摘要

众所周知，中国古典诗歌堪称中国文学的精华与瑰宝。其中，早期的乐府诗在中国文学史上就占有特殊的地位并对其产生了重要的影响。它的自由体诗和格律诗对后期的诗歌创作起到了典范的作用。然而，由于文化缺省因素的存在，使得在乐府诗歌翻译的过程中始终会遇到很多障碍。虽然国内外的很多译者都致力于乐府诗歌的翻译，他们仅考虑到译文的实际用途，目的语读者的期盼和他们的认知环境往往被忽视了。本文将以乐府诗歌的翻译为例，并把关联理论运用到中国古典诗歌的翻译当中，试图解决文化因素对翻译过程产生的障碍，以此证实关联理论可以运用到诗歌翻译过程中的可行性和正确性。借助于关联理论，本文仅将深入研究乐府诗歌翻译中文化信息的传递。Sperber和Wilson于1986年首次提出了关联理论，之后又由Wilson的学生Ernst-August Gutt于1991年继续发展了此理论。根据关联理论，交际过程包括两个模式—解码过程和明示-推理过程。在交际过程中，能够影响并保证交际过程成功的主要因素即是说话者和听话者之间能否找到最佳关联。最佳关联也就是以最小的认知努力取得最大的语境效果。在交际过程中，语境效果大，推理时付出的努力就小，关联性就强；语境效果差，推理时付出的努力就大，关联性就弱；除此之外，关联理论还强调语境的重要性。译者在翻译过程中还必须考虑原文读者的认知环境是否存在于目的语读者的认知环境中，以及原文作者企图传达给原文读者的语境假设是否同样也存在于译文读者的认知环境中；也就是说，只有目的语读者的认知环境和语境假设都被译者考虑在内时，原文本的言内之意和言外之意才能被成功地传递。本文将以乐府诗歌的翻译为例，试图说明关联理论对诗歌翻译过程中文化信息传递的解释力。

关键词：乐府诗歌　关联理论　最佳关联　文化缺省　言内之意　言外之意

Abstract

It is well-known that classical Chinese poetry is the essence and treasure of Chinese literature. Among them the early *yuefu* poetry occupies particular position and exerts great influence to Chinese literary history. Its free and regulated forms intratextualize the latter poetic creations. However, due to the cultural default, the process in the translation of the *yuefu* poetry still has many obstacles to overcome. There are many translators, at home and abroad, devoting themselves to classical Chinese poetry translation usually according to the practical use. The actual target reader's expectations and cognitive environments are ignored. This thesis adopts the translation of *yuefu* poetry as a case study by applying relevance theory into the translation of the classical Chinese poetry and tries to overcome the translating obstacles of cultural factors in order to show the feasibility and validity of the relevance theory in poetry translation. With the help of relevance theory, this thesis will make an effort to probe into the translation of *yuefu* poetry and only focus on the conveying of the cultural information. Relevance theory is first put forward by Sperber and Wilson in 1986, and then developed by Wilson's student Ernst-August Gutt in 1991. In light of relevance theory, communication process includes two models. One is coded communication. Another is ostensive-inferential communication. In this communicating process, the main factor that can affect and guarantee the communication to be successful is the pursuit of the optimal relevance on the both parts of the communicator and addressee. When one communicates to another, he always transfers the assumption that the recipients can derive contextual effects with minimal effort adequately. According to the relevance theory, the translator should take the target readers' cognitive environment into consideration so as to choose the optimal communicative clues for arousing contextual effects on the part of the recipients. Only when one has thought about the cognitive environment and contextual assumptions of the target readers can he convey the explicature and implicature of the source text successfully in his versions. This thesis will give a case study by using relevance theory in the translation of *yuefu* poetry, especially in the conveying of the cultural information, and endeavors to make the feasibility of relevance theory in poetry translation come into sight.

Key words: *yuefu* poetry   relevance theory   optimal relevance   cultural default
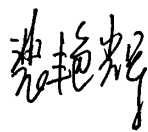explicature   implicature.

