

Subjectivity in translation as interlingual re-instantiation

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Existing theories of translation are mostly product-oriented, the process of translation is under-theorized. The concept of equivalence, as idealized quality of a translated text, is re-examined from the perspective of functional linguistics. It is argued that equivalence should not be merely interpreted as similar perlocutionary effects of the source text and the target text. The translated text should be maximally equivalent to the source text in the interpersonal, ideational and textual meanings. A process model is constructed to reveal the process of translation as interlingual re-instantiation and the sorts and sources of information dealt with by the translator in his/her endeavour to achieve maximal equivalence. The subjectivity of the translator in making inferences and in rhetorical manoeuvring is analysed based on data from two English translations of Lao Zi's *Book of Tao and Teh*.

Keywords: translation; re-instantiation; subjectivity

1. Introduction

Regarding theories of translation, Nida (1993, 155) observes, “As yet there is no theory of translation in the technical sense of ‘a coherent set of general propositions used as principles to explain a class of phenomenon’, but there are quite a few ‘theories’ in the broad sense of ‘a set of principles which are helpful in understanding the nature of translation or in establishing criteria for evaluating a translated text’”.

Indeed, translation theorizing lags behind practice. For instance, articles on translation theories constitute only 12% of the total published from 1949 to 1978 in China, while those on translation techniques make up 55.7% (Xu and Mu 2009). The existent theories of translation are more product-oriented than process-oriented. In other words, the theories are expressed in the form of criteria or principles for evaluating the effectiveness of translation. The process of translation is comparatively under-theorized.

The state of the art mentioned above is not surprising if we take into consideration the fact that translation as an interlingual and intercultural activity cannot be comprehended without insights from a number of relevant disciplines, namely linguistics, psychology, sociology, literary criticism, semiotics, cultural anthropology, communication theory, information theory and aesthetics. These disciplines are developing, and there are a flux of theories in each of them. As observed by Nida (1993, 157), translation theories are

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based on insights from these, and “basic points of reference for some primary insights” are from philology, linguistics and semiotics.

Linguistics as a discipline studying the nature of language naturally has more to contribute to theorizing the process of translation. But linguistics itself is diversified. Halliday and Matthiessen (1999) have differentiated two orientations of linguistics: (a) linguistics oriented towards logic and philosophy, with language seen as rules; and (b) linguistics oriented towards rhetoric and ethnography, with language seen as resources. First, the two orientations differ with respect to location of meaning: in (a), meaning is seen as transcendent – something that lies outside the limits of language; in (b), meaning is seen as immanent – something that is constructed in, and so is part of language itself. Secondly, the two differ with respect to the basic unit of meaning: in (a), the basic unit of semantics is proposition; in (b), the basic unit of semantics is text since language is functioning in context. Thirdly, the two differ in the metafunctional scope of their models of semantics: in (a), the metafunctional scope is restricted to the ideational function, with meaning seen as closely related to representation, reference, denotation, extension or “aboutness”; in (b), the metafunctional scope involves the ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function, with meaning seen as closely linked with context and rhetoric.

This paper will, following the rhetorical–ethnographical orientation, examine the concept of equivalence, and then elucidate the process of translation and subjectivity of the translator from a functional linguistic perspective. The specific questions to be explored are

- (1) On what parameters is equivalence idealized or created?
- (2) If translation is envisaged as interlingual re-instantiation, what kinds of information are processed by the translator in order to create maximal equivalence?
- (3) What phases of translation as interlingual re-instantiation particularly hinge on subjectivity of the translator?

