

# The Role of Presupposition in Communicative Translation

劉文媛、陳淑明

E-mail: 344750@mail.dyu.edu.tw

## ABSTRACT

This study employs the communicative functional theory to explore the relationship between translation and presupposition. The linguistic term, presupposition, is regarded as a pragmatic inference, i.e. involving in logic analysis of information from a pragmatic viewpoint. The usage of presupposition in translation is to clarify the meaning of a linguistic expression embedded by contextual and cultural factors. Fawcett (1997, p. 124) points out that contextual and cultural presupposition are of most interest to translators. Hence, in this study the contextual and cultural presupposition in the process of translation are going to be firstly examined. Nord (1997, p. 59) indicates that every translation task should be accompanied by a (translation) brief that defines the conditions under which the target text should carry out its particular function. Therefore, in this study the role of presupposition in the translation brief will be secondly studied. The study firstly analyzes the issue regarding how a translator presupposes the denotative and connotative meanings of lexical items and the cohesive elements in a source context to produce properly translated result. Secondly, it explores the reason why the trainee students make incorrect cultural presuppositions. Realizing that a translator should presuppose target text (TT) readers' cultural background knowledge if he or she wants to achieve a successfully communicative purpose, the study thus discusses the following two aspects with regard to cultural presupposition in translation: (1) connotative meanings related to cultures, (2) decision making in the cultural gaps between source text (ST) and TT. Finally, this study evaluates the divergence of readers, place, motive and function in a brief between ST and TT. The result of this study shows that contextual and cultural presuppositions in ST influence and determine the meaning of a linguistic expression in TT. It further demonstrates that the significance of translation brief before a translation case should be considered. A translator's presupposition on context and culture thus plays an important role in achieving a communicative purpose in translation.

Keywords : contextual presupposition、cultural presupposition、translation brief、translation process

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents	COVER PAGE	ENGLISH SIGNATURE PAGE	SIGNATURE PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	iv	CHINESE ABSTRACT.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii	TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii	LIST OF TABLES.....	xiii
ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGIES.....	xiv	Chapter I. Introduction	
Motivation.....	1	1.1 Background and	
1.2 Methodology of the Study.....	4	1.3 Purposes and Research	
Questions.....	4	1.4 Organization of the Study.....	6
Chapter II. Theoretical Background		2.1	
The Introduction of Communicative Functional Theories.....	8	2.2 Reiss's (1977/89) Text Type Theory.....	11
2.3 Holz-Manttari's (1984) Translational Action Theory.....	16	2.4 Reiss and Vermeer's (1984) Skopos	
Theory.....	18	2.5 House's (1997) Translation Quality Assessment Model.....	20
2.6 Nord's (1988/2005)		Translation-Oriented Text Analysis.....	22
2.7 Summary.....	33	Chapter III. Literature Review	
and Previous Studies		3.1 Presupposition.....	34
3.2 Contextual		Presupposition.....	36
3.2.1 Denotative Meaning and Translation.....	37	3.2.2 Connotative Meaning	
and Translation.....	38	3.2.3 Cohesion.....	42
3.3 Cultural		Presupposition.....	46
3.3.1 Cultural Misreading in Translation.....	51	3.3.2 Connotative Meaning	
and Cultural Translation.....	51	3.3.3 Decision Making in Translation.....	52
3.4 Ke (1999): Cultural Presuppositions		and Misreadings.....	52
3.5 Chen (2008): Cultural Presupposition and Decision-Making0.....	57	3.6 Chen (2008): Translation	
of Cultural Images of Wolf and Tiger.....	64	3.7 Wang (2009): Translating Publicity Texts in the	
Light of the Skopos Theory		.....	66
3.8 Summary.....	71	Chapter IV. Contextual Presupposition in Translation	
4.1 Denotative Meaning and Translation.....	74	4.2 Connotative	
Meaning and Translation.....	80	4.3 Cohesion in Translation.....	84
Chapter V. Cultural		Presupposition in Translation	
5.1 Cultural Misreading in Translation.....	91	5.2 Connotative Meaning and Cultural	
Translation.....	97	5.3 Decision Making in Translation.....	100
5.3.1 Summary of Decision			

