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KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND RESOURCES IN CHINESE TRANSLATION

Dahui Dong

3.1 Introduction
For the past 30 years, translation knowledge, skills and resources have been greatly emphasised in both Western and Chinese translation theories. There is a wide consensus among experts that translation is a complex activity, and in order to produce translation of professional quality, translators must have a requisite skillset, specialised knowledge, expertise and the ability to access various resources. Chinese translation knowledge is regarded as consisting of bilingual knowledge, extra-linguistic knowledge and knowledge of translation theory. There are beliefs that Chinese translation skills must be internalised and synthesised if one is to achieve strategic competence. With web-based search tools, corpora and machine translation having emerged as major translation resources in the context of contemporary Chinese translation, Chinese translators can now consolidate knowledge in the field, sharpen translation skills and utilise the ever-accumulating resources to obtain high translation quality. This chapter also addresses the issue of translation competency from Chinese into English by native Chinese-speaking translators, a common practice in Chinese translation. The chapter will provide valuable materials for Chinese translator training, as well as for the academic study of Chinese translation theory and its evolution.

3.2 Conceptualising translation knowledge and skills
There have been attempts at bringing translation knowledge and skills within the realm of translation competence (Schäffner and Adab 2000; Bell 1991; Neubert 2000). However, the study of translation competence is mainly based on Western perspectives focusing on its universal aspects, and there is a fundamental lack of systemic review of its ‘differences’ with other languages and cultures. For example, the means by which Chinese translation competence and German translation competency are achieved have never been adequately compared. In addition, there has been little in the way of concern for translation competence in the situation of translating into the translator’s second language (L2) (Campbell 1998). Many Chinese scholars hold that it is critical for Chinese translation studies to examine the basic issues of translation, including translation knowledge, skills and the ability to use resources, from a specific perspective that emphasises the domain of Chinese translation theory. The rapid development of
information technology in the twenty-first century, translation corpora and web-based knowledge have led to important translation resources (Shei 2010). Translators are now faced with the new challenge of making full use of machine resources to supplement their personal translation knowledge and hone their individual translation skills.

The knowledge and skills of the translator have already been looked at from the perspective of translation competence. In fact, the use of the term ‘competence’ is almost interchangeable with terms such as ability, skills, knowledge, aptitude, potential resources, expertise, awareness and so on (Orozco and Hurtado Albir 2002; Harris and Sherwood 1978; Toury 1995; Hatim and Mason 1990; Bell 1991). Many translation studies scholars have also put forward various theories to categorise translation knowledge, skills and expertise and proposed different translation competence models (Bell 1991; Gile 1995; Neubert 2000; Nord 1991; Wilss 1976). In contrast to the ‘old’ methods, some new translation models have been developed in light of cognitive science in recent years (Kelly 2005; Risku 2010; Rothe-Neves 2007). For example, Kelly’s (2005) systemic model of translation competence includes seven basic sub-competences:

1. strategic sub-competence;
2. interpersonal sub-competence;
3. psycho-physiological sub-competence;
4. instrumental-professional sub-competence;
5. thematic sub-competence;
6. cultural sub-competence; and
7. communicative and textual sub-competence.

So far, the most systemic model of translator competence yet to be developed has been proposed by the PACTE group at Barcelona University (PACTE 2005). This model was developed on the basis of the group’s definition of translation as ‘the underlying system of knowledge, abilities and attitudes required to be able to translate’ (Göpferich 2009: 18). This particular model has been revised several times and tested with empirical data. As such, translation competence is regarded as comprised of five sub-competences and a psycho-physiological component as shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Translation competence model (adapted from PACTE 2005: 610)
The psycho-physiological sub-competence presented in this model is less relevant to the topic of this chapter related to translation knowledge, skills and resources. As such, it will be largely omitted hereinafter. Among all the other five sub-competences, the strategic sub-competence should be regarded as the most important, solving problems and guaranteeing the efficiency of the process. This sub-competence covers the traditional concept of ‘translation skills’, but it is more than simply using a set of skills. It ‘intervenes by planning the process in relation to the translation project, evaluating the process and partial results deficiencies, identifying translation problems and applying procedures to solve them’ (Göpferich 2009: 18).

The sub-competences of bilingual, extra-linguistic, and knowledge-about-translation located in the PACTE model provide a clear account of exactly what kind of translation knowledge expert translators need to possess. Bilingual sub-competence means to possess the procedural knowledge related to two languages, including ‘pragmatic, socio-linguistic, textual and lexical-grammatical knowledge in each language’ (PACTE 2005: 610). Extra-linguistic sub-competence comprises general world knowledge, domain-specific knowledge, bicultural and encyclopaedic knowledge about the world in general, and subject knowledge. Knowledge-about-translation sub-competence, as suggested by its name, comprises knowledge about what translation is and operative aspects of the profession such as types of translation units, processes required, methods and procedures used, types of problems and workplace (Beeby et al. 2011; PACTE 2005).