2. Equivalence as ideal quality of translation

As pointed out in the introduction, existent translation theories are more product-oriented, expressed in terms of criteria and principles. In China, the most influential theory of translation was put forward by Yan (1896) in the preface to the Chinese translation of *Evolution and Ethics* by T. H. Huxley. Yan’s three principles, namely *faithfulness*, *smoothness* and *elegance*, have been extensively discussed as a traditional theory of translation. His contemporary Ma Jian Zhong also explored qualities of an ideal translation in his proposal to establish the institute of translation (Ma 1894). Addressing how to overcome the difficulty of translation, he first emphasizes the preparation, including the translator’s command of the two languages and his/her thorough understanding of the source text (ST). Then he explicitly states what an ideal translation should be like:

The translated text should be exactly equivalent to the original text without anything added or lost, so that the readers of the translated text can be benefited as if reading the original. That is true and ideal translation. (译成之文适如其所译而止，而曾无豪发出入其间，夫而后能使阅者所得之益与观原文无异，是则为善译也。) (Ma 1894, 2)

In the above citation, we find the concept of equivalence expressed clearly although no Chinese term is used that corresponds to “equivalence” at the time. “Equivalence” as a theory of translation is put forward by Nida (1993, 116):

The adequacy of translation has traditionally been judged on the basis of the correspondence in lexicon and grammar between the source and target language. The correspondence has frequently been stated in terms of “equivalence”, even though the term equivalence is often not used. There is, however, a serious problem involved in discussing the adequacy of a translated text primarily in terms of lexical and grammatical features, or even in terms of discourse structures. Translating means communicating, and this process depends on what is received by persons hearing or reading a translation. [...] What is important is the extent to which receptors correctly understand and appreciate the translated text. Accordingly, it is essential that functional¹ equivalence be stated primarily in terms of a comparison of the way in which the original receptors understood and appreciated the text and the way in which receptors of the translated text understand and appreciate the translated text.

From these remarks, we can see that (1) Nida’s theory of translation is more product-oriented; (2) Nida’s interpretation of equivalence is restricted to perlocutionary effects on the part of the readers,² while the term can be understood in many other senses, that is, equivalence on different dimensions of language and text; and (3) equivalence is a gradient concept.

These points have been addressed by other translation theorists. Regarding equivalent effect of translation, Venuti (2009, 159) writes:

[...]the notion of an equivalent effect – that a translation can produce for its readers an effect that is similar to or the same as the effect produced by the foreign text for the foreign language reader – describes an impossibility: it ignores the manifold loss of contexts in any translation.

Hickey (1998) reminds us that a translator is not concerned with real effects produced on readers, only with potential effects. To validate his point, he cites the opinion of Gu (1993) that the agent of perlocutionary effects is after all the hearer, and that different individuals may respond differently in different contexts to the same locutionary act as trigger. Hickey (1998, 219) prefers the term “perlocutionary analogy”.

A translator [...] must examine all potential perlocutions (the effects and responses reasonably predictable – on the basis of the common trigger or cause – in or on the mind, imagination, feelings or actions of a reader of the TT as a check to ensure that perlocutionary equivalence – “perlocutionary analogy” might be a more accurate term – has been achieved. [...]Any TT, must, in turn, be capable of producing “analogous” perlocutionary effects on its readers. The use of the adjective “analogous” rather than “similar”, allows for the fact that, just as not all ST readers or their contexts are the same, so also the TT readers may be quite different, and situated in different contexts, from any of the ST readers.

Halliday (2009, 17) discusses six dimensions of equivalence, namely metafunction, stratification, instantiation, rank, delicacy and axis. He points out that “all translators know from their own experience that there are kinds of equivalence whose demands very often conflict”. Steiner (2001, 186) views translation as “preservation – or maximally close preservation – of experiential, logical, interpersonal and textual meanings in the relationship of translation between texts, or in the process of translation by the translator”.

Matthiessen (2001, 78) writes, “I shall assume that translation equivalence and translation shift are two opposite poles on a cline of difference between languages – from maximal congruence to maximal incongruence”. He proposes the principle of contextualization, “the wider the environment of translation, the higher the degree of translation equivalence; and the narrower the environment, the higher the degree of translation shift”.

In summary, the concept of equivalence has been long and widely accepted as ideal quality of translation. Nevertheless, equivalence can be interpreted in different senses because there are many parameters of equivalence. In addition, equivalence is a gradient concept. The degree of equivalence is closely related to context. It is the consensus of functional linguists that the translator endeavours to achieve maximal equivalence between the ST and the target text (TT) in ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings.