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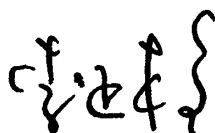
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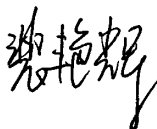
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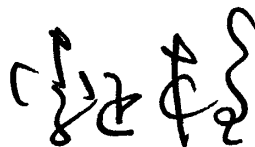
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2008 年 5 月 30 日   2008 年 5 月 30 日

Introduction

Language is the soul of the culture, and poetry is the soul of the language. So is the classical Chinese poetry. Just as Shakespeare said, brevity is the soul of the wit. When using wit as a standard for literary works, classical Chinese poetry among all forms of literary surely marked the epitome of the wit of the Chinese people. *Yuefu* poetry, an important part of classical Chinese poetry, shows its unique excellence as one of the most shining gems of Chinese culture. It is not only a sign of the values, sentiments and philosophies of the Chinese people but also their national characters. When one is appreciating it, for example, *yuefu* poetry in particular, he seemingly touches the Chinese history and the heart of the Chinese culture. Taking *yuefu* poetry for example, it is a mirror of the Han Dynasty reflecting the whole spectrum of human life and feeling of that period. Apart from these characteristics, due to the brevity of poetic diction, the classical Chinese poetry also represents the highest art of Chinese language. Moreover, classical Chinese poetry is bound with the superb beauty in sound, diction and sense which has made Chinese spell-bound for centuries. To be exact, classical Chinese poetry embodies the essence of the Chinese language and culture. With the development of the country, culture transmitting to the world poses a special position in the whole scale of developing plan. Therefore, the introduction of classical Chinese poetry to the world is of strategic significance. Yet, because of the cultural default caused by the lack of mastering of classical Chinese language and culture, the inevitable mistranslations emerge. Taking it as a sort of responsibility, the translator nowadays should shoulder the task of transmitting the national culture to the world by improving the versions on hand to meet up with the demands of our time.

Penetrating into the developing process of the human civilization, translation plays not only an active but also an important role in promoting cultural exchanges in different nations. Though great achievement has been obtained, cultural constituents are still the toughest obstacles standing in translation. Gradually, the trend of translating studies at present treats culture as an indispensable element. Just as Nida pointed out, "the role of language within a culture and the influence of the culture on the meanings of words and idioms are so pervasive

that scarcely any text can be adequately understood without careful consideration of its cultural background."① Translation has been studied from a variety of perspectives and scholars of different schools hold different opinions about some controversial topics, most of which are culture-involved. However, none of the traditional research can produce a perfect and universal model for a complete coverage of translation studies. There is always some space for argument. As a cognitive pragmatic theory of communication, relevance theory has the most explanatory power over translation. Relevance theory is first put forward by Sperder and Wilson and then developed by Wilson's student, Gutt, who is the first person studying translation in terms of relevance theory. As a result of research, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* brings forward the idea that translation is a linguistic communication, an inferential process closely related to mental mechanisms, an interlingual ostensive-inferential interpretive act. Translation deals with not only linguistic codes but also, more importantly, dynamic inference, which relies on dynamic contexts and relevance. This framework provides a totally new perspective to the field of translation and it has been proved that some paradoxes existing in the traditional studies can be well solved within this framework.

At home, there are also several scholars who have written creative articles about this new perspective of translation including Professor Lin Kenan, Professor He Ziran and Professor Zhao Yanchun. This field is also heatedly discussed and studied by many postgraduates in their theses for M.A. degree. According to the data collected from CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), it is found that there are 251 theses and 537 journals touching relevance theory, of which 5 theses and 4 journals are directly concerned with poetry translation in the framework of relevance theory. Unfortunately, there is no one paper discussing the translation of the Han *Yuefu* poetry from the perspective of relevance theory among all the theses above.

As poetry, *yuefu* poems reflect not only classical Chinese poetic culture but also the realistic life and hardships of people living in the Han Dynasty. Based on the important effect of Han *yuefu* poems on Chinese literary tradition, with which many famous poets for example Li BO and Du Fu composed numerous new *yuefu* poems in the fusing of their personal intent with passions to expose the individual and social reality vividly, the translation of the Han

yuefu poems become especially meaningful for it is this special genre that in many ways *yuefu* poetry, with its imitative core and intratextual elaboration, is a genre that practices all the other genres. One could, after all, write a regulated *yuefu* verse, an old style *yuefu* poem, a *yuefu* poem that is in another light a *yongwu* poem. Certainly a *yuefu* is also a "song", (gexing) with the intratextuality added, and perhaps even a proto-*ci* with its intratextuality reformed. Of the major poetic genres, only the *fu* (rhapsody) seems untouched by the range of *yuefu* poetic forms. So the importance of the *yuefu* poetry in Chinese literary history became more apparent when one studys *yuefu*'s influence on other literary genres. [②] However, the study of *yuefu* poetry and the translation of the *yuefu* poetry never reach the height just like the influence of the *yuefu* poetry on the literary history. Based on this point, the study of translation in *yuefu* poetry has its particular worth. To be regretted, even some different versions can be found, not many well-done researches about the versions themselves have been spotted.