Making.....	105	Chapter VI. Translation Brief 6.1 Change of Addressee.....	108	6.2 Change of Place.....	114
6.3 Change of Motive.....	119	6.4			
Summary.....	125	Chapter VII. Conclusion 7.1 Summary of Findings.....	130		
7.2 The Previous Studies and the Present Study.....	133	7.3 Significance.....	135	7.4	
Limitations.....	137	7.5 Suggestions for Future Study.....	137		
References.....	139				

## REFERENCES

- Ali, S. S. (2006). Connotation and Cross-cultural Semantics. *Translation Journal*, 10(4). Retrieved December 15, 2009, from <http://accurapid.com/journal/38connot.htm>
- Arp, T. R., & Johnson, G. (Ed.). (2005). *Sound and Sense: An introduction to poetry* (11th ed.). Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Baker, M. (1992). *In other words: A coursebook on translation*. London: Routledge.
- Baker, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Bock, P. (1979). *Modern cultural Anthropology* (3rd ed.). New York: Alfred & Knopf.
- Bradie, M. R. (2007). *The scarlet letter* (S. Wang, Trans.). Korea: Darakwon Publishing Company.
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buhler, K. (1934). *Sprachtheorie*. In C. Nord (Ed.), *Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained* (p. 40). Manchester: St Jerome.
- Carroll, L. (1993). *Alice 's adventures in wonderland and through the looking-glass*. Cumberland: Wordsworth.
- Catford, J. C. (1965). *A linguistic theory of translation*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Chen, H. S. (2008). Translation of cultural images of wolf and tiger. In F. McCulloch (Chair), *The Novel and its Borders*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of University of Aberdeen, UK. Retrieved December 1, 2008, from <http://www.ntnu.edu.tw/acad/docmeet/97/a12/a1201-1.pdf>
- Chen, L. F. (1999). *愛麗絲夢遊仙境 [Alice 's adventures in wonderland and through the looking-glass]*. Taipei: Sitak. 【陳麗芳 (譯) (1999)。愛麗絲夢遊仙境。台北:希代。】
- Chen, M. H. (Ed.). (2006). *A collection of English proverbs*. Taipei: Pearson. 【陳明華 編著 (2006)。英文諺語精選。台北:台灣培生教育。】
- Chen, S. (Ed.). (2008). Cultural presupposition and decision-making in the functional approach to translation. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 83-89.
- Chen, S. L. (Ed.). (1990). *A collection of English proeses*. Taipei: Learnbook. 【陳淑玲 編著 (1990)。英美名家散文選。台北:學習。】
- Chesterman, A. (Ed.). (1989). *Readings in translation theory*. Helsinki: Finn Lectura.
- Compliment Language Press. (Ed.). (1991). *Compliment English-Chinese dictionary*. Taipei: Compliment Language Press. 【群力英漢辭典。台北:群力語言出版社。】
- Crystal, D. (2003). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (5th ed.). UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Fawcett, P. (1997). *Translation and language: Linguistic theories explained*. Manchester, UK: St Jerome.
- Ehrman, J. F. (1993). *Pragmatics and translation: the problem of presupposition*. *Traduction, terminologie, redaction*, 6(1), 149-170. Retrieved October 5, 2009, from <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ttr/1993/v6/n1/037142ar.pdf>
- Franklin, B. (1954). *The autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Taipei: Bookman.
- Fromkin, V., & Rodman, R. (1998). *An introduction to language* (6th ed.). Orlando: Harcourt.
- Gu, S. G. (Ed.). (2006). *Master English with financial times 3: In-depth commentary*. Taipei: Pearson. 【顧叔剛編著 (2006)。讀金融時報學英文精選集。台北:台灣培生教育。】
- Guo, Y. C. (2007). *Traditional local food*. Taipei: Yowfu Culture. 【郭英春 (2007)。台灣小吃。台北:幼福文化。】