Although equivalence is seen as an ideal quality of the translated text, the attainment of that quality hinges on understanding of the translation process, the reading of ST and the reconstruction of meaning in TT. Since translation is intercultural communication through language and text, it is essential that the translator understands the relation between language and text, the relation between language and cultural context, and the relation between text and situational context. These relations have been recently elucidated by systemic functional linguists (SFL), a point to which we turn in the following section.

3. Translation as interlingual re-instantiation

It is pointed out in the introduction that the translation process is under-theorized, and in [Section 2](#) that equivalence as an ideal quality of a translated text still needs clarifying. Recent developments in SFL have led to new insights into linguistic communication and given novel interpretation of the process of translation. In this section, a brief review will be made of the three-dimensional model of linguistic communication and the view of translation as re-instantiation will be discussed, a process model of translation as re-instantiation will be then proposed to account for the sorts and sources of information processed by the translator in order to achieve maximal equivalence.

3.1 Three dimensions of linguistic communication

In Halliday and Matthiessen (1999, 2009) and Martin (2012), a model of language as social semiotic can be seen. They model language and communication as composed of three complementary dimensions: *realization*, *instantiation* and *individuation*.

SFL sees language as a multistratum system, a resource for making meaning. The speaker's/writer's communicative purpose in context is realized by discourse semantics, which is realized by lexicogrammar, which is, in turn, realized by phonology/graphology. Realization is a scale of abstraction.

In SFL, instantiation is a term used to refer to the cline relating language as a system and text as an instance of language use. Language as a system evolves in its context of culture, while a text is generated in a context of situation. A type of situations produce a certain kind of text named genre. Language as a system provides resources for the generation of a text. A text is constructed with system resources deployed, and in the meantime it contributes to the development of the system. The relation between language, text and context is shown in [Figure 1](#).

Individuation specializes meaning potential according to users rather than uses of language. Martin (2012) draws from Bernstein's terms to iterate this dimension of linguistic communication. A person's meaning potential is named *repertoire*, and the meaning potential of the community is termed *reservoir*. Martin holds that Bernstein's interpretation involves both recognition rules and realization rules. The former allows speakers "to identify the specificity or similarity of contexts and thus orient to what is

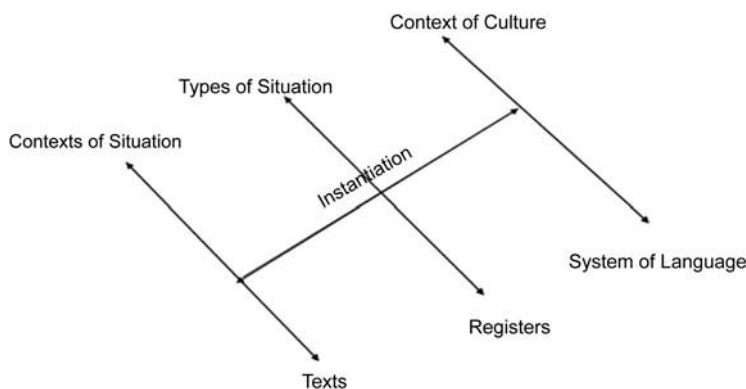


Figure 1. A model of instantiation (adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen 2009).

expected or legitimate in that context; realization rules enable speakers to produce culturally specific texts” (Martin 2012, 31).

The three dimensions represent simultaneous commitment of language in use. Realization accounts for a scale of abstraction of meaning potential as resource. Instantiation accounts for specialization of meaning potential in context. Individuation accounts for specialization of meaning potential according to users. This new model of SFL has important implications for understanding the process of translation.

3.2 Translation as interlingual re-instantiation

Based on the three-dimensional model of linguistic communication established by SFL scholars, de Souza (2010) proposes a systemic functional model of translation in which translation is viewed as interlingual re-instantiation. “Re-instantiation is the process by which one instance re-constructs the meaning potential of a given source instance” (109). From this functional perspective, the following new insights into the translation process can be drawn by this author.