Many English versions of the *yuefu* poetry appeared in Europe and America---published by Oxford in 1967. J. D. Frodsham translated and edited *An Anthology of Chinese Verse: Han Wei Chin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties*. Cyril Birth compiled *Anthology of Chinese Literature* (1965). John A. Turner edited *A Golden Treasury of Chinese Poetry* (1976). Burton Watson edited the famous *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry*(1984). Bonnie McCandless's *Chinese Poetry* and Anne Birrel's *Chinese Love Poetry –New Songs from a Jade Terrace* (1995). Apart from the versions mentioned abroad, there are also some versions at home. Wang Rongpei translated *300 Early Chinese Poetry*(1996). Xu Yuanzhong edited *On Chinese Verse in English Rhyme* (1992) and *Song of the Immortal—An Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry*(1994). Moreover, Ding Zuxin translated *Gems of Chinese Poetry*(2001). The previous quoted versions show that scholars at home and abroad are quite intereted in *yuefu* poetry. Yet rare commentary of *yuefu*'s versions can be found. Wang Rongpei analyses several versions abroad in the preface of his *yuefu*'s version. He comments on respective versions according to the principle of "transfer of meaning and conveyance of spirit."[③] Only when the poem is translated in terms of this principle can it be a successful version. Li Yiyin compares Dr Anne Birrell's version and Eric Edney's version by analyzing them in light of "faithfulness" and "expressiveness" and finally draws on the conclusion that

each version has its own merits. ④

Many scholars and translators abroad are also closely connected with the *yuefu* poetry. Joseph R. Allen studies the *yuefu* as an identifiable form within a literary system and analyzes the translation of *yuefu* poetry in the framework of intertextuality. Intertextuality is first put forward by Julia Kristéva and is what Kristéva understands as the totality of knowledge that makes literary meaning possible by allowing a text to be read within a semiotic system. Appling this theory, Joseph R. Allen commands on the versions of *yuefu* poetry from the perspectives of form and musicality in his book *In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry* (1984).

Another scholar and translator associated with *yuefu* poetry abroad is Stephen Owen. Many of the discussions in his studies involve recurring patterns in groups of texts. He uses this useful way to study of Chinese classical poetry because it involves a repertoire of knowledge that is not restricted to writers of poetry alone; he argues that the term "intertextuality" is probably inappropriate for early classical poetry. Intertextuality presumes a relationship between "texts" and many more poems were composed in the early period than have been preserved. Based on the above viewpoint, Stephen Owen studies the translation of the Chinese classical poetry especially the Han *yuefu* poetry from the different themes including immortals、death、the feast、imitation and the relationship between the author and the speaker. He comments on the composing and translation of the *yuefu* poetry from the novel perspectives in his book *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (2006). All these will contribute to the progress in the translation of Chinese classical poetry.

Considering the important influence of *yuefu* poetry on Chinese literary history, one could argue that the position *yuefu* poetry held on the lyric side of the Chinese poetic spectrum was similar to that held by the rhapsody on the prosaic side. The intratextuality of *yuefu* poetry was also a relatively easy form of imitative poetics. It did not even require access to an encyclopedia; as long as another poem in the intratext were available then one could write intratextually. This form of writing would have been quite suitable to novitiates of literary culture of early China. They could learn to write well in a limited area of intertextuality (in the *yuefu* intratext), before venturing out into the textual sea of Chinese poetry. The introduction to *yuefu* poetry could lead them on to the more subtle and difficult

writing of *shi* poetry, especially regulated verse.⑨

Up till now, not many theses for M.A. degree can be found to study *yuefu*'s versions from the perspective of cognition and context. The starting point of this thesis is an intention to introduce a general view of relevance-based translation presented by Ernst-August Gutt and also apply it to the translation of *yuefu* poetry. The main aim is to put relevance theory to a more applicable use in studying Chinese classical poetry translation. Facing with the enduring conflict of poetry translating strategy, with which different schools hold different and even completely opposite views, this thesis will attempt to find a more effective and justified method by placing poetry translation in the framework of relevance theory.

This thesis is divided into three chapters.

Chapter One introduces basic concept of relevance theory and a new notion of translation in the framework of this theory as well as its feasibility in the translation of classical Chinese poetry translation.

Chapter Two pursues the genre of *yuefu* as a literary concept and analyzes the translation of *yuefu* poetry from perspectives of material cultures, social cultures and historical cultures.

