Use of Translation in Cross-linguistic Study of Language and Thinking

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Language and Thought

- How humans use language to create understanding.
- Understand one thing in terms of another.
- 吕老师的课程让我爱上 (love-up/on) 了中文。
- INCEPTION >> SPACE
- 关上门 (close-up/on-door)、闭上嘴 (shut-up/on-mouth)
- *Use up, eat up, shut up*, etc.

Meaning and understanding

- Various ways of understanding.

- Meaning of the picture resides in the way we understand it.

- Meaning of a situation resides in the way we verbalize it.

Viewpoint and Construal

- *Wei-lun went to Bratislava to give a talk.*
- *Wei-lun came to Bratislava to give a talk.*

- *How she [Alice] longed to get out of that dark hall!*
- *How she [Alice] longed to get out of this dark hall!*

- Typical PoV markers:
  - Deictic verbs, demonstratives...

- Different linguistic manifestations, different construals.

What's New?

- Cognitive Linguistics has taken advantage of various research methods.
  - Intuition-based.
  - Mono-lingual corpora.
  - Experimental (fMRI, EEG, eye-tracking).

- No systematic use of parallel texts or translation corpora yet.
  - Rojo and Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2013; Muskat-Tabakowska 2014; Slobin 1996, 2003; Tabakowska 1993; Wu 2004.

What Are Parallel Texts?

- Parallel texts as a collection of texts put alongside with their translations.

- Benefit: Verbalization of highly similar (if not identical) usage events.

- Use of world masterpieces.
  - Translations in various languages
  - More than one version in a given language
  - Inter- and intra-language variation

Methodological Concern

- What can translated texts reveal that other methods cannot?

COME in Chinese: *Lai*

qian-bian	huang-he	pai	zaizhong-kache	de	jiashi-yuan	cong
front-side	yellow-river	brand	big-rig-truck	DE	drive-man	from
jiashi-shi		li	tiao-xia-lai,	zhan	zai	lu-bian,
drive-room		in	jump-down-come	stand	LOC	road-side
naonu	de	kan-zhe	ta...			
angry	DE	look-IMP	her			

前边黄河牌载重卡车的驾驶员从驾驶室里跳下来，站在路边恼怒的看著她...

(Lit.) "The driver of the Yellow River big-rig in front of them came down by means of jumping and stared daggers at her from the roadside."

(Published Translation) "The driver of the Yellow River big-rig in front of them jumped out of his cab and stared daggers at her from the roadside."

Lai 'Come' vs. *Qu* 'Go'

| qian-bian	huang-he	pai	zaizhong-kache		de	jiashi-yuan	cong
front-side	yellow-river	brand	big-rig-truck		DE	drive-man	from
jiashi-shi		li	tiao-xia-qu,		zhan	zai	lu-bian,
drive-room		in	jump-down-go		stand	LOC	road-side
naonu	de	kan-zhe	ta...				
angry	DE	look-IMP	her				

前边黄河牌载重卡车的驾驶员从驾驶室里跳下去，站在路边恼怒的看著她…

(Lit.) "The driver of the Yellow River big-rig in front of them went down by means of jumping from his cab and stared daggers at her from the roadside." (constructed)

Specific Research Questions

- How is a Chinese passage with a typical deixis, such as *lai* 'come', translated into English?

- Is there any stylistic difference between the original and the translation, in terms of PoV management?

- What kind of cognitive coordination does this deixis and its translated counterpart involve?

Material Choice

- *酒國/The Republic of Wine* (Mo Yan).

- Translation by Howard Goldblatt.

- Only Chapter 1.
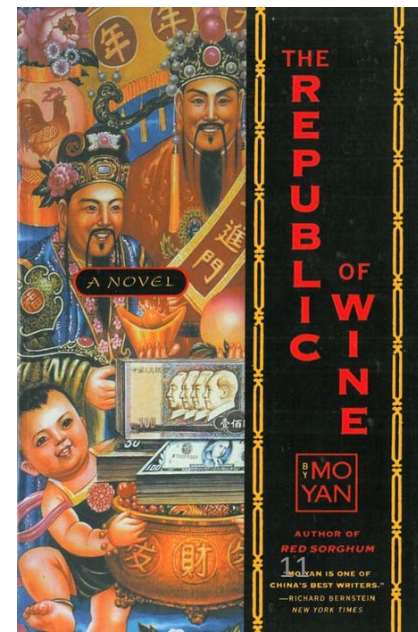
Frequency of COME in Chinese

- 82 tokens of *lai* 'come' identified in the Chinese original:
  - 40 tokens in deictic expressions

  - 42 tokens of *lai* in idiomatic expressions

Frequency of COME in English?

- COME in the English translation (incl. *come(s), came, coming*):

  16 (!) tokens identified

  – 10 tokens in deictic expressions

  – 6 in idiomatic expressions (*came up with the idea, he must come down to earth*, etc.)

Distribution of *Lai*

- In Chinese, *lai* occurs predominantly as a resultative suffix in resultative constructions (cx).

- They account for 75% (30/40) in the deictic category.

- Constructional profile: *lai* as a viewpoint operator is attracted much more (3x more often) to the resultative cx than as a main verb.

- The distribution and frequency of translation equivalents in both lg *in the same usage event*.