Firstly, seeing translation as interlingual re-instantiation means that TT is constructed out of the meaning potential of the target language system in accordance with the discourse meaning of ST. Therefore, the translator’s recreation is conditioned by the target language system and the discourse meaning of the ST.

Secondly, as a text is generated in a situational context, translation as re-instantiation necessarily requires re-contextualization of the TT. In other words, the translator must first make sure that TT corresponds to ST in register/genre.

Thirdly, as a text is an instance of the language system in use, translation as re-instantiation means that the translator must consider the differences between the two systems and the two contexts of culture in order to achieve maximal equivalence.

Fourthly, as linguistic communication involves three simultaneous dimensions, re-instantiation naturally involves realization and individuation in the process of constructing TT. The translator’s repertoire of both languages and cultures is the primary condition of an ideal translated text.

Fifthly, the translator, both as a reader of ST and the writer of TT, must understand the author through correct and critical reading of ST and anticipate possible responses of the

intended TT readers. Making inferences and reconstructing meaning are therefore the most essential phases of translation.

3.3 A process model of translation as re-instantiation

Based on the above insights, a process model of translation as re-instantiation (Figure 2) is constructed to account for the sources and sorts of information processed by the translator in order to achieve maximal equivalence, which is understood as analogous intertextual relation between ST and TT. As SFL scholars hold that ST and TT should be equivalent in interpersonal, ideational and textual meanings, in the figure the analogous intertextual relation between ST and TT is symbolized by three horizontal dotted lines.

As indicated in Figure 2, the sorts of information dealt with by the translator can be put into two categories, namely encoded information (indicated by solid lines) and subliminal information (by dotted lines). Encoded information is provided by ST as discourse meaning. It must be processed by the translator through careful readings and then conveyed in another language to the readers of TT. The translator, both as a reader of ST and the writer of TT, serves as a mediator between the author of ST and the readers of TT.

Subliminal information includes knowledge of the source language system and its context of culture, knowledge of the target language system and its context of culture, the context of situation in which ST is produced, the context of situation in which the TT is written, information about the community of readers of ST, and anticipation of the community of readers of TT. Although ST and TT are the start and the end of the

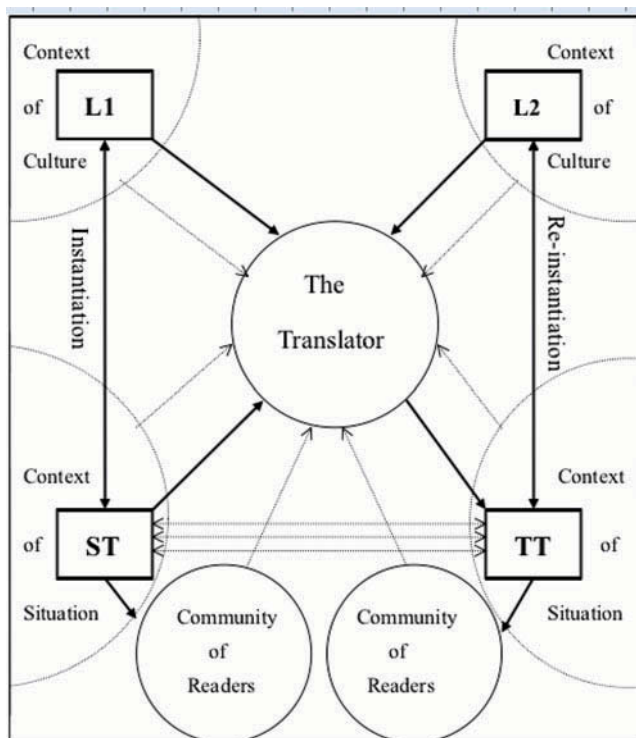


Figure 2. A process model of translation as re-instantiation.

translation process, all the subliminal messages contribute to the success of the task of translation. As elucidated in [Section 3.1](#), a text as an instance of the language in use is generated in a situational context to fulfil the purpose of communication. It is created with resources of the system and the system evolves in its context of culture. Therefore, the translator must take into consideration relevant subliminal information in reading and creating although he/she works on the two texts. The model reflects the complexity of the process of translation as interlingual re-instantiation. The complex process of interlingual re-instantiation requires expertise and competency of the translator, which is exemplified in the following section.