Chapter Three makes a study of the metaphor in light of relevance theory and analyzes its different versions in *yuefu* poetry translation by adopting the optimal relevance principle.

Chapter One

Relevance Theory and Poetry Translation

A. A survey of relevance theory

1. Ostensive-inferential communication

Before Relevance Theory is introduced in detail, particular attention should be paid to communication. From Aristotle to modern semioticians, the theories of communication were mostly based on the single model—the code model with which the communication itself is interpreted as an encoding and decoding process. Paul Grice has proposed a quite different model, the inferential model. According to the inferential model, communication is achieved by producing and interpreting evidence. However, Sperber and Wilson (1995:1) advocated that "the code model and the inferential model are not incompatible; they can be combined into various ways. Verbal communication involves both coding and inferential process."[1] According to Sperber and Wilson (1986a), the crucial mental faculty that enables human beings to communicate with one another is the ability to draw inferences from people's behavior. In the processing of communication, one of its participants, the communicator, produces a stimulus—verbal or otherwise—from which the audience can infer what he 'means', or, in the terms of relevance theory, what his *informative intention* is. Taking both the communicator and the audience into consideration, Sperber and Wilson define communication as 'ostensive-inferential behavior'. Appling this viewpoint into information transfer of communication, the communicative process itself can be regarded as an inferential processing:

> Ostensive-inferential communication: the communicator produces a stimulus which makes
> it mutually manifest to communicator and audience that the communicator intends, by means of
> this stimulus, to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumption. [2]

In the framework of relevance theory, verbal communication is taken as an ostensive-inferential process. That is to say, firstly, the communicator makes manifest to the recipient his or her intention in the form of ostensive stimulus on the basis of the presumption that the stimulus chosen is optimally relevant to the addressee; and then the recipient combines the ostensive stimulus with the contextual assumptions, particularly the mutually manifest contextual assumptions, to construct the possible interpretive hypotheses about the communicator's intention. Through this processing, the communicator's intention and recipient's expectation would meet successfully.

2. Context and principle of relevance

The context of an utterance is "the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance. As such, it is a psychological construct, a set of the hearer's assumptions about the world."[5] Hence in relevance theory context refers to partner's "assumptions about the world" or *cognitive environment,* which takes into account the various external factors but places the emphasis on the information they provide and its mental availability for the interpretation process.

> The cognitive environment of a person comprises a potential huge amount of very
>
> varied information. It includes information that can be perceived in the physical
>
> environment, information that can be retrieved from memory—in itself a vast store of
>
> information, including information derived from preceding utterances plus any cultural
>
> or other knowledge stored there—and furthermore information that can be inferred
>
> from these two sources.[3]

So following the relevance theory, an individual's cognitive environment consists of three kinds of information: encyclopedic information, lexical information and logical information. In a word, a cognitive environment of an individual is "a set of facts that are manifest to him."[4] To be manifest here particularly means to be perceptible or inferable. However, because there exists differences in an individual's physical environments and cognitive abilities, cognitive environments may differ in many aspects among people. To achieve successful communication, the same facts and assumptions may be manifested in the

communication by the communicator and recipient with which the two partners' mutual cognitive environments intersect. The intersection itself is called a mutual cognitive environment, which becomes the basis for successful communication among people. In terms of relevance theory, communication by nature is a cognitive interpretive process in which people communicate on the basis of their mutual cognitive environments to achieve optimal contextual effects, modifying the old cognitive environment to recreate new cognitive environment.

According to Sperber and Wilson's notion of context, any of the information provided by cognitive environment could serve as the *potential* context of an utterance. Yet, consideration should be taken into account is that in processing information of a concrete utterance, context selection will come into being. That means not all the assumptions available from the potential context are equally accessible at any given point in time. Only does it prefer to involve selecting the actual, speaker-intended assumptions from among all the potential assumptions. Communication requires the use of quite specific assumptions instead of any other ones in order to avoid misunderstandings which are more likely to arise when wrong assumptions are used. Even so, not all the potential assumptions have the same accessibility in degree. The difference lies in the amount of *effort* required in their retrieval in a particular act of communication.

> The sensitivity to processing effort is one of the crucial factors that make inferential communication possible: it seems that communication, no doubt like many other human activities, is determined by the desire for optimization of resources, and one aspect of optimization is to keep the effort spent to a minimum. Applied to context selection, this means that hearers will naturally start out with those contextual assumptions that are mostly easily accessible to them. Thus by its effect on the accessibility of assumptions, the organization of memory provides the basis for a very effective constraint on the selection of context, given the general principle that people will try to spend as little processing effort on supplying contextual information as possible.

