooming gorgeously, pairs of birds are singing blissfully, flocks of sheep are grazing leisurely, and companies of girls are dancing merrily—what an animated picture it is! As it is, "Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo," the rhythmic onomatopoeic words are repeated in each stanza. In Stanza 1, "spring," "sting," "king," "ring," and "sing" rhyme. In Stanza 2, "may," "play," "gay," "day," and "lay" are rhymed; in Stanza 3, "sweet," "meet," "feet," and "greet" also rhyme. Obviously, the phonetic stratum of the poem is characterized by the use of onomatopoeia and rhyme. As regards the meaning unit, we find that each line flows spontaneously, and each word is chosen from the common core of our daily vocabulary. So each time we read the poem, we can sense the naturalness of the poet's diction and the intimacy of the poem to our life. As soon as we finish reciting the poem, we will be deeply impressed by the image of the dancing girls, the whistling shepherd, the blooming flowers and the singing birds. All the live entities are portrayed objects in the poem. In reading the poem, not only can we feel the poet's intense love for nature, but we may also breathe the air of the sprouting vigor and energy of spring. This is what is schematized in his poem.

In the process of reading, the reader becomes informed of both the animated spring and the poet himself; his aesthetic and artistic experience is enriched by the beauty of the poem. Because the information related to the three layers of contexts is implicit, the reader processes the implicit information as well as the **artistic, aesthetic and informative** layers of contextual effects.

4.3 An explanatory framework: How the implicit information is translated

As Figure 2 suggests, in the primary communication (i.e. the communication between the author and the reader of the source language), the reader can acquire adequate contextual effects without expending any unnecessary processing effort. However, in translation, the secondary communication (i.e. the communication in which the addressee does not have access to the original communicator's context) will cost the reader of the target language more effort to process the translated text due to the cultural and linguistic barriers. E_T (i.e. target language reader's effort) will be greater than E_S (i.e. source language reader's effort) and CE_T (i.e. target contextual effects) will be less than CE_S (i.e. source contextual effects), so R_T (i.e. relevance of the target language) will be weaker than R_S (i.e. relevance of the source language text). Hence, the translator would have but two alternatives: to provide the reader of the target language with more contextual information by explicating the contextual implication—that is, the implicit information of the text—or to translate the text into one less faithful to the text of the source language. Considering that the explication of implicit information is likely to change the original meaning of the text, one might conclude that it is just one way of "murdering the original" (Adams 1973: 10). So the translator should be on the alert while dealing with this strategy. Furthermore, when a source text is not comprehensible to the target reader, it is unwise to translate the text into the one less faithful to the original. Thus, the translator is in a dilemma. How could the translator thread his way out?

First, to find the answer to the question, we need to review the innovative notion in 4.1: translation is clues-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries. This notion entails the concept of direct translation and indirect translation, as both turn out to be instances of interpretive use of language. The difference between them is that the former aims at the complete interpretive resemblance of communicative clues, while the latter endeavors to achieve as much resemblance of clues as it can. In addition, the difference is brought about by the linguistic and the cultural barriers.

Obviously, we may find that the notion in 4.1 is more emphatic on the interpretive resemblance of communicative clues in translation than Gutt's notion. As it is, in literary translation, one of the translator's key concerns is to achieve the interpretive resemblance of the literary text and its properties. As we know, the author's intended meaning (including the implicit information) is conveyed via the four structures of a literary text: phonetic structures, semantic units, the stratum of schematized aspect and that of portrayed objects. As we discussed in 4.1, a literary work has two kinds of valuable qualities: the qualities of artistic value and those of aesthetic value. These qualities are also embodied into the text via the four strata of the text, so the textual properties of a literary text include the four text strata plus the qualities of artistic and aesthetic value. Therefore, in literary translation, the translator would aim at producing a translated text that shares the adequate textual properties of the complete interpretive resemblance to the source language

text—the textual properties mainly are the above-mentioned four text strata and the qualities of artistic and aesthetic value.

4.3.1 A strong version

Here we need to review Gutt's principles of translating the implicit information. First, in translation, the translator would aim to maintain a successful communication in view of cultural and linguistic barriers. Secondly, the translator's attention should be focused on achieving interpretive resemblance. Thirdly, the translator would take into consideration the communicability of the text in the context of the target audience and predict the potential context of the audience. The major part of the context should be the audience expectation of the target language text. Of course, the basic principle is to be consistent with the principle of relevance.