4. Subjectivity in the process of translation as re-instantiation

Based on the above delineation of the process of translation as re-instantiation, this section discusses subjectivity of the translator. As indicated in [Figure 2](#), in reading ST and writing TT, the translator needs to think independently and creatively. Pragmatics has shown that understanding an utterance often requires inference on the part of the hearer (Leech 1983) because what is meant is not always what is said. Cognitive linguistics has revealed that subjective attention is necessarily involved in constructing a sentence. “The lamp is over the table” and “The table is below the lamp” describe the same scene, but which of them is actually uttered depends on the speaker’s attention of what is given information (Langacker 1987). The instantiation model put forward by Halliday and Matthiessen (2009) integrates language, text and context in linguistic communication. Language as a semiotic system is conventional in nature, but a text as language in use is constructed by the writer to fulfil his/her purpose in a situational context. It naturally contains the writer’s subjective consciousness. In this connection, the author holds that both conventionality and subjectivity are inherent in linguistic communication. The higher the rank scale of language in use, the more subjective; the lower the rank scale, the more conventional. If a text and a morpheme are taken for the two ends of the cline of rank scale, the degree of subjectivity in a text is definitely higher than that in other rank scales. As an ST contains subjective consciousness on the part of the writer, the task of the translator is first and foremost to work out the writer’s intention.

In the process of translation, making inferences in understanding ST and reconstructing meaning in writing TT clearly require the translator’s independent and creative thinking. Here is an advertisement posted near our campus, which may illustrate the point:

不小心，有了。
(bu xiaoxin, you le)
 (“not” “take care” “have got” “particle”)
到协和，没了。
(dao Xiehe, mei le)
 (“go to” “Xiehe” “not have” “particle”)

If one is asked to put it into English, he/she must first figure out what is got, who has got it, then get to know who are the intended receptors of the ad. The next step is to reconstruct the discourse meaning in English, striving to produce a maximally equivalent English text. One possible translation is this:

Carelessly you have got a problem, lady?
Easily it will be resolved here in Xiehe (Hospital).

As getting pregnant and undergoing abortion are highly private, in the original text these are implicitly expressed. So it is absolutely necessary for the translator to infer correctly the implicit meaning before putting it into English. In the English text, the word “lady” is added so as to explicate the receptors and to specify the meaning of *problem*. The two texts correspond in interpersonal, ideational, and textual meaning and context of situation. The idea of getting pregnant unintentionally is expressed implicitly in English through “carelessly”, “problem” and “lady”. This example illustrates the necessity of the translator’s subjectivity, particularly making inference and reconstructing meaning in the process of re-instantiation.

Lack of subjective consciousness in making inference and reconstructing meaning leads to translation shift. Here is a sentence from a book entitled *Why Photography Matters as Art as Ever Before*:

What sets diCorcia’s street photographs apart from earlier work in that tradition is the dramatic to-be-seenness.

The writer, a reviewer of photography, coined the word *to-be-seenness* to highly praise the special feature of the works of the photographer diCorcia. A translation student translated the word into 待看到性, which is coined by him as an equivalent. But the coined Chinese term does not make sense. The translation shift is due to the inability to recreate meaning in the TT. The translator fails to re-contextualize the original meaning of highly positive evaluation of the photographer’s style. Actually the keyword *to-be-seenness* can be translated into a Chinese idiom 耐人寻味。

These two examples suffice to illustrate the necessity of the translator’s subjectivity, particularly making inference and reconstructing meaning in the process of re-instantiation. In the rest of this section, data drawn from two English translated texts of Lao Zi’s *Book of Tao and Teh* will be discussed to further reveal the subjectivity of the translator.