The instrumental sub-competence is related to the use of documentation sources and information and communication technologies applied to translation: dictionaries of all kinds, encyclopaedias, grammars, style books, parallel texts, electronic corpora, etc. This sub-competence can be regarded as covering how to source and then to use translation knowledge, skills and translation resources, which are relevant to this chapter. It is the potential knowledge and skills inherent in these sub-competencies that enable Chinese translators to undertake their translation tasks.

3.3 Chinese perspectives on translation knowledge and skills

With the introduction of Western theories related to translation competence, themes such as Chinese translation competence, as well as Chinese translation knowledge and skills, have attracted a great deal of interest from Chinese academia, who have realised that the core task and objective of translation education is to foster learners’ translation competence (Ma 2013; Wen 2004; Wang and Wang 2008; Liu 2011; Li 2011; Luo et al. 2008; Jiang and Quan 2002; Miao 2007; Mu 2006; Feng 2010; Yang and Wang 2010; Yang 2002). Chinese views on what knowledge and skills constitute translation competence are in fact abundant.

3.3.1 Chinese translation studies on translation competence

Numerous useful models have been proposed to evaluate the relative translation competence of Chinese translators (Jiang and Quan 2002; Miao 2007; Wang and Wang 2008; Feng 2010). For example, Wang and Wang (2008) proposed that Chinese translation competence includes six components: (1) language–discourse-pragmatic competence; (2) cultural competence; (3) strategic competence; (4) instrumental competence; (5) thinking competence; and (6) coordination of the personality system.

When compared with Western studies conducted over the same period of time, Chinese translation studies on what constitutes translation competence have been developed largely based on the Western translation competence models, and, as such, they simply break translation competence into different components (Ma 2013). Readers may have noticed many similarities between the categories of sub-competences and definitions used in Wang and Wang’s (2008)
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model and those in the PACTE’s (2005) competence model. As pointed out by Miao (2007) and Ma (2013), studies of Chinese translation competence have been relatively underdeveloped and are still at a nascent or even an exploratory stage. This is probably because Chinese studies on translation competence have only become popular in recent years when cognitive translation studies are at the forefront of the research trend.

Chinese translation scholars have tended to attach more importance to the translator’s cognitive competence, such as one’s ability to synthesise and internalise knowledge and skills, and they considered it as the most important component of translation competence. For example, Miao (2007: 48) claims that among her three competence components, the translator’s cognitive competence is vital since it ‘determines whether a person can become a real translator’. Similarly speaking, Yang (2002) points out that all the elements in translation competence have to engender the translator’s inner rules (i.e., principles, skills, knowledge, etc.) and revert into the translator’s consciousness and intuition before real translation competence can be developed. When translators are able to develop such translation competence, they will naturally and intuitively use translation knowledge and skills, even without instruction or certainty.

In addition, Jiang and Quan (2002) propose a sub-competence labelled ‘aesthetic competence’, which includes one’s ability to derive image perception, image integration and other psychological mechanisms related to one’s individual aesthetic imagination. This sub-competence is specific for Chinese translation. The idea of aesthetic competence may date back to the work of Liu (1987), which first, to the best of my knowledge, raises aesthetic judgement as one of his five dimensions of translation competence. Liu (1987) emphasises the technical aspect (skills) of translation competence, and it has been used as the blueprint for many translation and interpretation programmes in the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, his primary concern is the under-translation and subsequent absence of English aesthetic elements whenever translating from English into Chinese. However, Jiang and Quan (2002: 14) are more concerned with the over-translation of such elements, which, according to them, are ‘countless’ in Chinese translation. The elements in question may reflect a discrepancy in the translator’s aesthetic appreciation and expressive ability between the two languages. As a result, any translation effort would surely suffer since the divergence of Eastern and Western values is at stake.

3.3.2 Translation competence into L2

Researchers and translation practitioners (Baker 2011; Kelly 1979; Newmark 1988; Nida 1975; Picken 1983) have long regarded translating into the mother tongue as the more, if not the only, acceptable working mode of translation. However, many studies have shown that bilinguals do not necessarily become competent translators since bilingual knowledge is only a part of the knowledge necessary for appropriate translation (Krings 1986; Lorscher 1991; Kussmaul 1995; Faber 1998; Presas 2000). It has even been argued that bilingual competence is not ‘necessarily translation competence’ (Bowker 2000: 185).