- Guo, Y. Z. (2009, January). A guide to presupposition thinking in translation teaching. In Z. Y. Hong (Chair), *Third annual conference on translation and cross-cultural communication*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of Fujen Catholic University, Taipei. 【郭英珍 (2009)。翻譯教學中的預設誘導。第三屆兩岸四地翻譯與跨文化交流研討會 (頁331-336)。台北:輔仁大學翻譯研究所。】
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (1990). *Discourse and the translator*. UK: Longman.
- Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (1997). *The translator as communicator*. London: Routledge.
- Holz- Manttari, J. (1984). *Translatorisches Handeln: Theorie und Methode*. In J. Munday (Ed.), *Introducing translation studies theories and applications* (pp. 77-78). London and New York: Routledge.
- Hong, S. S. (2007). *Pastry cook book*. Taipei: Yowfu Culture. 【洪瑟穗 (2007)。麵類食譜。台北:幼福文化。】
- House, J. (1997). *Translation quality assessment: A model revisited*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- House, J. (2002). Universality versus culture specificity in translation. In A. Riccardi (Ed.), *Translation studies: Perspectives on an emerging discipline* (pp. 92-109). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huang, F. Z. (2003). *動物農莊 [Animal farm]*. Taipei: Yowfu. 【黃福灶 (譯) (2003)。動物農莊。台北:幼福。】
- Huang Guan Translation Team. (2005). *哈利波特:混血王子的背叛 [Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince]*. Taipei: Crown. 【皇冠編譯組 (2005)。哈利波特:混血王子的背叛。台北:皇冠。】
- Huang Guan Translation Team. (2007). *哈利波特:死神的聖物 [Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows]*. Taipei: Crown. 【皇冠編譯組 (2007)。哈利波特:死神的聖物。台北:皇冠。】
- Huang, H. L. (2002). *Stew tonics collection*. Taipei: Yowfu Culture. 【黃懷玲 (2002)。藥膳大全。台北:幼福文化。】
- Huang, X. P. (2002). Chinese folk stories of tiger grandaunt with initial searches. *Chinese literature research*, 16, 197-230. 【黃馨霏 (2002)。中國民間童話老虎外婆故事類型初探。中國文學研究, 16, 197-230。】
- Ichiro Suzuki sets record by reaching 200 hits for 9th straight season. (2009, September 14). *Formosa News*. Retrieved October 19, 2009, from <http://englishnews.ftv.com.tw/read.aspx?sno=3078E2C79EC804687CC5C305367F8344>
- Jakobson, R. (1960). Linguistics and poetics. In T. A. Sebeok (Ed.), *Style in language* (pp. 350-377). Cambridge Mass: The M.I.T. Press.
- James, K. (2002). Cultural implications for translation. *Translation Journal*, 6(4). Retrieved December 11, 2009, from <http://accurapid.com/journal/22delight.htm>
- Ke, P. (1994). *A guide to English-Chinese and Chinese-English translation*. Taipei: Bookman. 【柯平 (1994)。英漢與漢英翻譯。台北:書林。】
- Ke, P. (1999). Cultural presuppositions and misreadings. *Meta*, 44(1), 133-143. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.erudit.org/revue/meta/1999/v44/n1/003296ar.pdf>
- Kramersch, C. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press. L' Agence France-Presse. (2007, Augster 1). Former president calls for ' corruption-free ' India. Taipei Times. Retrieved December 17, 2009, from <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/lang/archives/2007/08/01/2003372328> Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Levy, J. (1967/2000). Translation as a decision process. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 148-159). London and New York: Routledge. Lewis, C. S. (1955). *The chronicles of Narnia: The magician ' s nephew*. New York: Harper Trophy. Li, M. X. (2005). *Easy cook for delicious hot pot*. Taipei: T. K. & P. C. Publishing. 【李梅仙 (2005). 美味火鍋在家做. 台北:大境文化。】 Liang, S. Q. (1993). *Far East English-Chinese dictionary*. Taipei: Fareast. 【梁實秋 (1993). 遠東英漢大辭典. 台北:遠東。】 