4.1 Making inferences in comprehending ST

According to Guo and Wang (2002), *The Book of Tao and Teh* was written by Lao Zi during the Warring States period. This world classic is regarded as one of the most important works of Taoism and one of the most influential works of Chinese philosophy. It consists of 81 chapters, covering a wide range of subjects, such as philosophy, cosmology, politics, ethics and strategies. It has been translated into 30 languages, and there are over 100 versions of the English translation (Xin and Gao 2008). In this paper, the author compares the English translation by Arthur Waley (henceforward as TT1) and the one by Gu Zhengkun (henceforward as TT2). Through careful reading of the two translated texts, the author selects some strikingly different sections from the two TT and then traces the causes. As the ST was written two millennia ago, any translator will have to make inferences now and then to comprehend the obscure portions. Different inferences definitely lead to different translations and even to shifts from the ST. Consider the following examples:

Example 1

ST: 天地不仁，以万物为刍狗；圣人不仁，以百姓为刍狗。

TT1: Heaven and earth are ruthless;

To them the ten thousand things are but as straw dogs.

The Sage is too ruthless;

To him the people are but as straw dogs. (Lao 1999, 11)

TT2: Heaven and earth are not merciful,
 They treat all things as straw dogs.
 The sage is not merciful,
 He treats the people as straw dogs. (Lao 2008, 71)

This clause complex in the ST is in a parallel structure, contrasting the relation between heaven and earth on one side, and things in the universe on the other, and that between the sage and the people. Although no conjunctions are used in it, it actually contains the conditional meaning. “If heaven and earth are not merciful. . . .” and “if the sage is not merciful”. This is retained in TT2, but disappears in TT1. The TT1 translation is simply assertive, particularly the second line “The sage is too ruthless”. Reading the whole text one can see that Lao Zi holds that heaven and earth benefit all things and the sage should be merciful to people. Here we find TT1 non-equivalent in meaning to the original because the hypotactic semantic relation is turned into a paratactic relation. The shift is probably due to incorrect inference.

Example 2

ST: 大道泛兮，其可左右。
 TT1: Great Tao is like a boat that drifts;
 It can go this way; it can go that. (Lao 1999, 71)
 TT2: The great Tao is felt everywhere
 Extending in all directions. (Lao 2008, 161)

This remark of the original text obviously sates the omnipresence of Tao rather than the movement of Tao. TT2 conveys the idea of existence, while TT1 is a description of movement, expressed by a simile “like a boat that drifts”. The idea of drift is obviously a shift from the original meaning that Tao exists everywhere.

Example 3

ST: 知不知，尚矣；不知知，病也。圣人不病，以其病病，夫惟病病是以不病。
 TT1: To know when one does not know is best.
 To think one knows when one does not know is a dire disease.
 Only he who recognizes this disease as a disease
 Can cure himself of the disease.
 The Sage’s way of curing disease
 Also consists in making people recognize their diseases as diseases
 And thus ceasing to be diseased. (Lao 1999, 151)
 TT2: Knowing one’s ignorance of certain knowledge is the best attitude;
 Not knowing certain knowledge yet pretending to know is a bad attitude.
 The sage is of no shortcoming,
 Because he considers shortcoming as shortcoming.
 He considers shortcoming as shortcoming,
 Thus he has no shortcoming. (Lao 2008, 279)

This example is from Chapter 71 of the ST. The topic is attitude to knowing, not touching upon treatment of disease. The character *bing* (病) is used in a metaphorical sense, not referring to physical problem. TT2 has unpacked the metaphor with “attitude” and “shortcoming”, while TT1 has not. In addition, TT1 has added “curing diseases”, which is not found in the original. Thus, we find in TT1 a slight translation shift.