Thus, we can establish an explanatory framework for translating the implicit information presumed in a literary text: in translating, what the translator aims at is to translate the text into one that interpretively resembles the original one adequately. The textual properties will include the four stratified structures of the literary text plus the qualities of artistic and aesthetic value. In translating, the translator will take into consideration the expectations that the target audience has of the target language text and the causal interaction of text and context. More importantly, he will make sure that the text can yield adequate contextual effects and does not cost the reader any unjustified effort. In literary translation, the translator's central task, as it were, is to translate the original literary text into a target text with adequate interpretive resemblance to the original, and with consistent relevance to its reader as well as faithfulness to the original. Very naturally, here arises another problem: to what degree will the target text be relevant to the target reader and faithful to the source text?

In *Relevance and Translation,* Li Yin (2004) emphasizes that the translator's task is to translate the text into one which is as relevant to the target text reader as the source text to its reader, and to make the strata of the translated text, via which relevance is achieved (the pragmatic, pragmatic-semantic and semantic strata), equivalent to the source text; that is, he would insure that the degree of relevance of the source text is equivalent to that of the target text. In the light of this statement, we may come up with our explanation: in translation, the translator's central concern would be to make sure that the target text interpretively resembles the source text adequately and to make the target text as relevant to the target reader as the source text to its reader. We may illustrate the explanation in Figure 3.

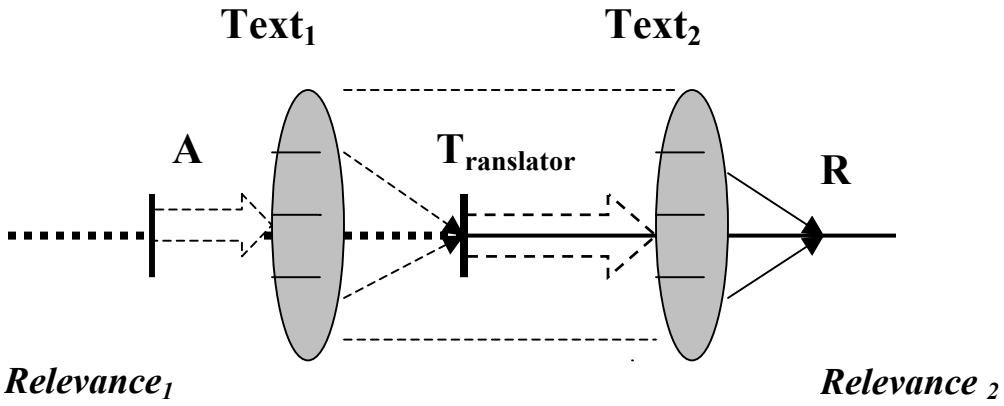

Figure 3. Of interpretive resemblance:
How the implicit information in literary text is translated

In Figure 3, the author of the source text presumes the implicit information via the four strata of the literary $Text_1$. The translator would process $Text_1$ in the same way as any source language readers in relevant respects. Having a complete understanding of $Text_1$, he would translate the text into $Text_2$. $Text_2$ would

interpretively resemble $Text_1$ and $Text_2$ shares the adequate textual properties of the adequate interpretive resemblance. Of course, the properties should mainly be the four stratified structures of the literary text and the qualities of artistic and aesthetic value. Meanwhile, he would take into consideration the causal interaction of text and context, and the expectations that the target audience have of the target language text. Then he would try to make $Relevance_1$ equal or approximate to $Relevance_2$. Moreover, he would make sure that the text can yield adequate contextual effects and does not cost the reader any unjustified effort. Therefore, in the process of translation, $Relevance_1 \backsimeq Relevance_2$ and $Text_2 \backsim Text_1$ (they resemble each other in relevant respects). Furthermore, we can check our experimental explanation with Bian and Cao's (2003) translation of Shakespeare's *Player King*.

Example A

Source text Player King

> Full thirty times hath **Phoebus**' cart gone round
> **Neptune**'s salt wash, and **Tellus**' orbed ground,
> And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
> About the world have times twelve thirties been,
> Since love our hearts and **Hymen** did our hands
> Unite commutual in most sacred bands.
> (Shakespeare, ***Hamlet***)

Target text (Chinese)

> "**金乌**"流转，一转眼三十周年，
> 临照过几番**沧海**几度**桑田**，
> 三十打"**玉兔**"借来一片清辉，
> 环绕过地球三百又六十回，
> 还记得当时真个是两情缱绻，
> 承"**月老**"作合，结下了金玉良缘。(Translated by Bian Zhilin 2003)

In the text, the dramatist's intention and the implicit information are conveyed via the four strata of the text. Primarily, the passage features the employment of rhyme: Lines 1 and 2, lines 3 and 4, and lines 5 and 6 rhyme. Since the actor's rhyming lines can yield some artistic and aesthetic effects, the information that the audience processes is implicit. As regards the meaning unit, the source text reader may find that the passage is rich in classical allusions from either Greek or Roman mythologies. Of course, what the dramatist intends to convey via these allusions is implicit information. The source text reader can read between the lines and sense the dramatist's allusions to Hamlet's indomitable faith and his intense love for Ophelia. Of course, the information implied here is schematized. In the passage, the names of the gods are the special entities portrayed in the text. In Roman mythology, Phoebus is the god of the sun. Neptune and Tellus embody the spirit of the sea and that of the earth. In Greek mythologies, Hymen is the god of marriage.