A pioneer study by Campbell (1998) has shown that translation into L2 requires a different set of competences from any translation into the mother tongue. Campbell’s translation into L2 model consists of three distinct parts:

1 Textual competence – the extent to which the translation output of translators has the structural features of formal, written English.
2 Disposition competence – the strategies used to choose words in constructing target texts.
3 Monitoring competence – the translator’s self-awareness and ability to edit in order to produce quality output.
Campbell’s model is quite different from those previously mentioned because of the number of competence components presented. Although the model’s textual competence is represented by certain grammatical features presented in the target text, such as nominalisation, average word length, diversity of vocabulary (e.g., type/token ratio), agentless passives and prepositional phrases, it is incomplete as it overlooks the explicit translator ability necessary to achieve relative translation equivalence (Popescu 2011).

Translation into L2 has been commonplace for Chinese translators because of online content, and it has therefore received increasing attention from the Chinese translation studies community with a number of translation into L2 competence models already proposed (Dong and Lan 2010; Ma 2013; Wen 2004 2005; Wen and Li 2010; Yang 2002). For example, Yang (2002) proposed that translation competence from Chinese translation into English competence consists of five components: (1) translation skills; (2) the mastering of translation standards and principles; (3) language proficiency; (4) overall knowledge body (encyclopaedic knowledge and language knowledge); and, (5) overall competence (logical thinking). Ma (2013) applied the PACTE’s model in her study of translation competence from Chinese into English for native Chinese-speaking translators. Her model also included five competences, as follows:

1. bilingual communicative competence;
2. professional knowledge about translation;
3. strategic competence;
4. extra-linguistic competence;
5. instrumental competence.

The Chinese models include more competence components than Campbell’s effort (1998). Actually, they have chosen to include as many components as those ‘normal’ translation competence models presented, such as PACTE’s model (2005). However, there is a key difference evident between the two types of models on hand. The core sub-competence in the L2 into L1 models is found to be the strategic competence, as shown in PACTE (2005); but, the L1 into L2 models give more attention to bilingual proficiency, as shown in Figure 3.2 (Ma 2013).

![Figure 3.2](https://example.com/figure32.png)
According to Ma (2013), while many translation students in Western countries have already achieved a considerably advanced level of L2 when they apply for admission to translation training programmes, Chinese student-translators have not reached satisfactory bilingual proficiency. In particular, the biggest problem facing novice Chinese student-translators when translating Chinese into English is their command of English expression. This explains why bilingual communicative competence, which is relatively overlooked in some Western competence models, is regarded as the core competence in her model. It appears that Ma’s (2013) viewpoint is also shared by a large number of Chinese translation scholars who have carried out research on translation competence in both English-into-Chinese and Chinese-into-English (Shan 1990; Yang 2002). As Yang (2002) pointed out, the core translation competence for Chinese translators is language proficiency, specifically English proficiency relevant to appropriate expressiveness.

### 3.4 Translation resources

When compared to a few decades ago, the translator’s use of translation resources has undergone tremendous changes in terms of both availability and facility. In addition to using traditional resources such as bilingual dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries, specialised dictionaries and encyclopaedia, translators have become more dependent on digitised resources such as Wikipedia, Google search, terminological databases and translation corpora (Austermühl 2001). Although translators are using digitised resources on a daily basis, there is limited research on how these translation resources are employed (Raido 2014). In the few comprehensive studies on translation resources (Austermühl 2001; Quah 2006; Raido 2014), the authors discuss available translation resources and how to use them in three broad categories: web search, computer-aided translation (CAT) and translation databases. Web search includes the retrieval of information from the Internet and online automated translation tools; CAT includes terminology management tools and translation memory systems; and translation databases include e-dictionaries and various corpora that may be accessed online. It has been suggested that the more experienced the translator has become, the more comprehensive the web resources are to be used in the translation (Raido 2014).

A number of studies on translation resources have emerged in Chinese translation literature (Gao 2011; Fan 2012; Hu and Shu 2009; Li and Li 2012; Wang 2007). However, they are mainly focused on either elaborating the Internet resources for Chinese translation or prescribing Internet resources for solving problems specific to Chinese translation. Li (2004) and Shei (2010) represent a few of the works that give a comprehensive account of Chinese translation resources and how to employ them effectively. In particular, Shei (2010) distinguishes three types of Internet resources directed towards Chinese translation: tool resources, source material resources and communicative resources. Tool resources include dictionaries, encyclopaedia, search engines, search tools and machine translation; source material resources include websites, documents, images, videos and music; and communicative resources include contents of forums, social media, instant communication, email and form enquiry methods. His classification gives a clear picture of Internet translation resources available to translators, regardless of their translation directions or their competence levels.