Example 4

ST: 民不畏威，则大威至！

TT1: Never mind if the people are not intimidated by your authority.
A mightier Authority will deal with them in the end. (Lao 1999, 153)

TT2: When people are not afraid of the threatening might of the authority,
The great tumult will ensue. (Lao 2008, 281)

The two clauses in this example are in “if-then” semantic relation marked by “ze”(则). TT2 is close in meaning to the original, TT1 is opposite to it, because a doctrine of Taoism is acting without interfering people.

Example 5

ST: 天之道，利而不害。圣人之道，为而不争。

TT1: Heaven’s way is to sharpen without cutting,
And the Sage’s way is to act without striving. (Lao 1999, 171)

TT2: The Tao of heaven benefits rather than harms all things;
The Tao of the sage is to give rather than rob the people.

The ST is full of Lao Zi’s speculations on heaven, earth and man. In this part of the text, he points out the feature of the Tao of heaven and that of the sage, both of which are beneficial. The character *li* (利) means to benefit, not to sharpen in this context. TT2 truthfully translates the proposition, but TT1 deviates from the feature of Tao of heaven as described in the original.

In summary, these examples show that subjectivity on the part of the translator plays an important role in the process of interlingual re-instantiation since the meaning of the ST is not always transparent. In translating obscure lines of the ST, it is the ability to make right inferences that makes a difference in achieving maximal equivalence. These examples also show that even expert translators may make quite different inferences in understanding obscure portions of the ST. Comparatively, the translator who reads the ST in his native language has more advantages in disentangling difficulties than the one who does it in a second language. However, in reconstructing meaning, the reverse may be the case, which will be illustrated in the following section.

4.2 Rhetorical manoeuvring in constructing TT: Tao/Way as a case

As discussed in Section 3.1, instantiation is a simultaneous process with realization and individuation. In re-instantiation, the translator’s repertoire of the source language and that of the target language preconditions the quality of the TT. In addition, as illustrated in Figure 2, the translator has to deal with subliminal information, particularly anticipation of the receptors of the TT. The translator adopts rhetorical strategies in constructing TT in order to achieve maximal perlocutionary analogy (Hickey 1998). Among other strategies, foreignization and domestication are at his disposal. As differentiated by Venuti (1995), foreignization means breaking target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original, while domestication describes the translation strategy of adapting to minimize the strangeness of ST. In this section, we compare the translation of 道 in the two TT to reveal the subjectivity of the translator.

In TT1, *Way* is used 20 times, and *Tao* 36 times, to translate 道. From Chapter 1 to Chapter 24, *Way* is used consistently, and from Chapter 25, *Way* and *Tao* are used interchangeably. In Chapter 25, a footnote is given, “Henceforward I shall use the

Chinese word *Tao* instead of the Way; to do so avoids many inconveniences” (53). But readers find that *Way* is still used in translating 道 in a more specific sense, such as “the Way of heaven”, “the Way of earth”, “the Way of man”, “the Way of the Sage”, while *Tao* is used to translate 道 in its general sense. In TT1, 206 footnotes are given to clarify or validate choices of expression.

In TT2, *Tao* is used consistently throughout the text (85 times, including 6 times in brackets). In the introduction to the TT, the translator points out that Taoism is systematic and consistent. “Philosophy is the chief concern of Lao Zi’s thought with Tao as its core. Centring around that core, Taosim is systematically constructed with four integral parts: (1) Tao as an ontological being; (2) Tao as a dialectic law; (3) Tao as an epistemological tool; (4) Tao as a practical guide to worldly affairs” (26).

Due to its polysemousness and textual coherence, it is extremely difficult to translate the word 道. In the ST, there are descriptions of the features of 道, but there is no definition of it.³ The ST expounds what Tao does without telling what Tao is. The word has long been an element of the Chinese lexical system, and the concept of Tao is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. But in the English language there is no equivalent. How can the meaning of it be conveyed to the TT readers? In the two TT, three ways are deployed – translation, transliteration and the combination of them. Transliteration is selected, following the principle of foreignization, to guarantee truthfulness. Translation is selected, following the principle of domestication, to consider the acceptance of the readers. In TT2, the translator attaches more importance to consistency and truthfulness. In TT1, the translator considers more the acceptance of the concept by the readers. He first uses *Way* in Chapters 1–24, and then *Tao* and *Way* in the rest of the text. In TT1, domestication is first preferred to reduce the strangeness of the concept, then foreignization is deliberately followed to introduce the foreign concept into the community of TT readers.