As the relevant implicit information is available in the source audience's cognitive environment, the source text audience can achieve adequate contextual effects only with some effort. The translator, who is a source text reader, also processes the implicit information from the four strata of the passage. The Chinese audience, however, may have to expend much more effort in processing the text as they are not always familiar with the cultural context. To them, the source text cannot be optimally relevant.

In view of this, having considered the expectations of the target audience with regard to the target language text and the causal interaction of text and context, the translator renders "金乌, " "沧海," "桑田," "玉兔" and "月老" as the substitute for Phoebus, Neptune, Tellus, Hymen, respectively. "金乌," "沧海," "桑田," "玉兔" and "月老" are all the expressions borrowed from Chinese legends and classical works, "金乌" and "玉兔" signifies the sun and the moon, "沧海" is the sea, "桑田" is the farming land, and "月老" is the god of marriage who unites loving couples in Chinese. It is evident that these Chinese expressions are also very

much tied to Chinese culture. The Chinese audience usually processes these expressions on the basis of the combination of the text and the context, so the relevant information is also implicit. In other words, these Chinese expressions are located where the translated text and the Chinese audience's expectation meet. Thus, the Chinese audience could also achieve adequate contextual effects without expending unjustified effort in processing the target text. In this way, the translator was successful in making his translated version as relevant as the source text, or approximately relevant to the extent that the source text is relevant to its original audience.

Considering the poetic effect that the source passage of the actor's line has, and anticipating what aesthetic and artistic effects the passage might bring into the audience context, the translator creatively made the couplets rhyme as in the source text and made the represented entities interpretively resemble those in the source text. As the semantic unit is closely bound up with the unit of portrayed objects, and schematized strata derives from the unit of portrayed objects (Ingarden 1973), the four units in the translated version may also bring the similar aesthetic and artistic cognitive changes into the audience's context. So it is safe to say that the translator has succeeded in achieving the interpretive resemblance of the passage to its source text.

4.3.2 A weak version

Obviously, the above framework does serve as a basis for evaluating and explaining the translation in that it spells out the process through which the implicit information in a literary text is translated. Nevertheless, seeing the contextual and linguistic differences, one may find it impractical to translate a text into one of complete interpretive resemblance to the source language text. It is also impossible to translate a text into one that can yield the same contextual effects in the target reader's cognitive environment as in the source language text. Therefore, in translation, the interpretive resemblance of target text to its source text is usually constrained due to the cultural and linguistic barriers. Very often, the resemblance of the four strata of the texts can bring about a loss of relevance. So it is safe to say that the above framework can merely act as a strong model for explaining how the implicit information in literary text is translated.

In most cases, the source text may be less relevant to the target text audience than it is to the source text audience. Since relevance is a comparative notion, the relevance of the source language text and that of the target language, of course, would be different in degree. As we have discussed in 4.2, the principle of relevance is the "natural law" of human communication, so the communication will fail when the translated text is less relevant to the target audience. It is imperative, then, that the translator reconsider his strategy.

Gutt's principle of translating the implicit information can shed lights on our discussion. As Gutt (1996) notes, no matter what difficulties the translator has in translating, his central concern would be to construct a successful communication. When in the target text complete interpretive resemblance to the source text cannot be achieved, and the relevance of the source text to the target audience is weakened due to the contextual and linguistic differences, the translator's priority is to translate the texts in consistency with the principle of relevance. The translator would search for adequate relevance in translating to maintain the successful communication. Secondly, he would endeavor to make the textual properties of the target text interpretively resemble those of the source text as much as he could, modifying the resemblance of each set of text structures. That is, in achieving the resemblance of textual properties, any stratum of the literary text which may hinder the principle of relevance should be modified. This is our weak version of the explanatory framework for translating the implicit information in literary text. This framework, of course, acts as an expedient way of translation when there are no other alternatives.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

5.1 A general look at the framework

From the perspective of relevance theory, we build up an explanatory framework for translating the implicit information in literary texts.