Liebman, J. L. (1946). *Peace of mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster. Lin, L. (1999). 狼婆婆 [Lon Po Po]. Taipei: Yuan-Liou. 【林良 (譯) (1999). 狼婆婆. 台北:遠流。】 Lin, S. L. (2002a). Banquet ordinary soup. Taipei: Yowfu Culture. 【林淑蓮 (2002a). 家常宴客湯. 台北:幼福文化。】 Lin, S. L. (2002b). Ordinary vegetarian meals. Taipei: Yowfu Culture. 【林淑蓮 (2002b). 家常素食. 台北:幼福文化。】 Liu, M. C. (1997). *A workbook for English-Chinese translation*. Taipei: Bookman. 【劉宓慶 (1997). 英漢翻譯訓練手冊. 台北:書林。】 Longman, A. W. (1998). *Longman dictionary of English language and culture*. Harlow: Longman. Ma, X. W. (2002). 格列佛遊記 [Gulliver ' s travels]. Taipei: Taiwan Mac. 【馬祥文 (譯) (2002). 格列佛遊記. 台北:台灣麥克。】 McCabe, M., & Zhu, Y. (朱衣) (2006). *The garden of eatin ' : A guide to Western food*. Taipei: Locuspublishing. Mi, Y. M. (2005). 魔法師的外甥 [The magician ' s nephew]. Nanjing: Yilin. 【米友梅 (譯) (2005). 魔法師的外甥. 南京:譯林。】 Munday, J. (2001). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications*. London and New York: Routledge. Newmark, P. (1987). The use of systemic linguistics in translation analysis and criticism. In R. Steele & T. Threadgold (Eds.), *Language topics: Essays in honour of Michael Halliday* (pp. 293-303). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Newmark, P. (1988). *Approaches to translation*. UK: Prentice Hall. Nida, E. (1964). Principles of correspondence. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 126-140). London: Routledge. Nieminen, T. (2004). The value of register, text type and genre for translation and translation assessment. Retrieved October 18, 2008, from <http://www.uta.fi/~tuulia.nieminen/esset.html> Nord, C. (1997). Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained. Manchester: St Jerome. Nord, C. (2005). *Text analysis in translation: Theory, methodology, and didactic application of a model for translation-oriented text analysis* (2nd ed.) (C. Nord & P. Sparrow, Trans.). Amsterdam: Rodopi. (Original work published 1988) Orwell, G. (2000). *Animal farm*. Taipei: Bookman. Owen, W. J. B. (Ed.). (1969). *Wordsworth and Coleridge: Lyrical ballads 1798* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Parker, F., & Riley, K. (2005). *Linguistics for non-linguists* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Peng, J. X., & Xia, Y. S. (1994). *Poems for Everyone*. Taipei: Bookman. 【彭鏡禧、夏燕生 (譯) (1994). 好詩大家讀:英美短詩五十首賞析. 台北:書林。】 Peng, Q. W. (2005). 納尼亞傳奇 - 魔法師的外甥 [The chronicles of Narnia: The magician ' s nephew]. Taipei: Titan. 【彭倩文 (譯) (2005). 納尼亞傳奇 - 魔法師的外甥. 台北:大田。】 Rado, G. (1979). Outline of a systematic translatology. *Babel*, 25(4), 187-196. Reiss, K. (1989). Text types, translation types and translation assessment (A. Chesterman, Trans.). (Original work published 1997) Reiss, K. (2000). *Translation criticism: Potential and limitations* (E. Rhodes, Trans.). Manchester: St Jerome and American Bible society. (Original work published 1971) Reiss, K., & Vermeer, H. J. (1984). Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie. In J. Munday (Ed.), *Introducing translation studies theories and applications* (pp. 78-80). London and New York: Routledge. Rowling, J. K. (2005). *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. New York: Scholastic. Rowling, J. K. (2007). *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. New York: Scholastic. Shavit, Z. (2006). Translation of children ' s literature. In G. Lathey (Ed.), *The translation of children ' s literature* (pp. 25-40). UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd. Shen, M. (2003). 動物農莊 [Animal farm]. Taipei: Cosmos Culture. 