The choice of Way or Tao in TT1 and TT2 illustrates the translator’s consciousness of recontextualization of the text. TT1 was written in the 1930s when the concept of Tao was outlandish to the readers in the United Kingdom. Thus, the translator first chose Way and then replaced it with Tao. TT2 was published in 2009 when Tao was no longer a strange concept to the readers of the English-speaking world. Now *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* contains Tao as an entry. This is undoubtedly the contribution of translation following the principle of foreignization.

In summary, Section 4 has analysed subjectivity of translation as re-instantiation based on the data from two versions of English translation of Lao Zi’s *Book of Tao and Teh*. The examples show that making inferences is an indispensable step of translation, and that even expert translators make different inferences in understanding obscure portions of the ST, which naturally results in disparities of translation or even shifts from the ST. In addition to making inferences, selecting rhetorical strategies is also a necessary subjective conscious activity. The translation of 道 in the two TT may suffice to illustrate the point. Gu Zhengkun, a native speaker of Chinese, adopts the principle of foreignization, while Arthur Waley, a renowned British Sinologist, first uses domestication and then switches to foreignization in order to reduce the strangeness of the concept and in the meantime to introduce the novel concept into the community of TT readers. In comprehending the ST and writing the TT, the translator has to deal with information of many sorts and sources. Translation as re-instantiation requires the translator’s repertoire of the two languages, his knowledge of the two cultures, as well as his competency in manipulating information of multiple sources in the process of interlingual re-instantiation.

5. Conclusion

The paper starts with the observation that the process of translation is under-theorized compared with the product of translation. The concept of equivalence, which is widely accepted as the core of criteria of translation, is then examined. Recent development of SFL provides new insights into the concept of equivalence. The interpretation of equivalence as similar perlocutionary effects of ST and TT seems to be waning and the idea of equivalence in terms of interpersonal meaning, ideational meaning and textual meaning is waxing. Based on this assumption, the nature of translation is discussed from the perspective of SFL, and a process model of translation as interlingual re-instantiation is proposed to reveal the kinks of information processed by the translator. The translator has to work out the discourse meaning of ST and then to reconstruct meaning in TT. Doing both of these is a subjective conscious process. The subjectivity of the translator, specifically making inferences and selecting rhetorical strategies, is discussed with data from two versions of English translation of Lao Zi's *Book of Tao and Teh* by a Chinese and a British expert translator, respectively.

The paper is written out of an attempt to deepen understanding of the process of translation and the competency of the translator. Given the situation of translator preparation programmes in China and the rest of the world, it is an urgent task to do a better job in translation theorizing. More than 150 universities in China are running Masters of Translation and Interpretation (MTI) programmes. It is definitely inadequate to teach the students what an ideal translated text is like without showing them how the product is produced, that is, what the complex process involves and how the translator copes with the complexity. The author's experience in working with MTI students reinforces his conviction of the value of translation theorizing. Admittedly, translation theorizing can be undertaken in relevant disciplines other than linguistics and other schools of linguistics. It is a daunting but rewarding task to gain more new insights into the process of translation that contribute to the preparation of competent translators in the context of globalization.

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Notes

1. As different disciplines have different theories of language functions, the term functional equivalence can be interpreted in different ways. This paper bases its interpretation on the theory of metafunctions established by M. A. K. Halliday.
2. The author holds that the translated text should be first equivalent to the source text in illocutionary force. This view is presented in Yang (1995).
3. In ancient Chinese classics, key concepts, such as Tao and Ren, are not defined, they are expected to be understood through speculation and enlightenment.

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