Resultative Constructions in Chinese

- Cx Schema: V(-DIRectional)(-DEIctic)
- V-DIR-DEI:

qian-bian	huang-he	pai	zaizhong-kache	de	jiashi-yuan	cong
front-side	yellow-river	brand	big-rig-truck	DE	drive-man	from
jiashi-shi		li	tiao-xia-lai…			
drive-room		in	jump-down-come			
(Lit.) "The driver of the Yellow River big-rig in front of them came down from his cab by means of jumping…" (PT) "The driver of the Yellow River big-rig in front of them jumped out of his cab…"						

Instance of V-DEI

wo	shi	shi	li	pai-lai	de	xin
I	am	city	in	send-come	DE	new
kuang-zhang						
mine-head						
我是市里派来的新矿长。 (Lit.) "I am the new Mine Director, from the city (they) sent (me) and (I) came." (PT) "I'm the new Mine Director, sent here by municipal authorities."						

Use of *Come* as a Dispreferred Option

qian-bian	huang-he	pai	zaizhong-kache	De	jiashi-yuan	cong
front-side	yellow-river	brand	big-rig-truck	DE	drive-man	from
jiashi-shi		li	tiao-xia-lai,	zhan	zai	lu-bian,
drive-room		in	jump-down-come	stand	LOC	road-side
naonu	de	kan-zhe	ta,	(zui	li	dunang-zhe
angry	DE	look-IMP	her	mouth	in	murmur-IMP
"an	ni-ma	ge	qiu!")			
press	you-mother	CL	ball			
(Lit.) "The driver of the Yellow River big-rig in front of them came down by means of jumping and stared daggers at her from the roadside, (murmuring "Stop pressing the fucking horn!")" (PT) "The driver of the Yellow River big-rig in front of them jumped out of his cab and stared daggers at her from the roadside."						

Translator's improvisation

- An inserted passage: *Ding Gou'er could feel the anger radiating from the man's eyes through the gleaming surface of his mirror-lens sunglasses.*

- Use of cog verb as an "approximation" of the viewpointing effect.

- A difference in style and in construal remains.

The Importance of Being… Constructionist

- Disproportion accounted for by occurrences of a PoV marker in particular cxs.

- Influence of grammar on stylistics.

- And on constructional means to coordinate readers' cognitive states.

- Grammar: Speaker's tendency to associate certain words with given constructions.

PoV Markers That Get Across?

- Deictic COME: 10 (Eng), 40 (Chi)

- It seems that only 10 tokens of deictic COME have "survived" the translation.

- Only 5 tokens, out of 10, pair up with *lai* in the original.

- The rest, 50%(!), is the translator's own invention.

Radical Invention: Opposite PoV

qing	ni-men	yansu-dian!		xianren	jiu-guo	shi	wei
please	you-PL	serious-DIM		current	wine-country	city	committee
xuanchuan	bu	fu-bu-zhang		Jin Gangzuan		shi	ci
promote	deputy	vice-deputy-head		Jin Gangzuan		BE	this
an	de	zhongyao	xianyiren,	ta	shi	cong	gui
case	DE	important	suspect	he	BE	from	you-HON
kuang	chu-qu	de.					
mine	out-go	DE					

请你们严肃点！现任酒国市委宣传部副部长金刚钻是此案的重要嫌疑人，他是从贵矿出去的。

(PT) "I must ask you to take this seriously. Liquorland's Deputy Head of Propaganda, Diamond Jin, who is a prime suspect, comes from your esteemed mine."

From Concept to Meaning and Form

- In the Chinese original, only the SOURCE (*cong* 'from') and PATH (*chu-qu* 'out-go') of the motion are linguistically elaborated.

- Direction: away from the speaker

- *Go (out) from* would make THE ideal translation.

Cx Profile in the Way

- Constructional profile: 70% (14/20) in *go from* involves a very specific pattern of *go from* X *to* Y (cf. *come from*: 0%)

- *Go from X* is attracted much more towards a construction with a GOAL specified than without.

- As a result *go from X* does not sound natural enough in that context (where the GOAL is not specified in the ST).

- The entrenchment of the full pattern *go from X to Y* makes the reduced *go from X* a bad choice (though not impossible).

Summary

- Differences and mismatches abound in the translated texts.

- Each lg has its own unique way of utilizing deictic elements as a PoV operator in narratives.

- Thus its distinct pattern of cognitive coordination and literary stylistics.

- Should be seen as the translator's spontaneous response to the differences between the two systems.

- Makes sense only when we view grammar as a system of cog routines with varying degrees of entrenchment.

What Translated Texts Have Revealed

- Difference in frequency and distribution of translation equivalents *in the same usage event.*

- Translator's improvisation and a consequent difference in construal.

- The fact that the same usage event *needs to be* presented from opposite viewpoints in different languages.

Take-home Messages

- Use of translations as a promising methodology in CLR.

- Translation as a window to the interaction of grammar, stylistics and thinking.

- The study of stylistics and translation cannot do without (constructional) grammar.

Future Works

- Including more translations FROM modern Chinese:
- Qian Zhongshu
- Lu Xun
- Eileen Chang
- Lin Yutang
- Bai Xianyong

- Translations of world masterpieces INTO modern Chinese

Cognitive Linguistics in FF MU

- Teachers:
  - Nadia Kudrnacova (EN)
  - Wei-lun Lu (CH)
  - Jiri Matela (JP)
- Doctoral students:
  - Jan Hartman (EN)
  - Magdalena Knotkova (EN)
  - Ivana Kralikova (EN)

- Cog Ling in Brno (CLiB)
- Keynote: Zoltan K (2015), Laura Janda (2016)

THANK YOU!

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