In this framework, the notion of contextual effects has been extended, and the process in which the implicit information in literary texts is conveyed and inferred has been explicated. Moreover, the concept of "textual

properties" resumes its status in a relevance theory framework of translation and the idea of embedded structures and that of interpretive resemblance are introduced into the framework; thus, the notion that "translation is clues-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries" gives a more unified description of translation. As frameworks, the two models can bridge the gap which results from the linguistic and contextual differences in the cross-cultural communication.

5.2 The limitations of the framework

Regardless of the linguistic and contextual barriers in communication, in the midst of maintaining optimal relevance, the translator would still find it very difficult to produce a text that interpretively resembles the original *completely* in the context envisaged for the original. This is because the notion "context" has variables in actual communication. Lakoff (1991) claims that there are some key factors that influence our language behaviors, among which are: class, gender, age, ethnic identity, educational background, occupation and religious belief. As we have discussed in 2.1.1, a crucial part of the context is the audience's expectations. Within a culture, the readers, who identify with the various factors, may react to the same text differently, having different expectations. In this sense, the concept of "direct translation" is more or less soft. Since the reader's expectations as a whole can be termed as a *function* (a mathematical term, that is, they are of variable quantity), both relevance theory and the notion of "direct translation" risk formularizing the reader's expectations.

In addition, we may find some limitations of the framework for translating the implicit information in literary texts.

Translation, as Zhang Yafei (1992) points out, is a complex process, and in studying translation we should avoid idealizing, formalizing and formularizing our subjective thinking. In fact, to develop the framework, this article employs some figures and a table, so the framework risks formularizing and simplifying the process of translation. However, as we have claimed in the first section, this article aims at building an explanatory framework for translating the implicit information in the literary text. To make the framework more explanatory and illustrative, the use of figures, tables and formula is inevitable. In addition, the exemplary texts cited in this article are mostly celebrated ones. It restrains the validity testing of the framework. However, the texts of little publicity cited would lead us to a weak conclusion. This is why we are in a dilemma.

5.3 A further discussion

In developing the thesis, in 2.1, we have discovered that relevance theory can be closely related to Krashen's (1985) concept of "comprehensible input." Moreover, both theories give an adequate account of literary translation and translation of other types.

How does a translator manipulate the target text of consistent relevance?

As we have discussed in 2.2, relevance is a graded notion which can be termed optimal relevance, strong relevance, weak relevance and irrelevance. So how does a communicator manipulate the degree of relevance in communication?

To answer the question, we need to introduce Krashen's "Input Hypothesis." The hypothesis claims that "humans acquire language in only one way—by understanding messages or by receiving 'comprehensible input'" (Krashen 1985: 2). "Comprehensible input," Krashen argues, means that in the second language acquisition, the information which a learner is exposed to should be just a bit beyond the learner's competence; that is, the information should be in line with the principle "i+1." "i" signifies the learner's present competence, or the learner's present information available within his/ her competence; "1" means the information the learner has to make an effort to process but still within his reach.

Coincidently, we find that Krashen's theory can also be applied to relevance theory, since relevance is defined in terms of processing effort and contextual effects. The more contextual effects an utterance yields, the more relevant it is. The less processing effort the reader takes, the more relevant the utterance is. Therefore, in order to make his utterance relevant, the communicator would take into account "i"—the addressee's competence and the information available in his cognitive environment. What he needs to do

next is to adjust "1" of the message he intends, making his text comprehensible to his audience. Meanwhile, to achieve optimal relevance, he would try to make his text yield as many contextual effects (i.e. artistic, aesthetic and informative contextual effects) as possible.

In translation, the translator would make an assessment of the target reader's expectation and his competence "i." Of course, he also needs to estimate the source text reader's competence and "1" that the author inputs in his text so that he could make "1" in the target text dynamically equivalent to "1" in the source text. In this way, the translator could maintain the consistent relevance in the target text.

Actually, this is also true with translating the implicit information in literary texts. Before implying some of the information in the target text, the author would anticipate the source reader's competence and his potential context, then he would make sure that the implicit information—"1"—could yield adequate contextual effects. The author, of course, would ensure that the implicit information is not too far beyond his reader's competence or beyond his comprehension. In this way he could enable the target reader to acquire adequate contextual effects only at the cost of some justifiable effort. In translating, bearing "i" and "1" in his mind, the translator could endow the translated text with the amounts of contextual effects which are equivalent to those of the source text. In a word, Krashen's theory could serve as a basis for the translator to make decisions in manipulating the target text of adequate and consistent relevance.

Therefore, considering the correlation between Krashen's "i+1" theory and the relevance theory account of translation, we may find the thesis promises a fresh study on literary translation.

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