In terms of using translation resources, Li (2004) recommends an electronic encyclopaedia and Google search as the major resources available to translators who are looking for English word meanings. He also gives detailed instructions on how to use these two resources to identify the authentic meaning of terminology and proper nouns such as the names of persons,
locations and institutions. In order to help translators firmly grasp surface meaning and underlying meanings, such as pragmatics and background information, Shei (2010) recommends a more systemic approach for translators to follow in order to get comprehensible collocations, idioms and sentence structures. In addition to terminology and proper nouns, translators may choose to use multiple resources such as Google search, monolingual English corpora and dictionaries to verify the meaning of problematic words or sentences.

In addition, Shei (2010) gives many useful tips on how to achieve the best search results by selecting appropriate Google advanced search options, using quotation marks (“ ”) for search words, the wildcard (*), and using Google Image search as a supplement to the broader text search. For example, to find the correct meaning of ‘the Commons’ given in Example 1, a Google search using ‘the Commons’ as a search word will have a better chance than simply using ‘Commons’.

Example 1

Chancellor Alistair Darling is presenting his pre-election budget in the Commons, including a stamp-duty cut for first time buyers.

(Shei 2010: 40)

Furthermore, if Google Search is left with its default settings, translators may find various Chinese translations of ‘Alistair Darling’, such as ‘阿利斯泰爾·馬克林·達林’, ‘阿利斯泰尔·麦克莱恩·达林’ or ‘戴理德’. Shei (2010) suggests that translators change the language and area settings of Google Search to fine-tune the search results and to obtain the correct usage in the target language; for example, 阿利斯泰爾·馬克林·達林. For traditional Chinese readers in Taiwan, Shei (2010) also demonstrates the use of wildcard (*) in Google search words to help Chinese translators improve their translation quality as shown in Example 2.

Example 2

However, ministers said action was being taken to reform dementia care.

a 然而部長們表示, 當正在採取行動改善癡呆症護理。

Back translation: However, ministers said, being taking action improve reform dementia care.

b 部長們卻說政府已經採取了癡呆症護理的改革方案。(Shei 2010: 30)

Back translation: However, ministers said government has taken dementia care reform plan.

In Examples 2a, and 2b, there are two Chinese translation versions of the source text (ST). In order to verify which usage in bold face is more appropriate, the wildcard (*) can be added to the Google search strings “採取行動改善**” and “採取**的改革方案”. The Google search of the two strings shows that the ** position of the former string often takes noun phrases, such as食品安全, 經濟 and 健康, and the ** position of the latter often takes adjective phrases such as 多樣化的, 綜合性的 and 激進的. As a result, version 2a is consistent with the pattern of the Google search results, and thus it is regarded as more accurate than version 2b.
These methods and tips are also applicable to searches involving collocations, idioms, sentence stems, grammar and background knowledge. As Shei (2010: 54) points out, the majority of translators with intermediate-level skills may gain a better understanding of the source text if they can use multiple translation resources both properly and creatively.

As to the use of corpora, Li (2004) considers translation corpora as an important translation resource. He recommends the use of Webcorp, an Internet corpus, and provides many specific query methods that may help Chinese translators increase the naturalness of their translation. Similarly, Shei (2010) sees the web as a better translation corpus because traditional language corpora are much smaller than what the Internet can fully provide. He has even proposed a web-based corpus translation model to help translators solve translation problems including general words, terminology, proper nouns, collocations, idioms and sentence structures.

3.5 Chinese translation knowledge and skills

3.5.1 Bilingual knowledge

As suggested by many Chinese translation scholars, I would propose that bilingual knowledge of Chinese translators include all linguistic elements of the Chinese and English languages such as phonetics, lexicology, syntax, text/discourse, rhetoric and genre. This knowledge cannot be exhaustively listed; however, readers may resort to various Chinese–English comparative studies or translation textbooks for specific references (Mao 2003; Wang 2002; Ye 2001; Liu 1987; Zhang 1980; Yang and Yu 2014). In addition, bilingual knowledge should also include how the languages are used by including both Chinese and English pragmatics and semantics. In translation from English into Chinese, this type of knowledge will enable Chinese translators to better understand the English text by recognising the voice, mood and other subtle clues available in an English sentence. In translation from Chinese into English, it helps the translators to produce more native-like translations. Those who pursue a career as a professional translator may consider further consolidating this type of knowledge in their training regimen.