【沈漢 (譯) (2003). 動物農莊. 台北: 寂天文化。】 Simpson, J. A., & Weiner, E. S. C. (Eds.). (1989). *The Oxford English dictionary* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. Stanley, R. E. (1982). Promotion: Advertising, publicity, personal selling, sales promotion. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall. Swift, J. (1992). *Gulliver ' s travels*. Cumberland: Wordsworth. Tang, S. (2000). *Idiom dictionary*. Taipei: Wunan. 【唐樞 (2000). 成語熟語辭海. 台北:五南。】 Thriveni, C. (2002). Cultural elements in translation: The Indian perspective. *Translation Journal*, 6(1). Retrieved December 10, 2009, from <http://accurapid.com/journal/19culture.htm> Vermeer, H. J. (1978). Ein Rahmen fur eine allgemein Translationstheorie. In Baker (Ed.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (pp. 235-236). London and New York: Routledge. Vermeer, H. J. (1992). Skopos und translationsauftrag. In Baker (Ed.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (p. 236). London and New York: Routledge. Vinay, J. P., & Darbelnet, J. (1958/1995). Stylistique comparee du francais et de l ' anglais: Methode de traduction [Comparative stylistics of French and English: A methodology for translation]. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 128-137). London and New York: Routledge. Wang, B. (2009). Translation publicity texts in the light of the skopos theory: Problems and suggestions. *Translation journal*, 13(1). Retrieved December 20, 2010, from <http://translationjournal.net/journal//47skopos.htm> Wikipedia. (2010). Chinese dragon. Retrieved January 16, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_dragon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_dragon) Wikipedia. (2010). The chronicles of Narnia. Retrieved December 30, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Chronicles\\_of\\_Narnia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chronicles_of_Narnia) Wolf, M. (2006, March 8). Japan ' s failure to reform has not prevented its recovery. *Financial Times*. Retrieved March 12, 2010, from <http://search.ft.com/search?queryText=richard+koo&x=19&y=15> Wong, D. (1999). Factors influencing the process of translating. *Meta: Translators '* , 44(1), 78-100. Retrieved October 10, 2009, from <http://www.erudit.org/revue/meta/1999/v44/n1/004616ar.pdf> Wu, A. Q. (2004). *The study of story of tiger grandaunt*. Taipei: Soochow University. 【吳安清 (2004). 虎姑婆故事研究. 台北:東吳大學中國文學研究所。】 Wu, Q. C. (Ed.). (1995). *Chinese-English translation through contrastive analysis*. Taipei: Crane. 【吳潛誠編著 (1995). 中英翻譯對比分析法. 台北:文鶴。】 Xiao, Y. J. (2001). *30 Minute menus for small families*. Taipei: Culture & Life. 【蕭義娟 (2001). 30分鐘好菜上桌. 台北:躍昇文化。】 Yeats, W. B. (1916). *Responsibilities*. New York: The Macmillan Company. Young, E. (1989). *Lon Po Po*. New York: Philomel Books. Yuan, D. C. (1995). 愛麗絲夢遊仙境 [Alice ' s adventures in wonderland and through the looking-glass]. Taipei: Chienhong. 【袁德成 (譯) (1995). 愛麗絲夢遊仙境. 台北:建宏。】 Yue, D.,

& Alain L. P. (1995). *Dujiaoshou yu Long*. Beijing: Peking University Press. Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Zhang, B. (2000). 格列佛遊記 [Gulliver ' s travels]. Taipei: Sitak. 【張彬 (譯) (2000)。格列佛遊記。台北:希代。】 Zhang, Y., & Gao, X. X. (2006). 動物農莊 [Animal farm]. Taipei: Business Weekly Publications. 【張毅、高孝先 (譯) (2006)。動物農莊。台北:商周。】 Zheng, S. Y. (2009, October 15). Med-style diet can battle blues. *Liberty Times*, A10. 【鄭寺音 (2009年10月15日)。地中海飲食可對抗憂鬱。自由時報，第10版。】 Zhou, Z. X. (1995). *Translating in practice*. Taipei: The Commercial Press. 【周兆祥 (1995)。翻譯實務。台北:台北商務。】