3.5.2 Extra-linguistic knowledge

Current research on translation competence suggests that extra-linguistic knowledge should include subject knowledge, encyclopaedic knowledge and cultural knowledge. Language is embedded in the cultural soil. In order to completely master both English and Chinese, Chinese translators need to familiarise themselves with both cultures, in particular, an immersion into the English-speaking peoples’ culture, their living environment, habits, behaviour and beliefs. As to the types of knowledge most related to translation, Ma (2014) particularly addresses seven of the most common items in both Chinese and English that are faced by Chinese translators: allusions (e.g., féng fù馮婦‘tiger hunting expert’, cāng hǎi沧海‘vast ocean’, wū shān巫山‘mountain Wu’, nymph, cast pearls before swine); appellations (e.g., lǎo dà老大‘boss’, niǎng niǎng娘娘‘emperor’s wife’, lǎo zōng老總‘chief executive officer’, Your Highness, Majesty), taboos (nà wù ér那物兒‘male genital organ’, the thing, milky, spirit); pejoratives and epithets (e.g., jiàn guì‘go to hell’, cā操‘fuck’, zhí niáng zéi直娘賊‘mother fucker’, bloody, scamp); metaphors (jiǔ xíng hú miàn鳩形鵝面‘looking poor and starved’, yā piàn guì xiàng鴉片鬼相‘opium addicted face’, huā ping花瓶‘vale’, Helen of Troy, Gordian knot); imagery (e.g., lóng páo龍袍‘emperor’s robe’, chūn fēng春風‘spring breeze’, wū yā烏鴉‘crow’, Sultan’s realm, nightingale); and personal and locative names (sūn wù kōng孫悟空‘monkey king’, yàn jīng燕京‘formerly Beijing’, Gospel, Isaac). Although
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far from exhaustive, this list covers most of the cultural knowledge areas that Chinese translators should begin to know.

Translators are often engaged in more than one area of translation. According to Wang and He (2014), areas of Chinese translation can be divided into the fields of liberal arts translation and technical translation. The former primarily involves matters related to law, finance, literature, marketing, administration and management, news, advertisements, tourism and welfare. The latter involves information and technology, mechanics, biology, physics, mathematics, medicine, engineering, electronics, geography, communication, electrical engineering and information protection. In fact, these areas often overlap with each other; for example, a news text may contain literary or science and technology. In addition to terminology, both encyclopaedic and thematic knowledge, translators need to understand stylistic features and rhetorical norms of different textual/discursive types. For example, the language found in a world news report is quite different from a corporate annual report. Translators need to be able to recognise the differences in order to provide genuine texts.

3.5.3 Knowledge about translation theory

Over the years, there has been a general view that a person can do without translation theory. This view has been reinforced by the fact that a great many Chinese translators have received little translation training on translation theory (Ma 2013). It may be true that translation theory cannot ‘make a bad translator into a good one’ but it can ‘show the student all that is, or that may be, involved in the translation process’ (Newmark 1981: 36). Among the translation theories recommended for translators (Schäffner 2004; He 2009; Tao 2006; Zeng 2012), the translation theories of the German functionalist school (Nord 1997) emerge as most fundamental for translation programmes given at postgraduate levels. For undergraduate students, introductory readings such as Baker (2011) and Munday (2009) will be deemed sufficient.

3.5.4 Chinese translation skills

Chinese translation skills are comprised of three levels: translation strategy, translation method and translation technique. In order to avoid confusion, these three terms are defined following both Western and Chinese studies (Chesterman 2005; Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002; Fan 2010; Fang 2013; Han 2015; Xiong 2014). Translation strategy refers to a ‘plan’ to solve translation problems (Chesterman 2005: 26). For example, Nida’s (1975) formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence and Newmark’s (1981) communicative translation are all translation strategies that provide guidance and principles for engaging in translation activities. Venuti (1995) is widely used as the textbook in Chinese MA translation programmes, so I would focus on his two translation strategies: domesticating and foreignising. It needs to be noted that these two strategies are simply different choices and neither is better than the other, although foreignising is considered more ethical than domesticating by Venuti (1995) who views them from an ideological perspective. It is not unusual to find that experienced translators may choose to adopt both in a single translation work.

Translation method refers to a particular way or procedure for doing translation work (Chesterman 2005: 26). According to Venuti (1995), the domesticating strategy calls for four translation methods to take place; namely, liberal/free translation, imitation, variation and recreation. Likewise there are four translation methods to take place when adopting the foreignising strategy: zero translation, transliteration, word-for-word translation and literal translation.
Foreignising translation strategy

The foreignising strategy is also known as source-orientation, and it aims to bring the translation reader into both the author's language and culture (Venuti, 1995). Chinese translators who choose to adopt this strategy may employ the four translation methods as shown in Examples 3–6 respectively.

**Example 3**

Zero translation applies when SL and TL differ in their spelling. For example:

I love my love with an E, because she's enticing; I hate her with an E, because she's engaged.

我愛我的愛人為了一個因為她是 Enticing (迷人的); 我恨我的愛人為了一個, 因為她是 Engaged (訂了婚的)。

( Xiao 2014: 85)

**Back translation:** I love my wife because she was attractive for a (fascinating); I hate my wife for one, because she is engaged (betrothed).

**Example 4**

Transliteration applies when the source concept is absent in TL. Bungee 蹦極; Ballet 芭蕾

(Xiong 2014: 85)

**Example 5**

Word-for-word translation applies when the detailed structure of the source sentence needs to be displayed in TL.

漢語四字成語往往蘊含豐富而生動的形象, 如“雞毛蒜皮”。如何在翻譯中再現其形象對譯者來說是個問題。

Chinese four-character set phrases are known to abound in vivid images, e.g., Jimao Suanpi 雞毛蒜皮 ('Chicken feathers, garlic skins'). The method by which to reproduce these images may pose certain problems for the translators (Xiong 2014: 85).

**Back translation:** 中國四個字短語在生動的畫面, 例如雞毛蒜皮(雞毛蒜皮)。如何重現這些圖像可能會帶來問題為譯者。

**Example 6**

Literal translation applies whenever lexical and grammatical rules of TL need to be observed.

不入虎穴, 焉得虎子。

If one does not enter the tiger’s lair, how can he expect to catch the tiger’s cubs?

(Xiong 2014: 85)

**Back translation:** 如果一個人不進入老虎的巢穴, 怎麼能他指望抓到虎崽?
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Domesticating translation strategy

This strategy requires translation to closely conform to the target language and culture even at the cost of losing SL information. Examples 7–10 illustrate translation methods frequently used when this strategy is adopted.

Example 7

Liberal/free translation (the metaphorical usage in ST ‘吃了被告吃原告’ is dropped in TT to retain the meaning).

時常會聽到一些有關執法者違法的報導，以及法官的義憤之辭。
There have been some reports on how law enforcers violate the law, and there are also such bitter complaints about how judges take bribes from both the defendant and the plaintiff.

(Back translation: 目前已有一些報告有關執法者如何違反法律, 也有苦訴關於如何法官從被告和原告雙方收受賄賂。)

Example 8

Imitation (four-word idioms in ST are all translated into plain English).

水映山容, 使山容益添秀媚; 山清水秀, 使山色更顯柔情。有詩云: 岸上湖中各自奇, 山斛水酌兩相宜。只言遊舫渾如畫, 身在畫中原不知。
The hills overshadow the lake, and the lake reflects the hills. They are in perfect harmony and more beautiful than a picture.

(Back translation: 山掩蓋湖, 湖中反映山。它們是完美和諧, 比圖片更漂亮。)

Example 9

Variation translation (the word ‘perfect’ in ST has been replaced by a word with opposite/ironic meaning).

Chinese Parents Defrauded by ‘Perfect’ Education

(Back translation: China brutally educational environment tortured parents and students.)
Translation technique refers to the specific manipulation of text in the translation process (Chesterman 2005: 26). Many English–Chinese translation textbooks have prescribed translation techniques for translation between the two languages, and the most important ones are generally agreed to be addition, omission, division, combination, shift, pragmatic translation and cross-cultural translation (Mao 2003; Wang 2002; Ye 2001; Zhang 1980; Yang and Yu 2014). Examples 11–17 illustrate these translation techniques.

Addition

Example 11

‘表示願意講和’ is added in the translation because the symbolic meaning of ‘olive branch’ as peace may not be known to the Chinese reader.

The crafty enemy was ready to launch a new attack while holding out the olive branch.
狡猾的敵人, 一邊伸出橄欖枝, 表示願意講和; 一邊準備發動新的進攻。

(Chen 2012: 121)

Back translation: Cunning enemy, while holding out the olive branch, express willingness to make peace; while prepare to launch a new offensive.

Omission

Example 12

Three clauses, ‘the capacity… is low’, are translated into three phrases in bold face to make the Chinese sentence more concise.

To use microwave communication has many advantages, for example, the capacity is large, the quality for secrecy is better, and the cost is low.
採用微波通訊具有容量大、保密性強、成本低等優點。

(Wang 2002: 31)

Back translation: Use microwave communication has large capacity, confidentiality strong, and low cost etc. advantages.
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Division

Example 13

One sentence in ST is translated into two sentences in TT.

The fanciful names found at Arches National Park include sites like Fiery Furnance, Three Gossips, Marching Men, Dark Angels, etc. do justice to the grotesque rock formations they denote.

Stone Gate National Park inside every scene name may be said manifold, very creative, for example 'stove flames', 'Three gossip', 'Marchers', 'Dark Angel' and so on. These names are used to describe the shape of the mountain that is truly weird rocks group portrait, vivid.

Back translation: Stone Gate National Park inside every scene name may be said manifold, very creative, for example 'stove flames', 'Three gossip', 'Marchers', 'Dark Angel' and so on. These names are used to describe the shape of the mountain that is truly weird rocks group portrait, vivid.

Combination

Example 14

Three sentences in ST are translated into one sentence in TT.

The four men huddled there and said nothing. They dared not smoke. The would not move.

Back translation: The four men gathered there did not speak, did not dare to smoke, also did not dare to go away.

Shift

Example 15

The verb ‘revolutionise’ is translated as a noun ‘革命’.

Steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production.

Back translation: Steam and machinery caused industrial production revolution.
Shift can also be used in the translation of pragmatic meanings and cultural/cross-cultural elements, as shown in Examples 16 and 17.

### Pragmatic translation

**Example 16**

你一路辛苦了！

Did you have a nice trip?

*(Xiong 2014: 88)*

**Back translation:** 你有一個很好的旅行嗎?

### Cross-cultural transfer

**Example 17**

梁山伯與祝英台

*Chinese Romeo and Juliet*

*(Xiong 2014: 88)*

**Back translation:** 中國的羅密歐與朱麗葉

Finally, many translators have reported that they rarely think about what methods or techniques they need to use during their overall translation process (Li 1999). Translators, especially novice translators, cannot expect to acquire translation skills simply by reading textbooks and memorising the ‘rules’. Instead, a great deal of practice is needed before these methods and techniques become ingrained as translation skills when confronting and then solving translation problems.

### 3.6 Chinese translation resources

Translators may seek information from a variety of sources, databases, corpus, online websites, etc. In addition, tools such as computer-aided translation software, assorted web-based translation resources, computer-aided translation (CAT), desktop publication and localisation are increasingly promoted for purposes of translation.

#### 3.6.1 Web-based dictionaries and corpora

Corpora are playing an increasingly important role in almost every aspect of linguistic studies, including translation teaching and learning (Laviosa 2002). With corpora, translators and general language learners are at once able to make correct linguistic choices based on objective
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fact rather than on subjective speculation (Sinclair 2004). There are two types of corpora that
Chinese translators may wish to consult. The first is monolingual English corpora, the most not-
able ones including the Brown corpus (Francis and Kucera 1979), the LOB corpus (Lancaster-
Oslo-Bergen corpus) (Johansson et al. 1978), the Birmingham Collection of English Text/The
Collins COBUILD corpus (Sinclair et al. 1987), the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English
(Greenbaum and Svartvik 1990), and the BNC (British National Corpus) (Burnard 1995).
Many English corpora provide available online search functions, and they can be easily located
by conducting a Google search of the given corpus name. However, Shei (2010) argues that
these corpora are not much help since they provide only limited search results.

Chinese translators may also find Webcorp to be a useful translation resource (Li 2004). It
exists as a search engine that uses the World Wide Web as a general corpus. Since it is designed
for purposes of corpus linguistics, it has provided specialised search functions for engaging new
words, rare or obsolete words, phrases and collocations. Its Time Series Graphs function may
also provide significant help to translators in choosing the right usage of a word at different
times and occasions.

Another translation resource that may be suitable for Chinese-speaking translators is the
web-based translational corpora. Translational corpora are basically databases with aligned texts
in two languages (Baker 1995). This type of corpora has been designed specifically for purposes
of translation teaching and research. The world’s first translation corpus, Translational English
Corpus (TEC), was composed in 1995 at Manchester University, UK (Baker 1995). Since then,
there are some online Chinese translational corpora that have joined the online corpora. The
Babel English-Chinese Parallel Corpus constructed by Lancaster University, UK, contains 327
English articles and their direct Chinese translations; Babel Parallel Corpus (Chinese>English)
and Babel Parallel Corpus (English>Chinese) developed by Beijing Foreign Studies University,
contain 275,361 and 244,696 words respectively. There is also the Bilingual Corpus developed
by National Taiwan Normal University, and the Peking University E–C Parallel Corpus.
Although these translational corpora are smaller than monolingual ones, translators – especially
professional translators – may find them to be relatively useful. However, since these corpora
only grant guest access to the public with basic concordance functions, novice translators who
do not have corpus experience may find them difficult to employ.

3.6.2 Machine translation

Translators are increasingly using machine translation (MT) and machine-aided (computer-
aided) translation (MAT/CAT) technology (Belluomini 2006) in their translation tasks.
Online MT tools, noticeably Google Translate, have made great progress in recent years
in terms of output accuracy (Spellman 2011). Some comparative Chinese–English translation
studies on machine translation and human translation have shown that Chinese
translators may edit MT output to achieve good-quality translation work, provided that
they are undertaking technical translation jobs (Dong et al. 2013; Lee and Liao 2011). As
Pym (2013: 488) pointed out, ‘statistical-based MT is destined to turn most translators into
post-editors one day, perhaps soon’. The development of technology provides boundless
opportunities that should not be overlooked by novice translators wishing to make a name
for themselves.

Although the use of machine translation will help Chinese translators to translate faster and
better through post-editing, the translator’s Chinese competence may still play a vital role in
guaranteeing translation quality (Dong et al. 2013). Example 18 is extracted from their study
(Dong et al. 2013: 335–6).
Example 18

Later studies with rats found that rats completed a maze faster after being played Mozart than rats that were played white noise or silence.

In comparison with 18a, the Google translate output and the two post-editing versions (18b and 18c) by Chinese translation students are found to be equally unsatisfactory. In addition to punctuation mistakes, the post-editing versions contain various errors (boldface words) arising from the use of wrong Chinese collocation (ting qu yin le 听取音乐 ‘listening to the music’, zou dong dao mi gong 走出一道迷宫 ‘walk out of a maze’) and redundant general usages (yi dou dong zuo 移动动作 ‘movement’, yi ci wei ti na luo shu zuo shi yan 以此为题拿老鼠做实验 ‘take this as topic do experiment’). As native Chinese speakers, the translators of these two versions were obviously influenced by the source text. As Dong, Lan and Wu (2013) pointed out, the benefit of machine translation can only be realised if it is used by translators with good Chinese language proficiency.

Google Translator Toolkit is an online CAT tool available to translators. It is different from Google Translate in that it saves the translation in the user’s account and allows translators to recycle or share their given translations. The toolkit also provides multilingual glossaries, and it will feed Google Translate output to the translation box when no human translation is immediately available.

3.7 Summary

Translation knowledge, skills and resources within a Chinese translation context have been the focus of this chapter. Having conceptualised Chinese translation knowledge and skills using translation competence models, it may be argued that bilingual knowledge of Chinese and English languages is the most important characteristic for Chinese translators to possess. The chapter has also provided the reader with an in-depth discussion of extra-linguistic knowledge and knowledge of translation theory, for use by Chinese translators to identify relevant literature and consolidate translation knowledge. The complex relationship between translation strategy, method and technique has been further clarified in this chapter with an overview of...
the professional translation skills needed, which include choosing translation strategies, selecting methods and acquiring translation techniques. Also addressed in this chapter are web-based corpora, MT resources and web search techniques that may be utilised to improve Chinese translation quality. In addition to translation from English into Chinese, the chapter has also included translation from Chinese into English by native Chinese-speaking translators as an important part in the discussion of Chinese translation.

Notes
1 www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/corpus/babel/babel.htm.
2 www.bfsu-corpus.org/channels/corpus.
3 https://sites.google.com/site/ntnucorpusportal.
4 www.icl.pku.edu.cn/icl_groups/parallel/concordance.asp.

Further reading

Venuti, Lawrence (2012) The Translation Studies Reader. London: Routledge. Venuti’s work has provided a thorough and critical examination of major developments in translation studies. It is widely used not only as a textbook by translation students but also a reference book by researchers.

Campbell, S. (1998) Translation into the Second Language. London: Routledge. The author has proposed a model of translation competence into the second language, which has often been adopted in studies on translation into the translator’s second language. The book provides useful information for Chinese translation learners to improve their Chinese into English translation skills.

Holmes, J.S. (1975) The Name and Nature of Translation Studies. Translation Studies Section, Department of General Literary Studies, University of Amsterdam. Holmes’s work is considered a fundamental reading for translation students to gain a bird’s-eye view of translation studies as a discipline.


References

English references


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Chinese references


Luo, Xuan Min 罗选民, Huang, Qin 黄勤 and Zhang, Jian 张健 (2008) 大学翻译教学测试改革与翻译能力的培养 (Reform in translation teaching and testing in universities and cultivation of translation competence). Foreign Language Teaching 29(1): 76–82.


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