The other aspect of optimization is that of obtaining benefits. Relevance theory

assumes that – put in very general terms—human beings have a natural interest in

improving their understanding around them, this understanding consisting of the

assumptions about the world which they have stored in memory. Hence they expect that

the effort spent in comprehension will in some way modify the contextual assumptions

they brought to the communication act.[③]

Following this way, in the light of Relevance theory, human communication activities

has the tendency to achieve the maximization of rewards by the minimization of the effort.

The rewards here mean context modifications which are referred as contextual effects.

Contextual effects can be of three kinds: they can consist in the derivation of contextual

implications, in the strengthening, or confirmation, of assumptions already held, or in the

elimination of assumptions due to a contradiction.

The crucial notion advocated by Sperber and Wilson is Relevance.

Extent condition 1: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its

contextual effects in this context are large.

Extent condition 2: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort

required to process it in this context is small.(1986a:125, italics as in original)[④]

Thus from the above one can see that relevance is dependent on the interplay of

contextual effects and processing effort. Just like the contextual effects and processing effort

are contextual-dependent, relevance itself is contextual-dependent too. As mentioned above,

context is not static. So relevance is a comparative notion—utterance can vary according to

the degree of relevance they achieve in some context.

The central claim of relevance theory is that human communication crucially creates an

expectation of optimal relevance, that is, an expectation on the part of the hearer that his

attempt at interpretation will yield adequate contextual effects at minimal processing cost. To

achieve this effect, ostensive communication requires the participation of the recipient in the

form of appropriate behaviors, and in particular of attention. With an ostensive stimulus, the

addressee can have not only hopes but also fairly precise expectations of relevance. It is manifest that an act of ostensive communication cannot achieve its effects unless the audience pays attention to the ostensive stimulus. A communicator who produces an ostensive stimulus must intend it to seem relevant to her audience: that is, must intend to make it manifest to the audience that the stimulus is relevant. So by the definition of ostensive-inferential communication, an ostensive communicator necessarily communicates that the stimulus he uses is relevant to the audience. In other words, an act of ostensive communication automatically communicates a presumption of relevance. The communicator should choose the most relevant stimulus to make her particular informative intention mutually manifest with which the addressee will use the least processing effort to achieve the most contextual effects. Based on the above-mentioned, the presumption of optimal relevance communicated by every act of ostensive communication can be spelt out.

Presumption of optimal relevance:

(a) The set of assumption which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus.

(b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one the communicator could have used to communicate.

Therefore, the principle of relevance comes into being.

Principle of relevance

Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance.[2]

As Sperber and Wilson show, human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance. The communicator always implicitly and automatically conveys the assumption that the hearer can expect to derive adequate contextual effects without spending unnecessary effort. The hearer has the right to assume that the first interpretation he arrives at that a rational speaker might have expected (a) to yield adequate contextual effects, and (b) to put

the hearer to no unjustifiable processing effort in obtaining those effects is the interpretation intended by the communicator. Such an interpretation, according to Sperber and Wilson, is consistent with principle of relevance. And this is the answer of relevance theory as to how hearers can infer what the intended interpretation or meaning of an utterance is: it is the interpretation that is consistent with the principle of relevance, and there is never more than one interpretation that fulfils this condition. Therefore, from the hearer's point of view, he will assume that he is in the pursuit of optimal relevance looking for adequate contextual effect when he has used the right, speaker-intended, contextual information. And from the communicator's end, he will find optimal stimulus to express his informative intentions which would be indeed recognized in a minimal effort the hearer costs. To be consistent with the principle of relevance, an utterance must achieve adequate contextual effects and put the hearer to no unjustifiable effort in achieving them.

The principle of relevance does make it possible to use an item-by-item testing strategy in comprehension. It warrants the selection of the first accessible interpretation consistent with the principle, if there is one, and otherwise no interpretation at all. In other words, relevance theory explains how ostensive communications is possible and how it may fail.

B. A new notion of translation in the framework of relevance theory

It is becoming commonplace for works on translation theory to acknowledge that there is a vast body of literature on translation, offering a wealth of observations and views on the subject. Almost equally commonly this acknowledgement is followed by some sorts of notions about translation—expressed with various degrees of this field. Among them the linguistic aspects of the translation process have been enclosed in a large number of definitions mostly dating from the 1960s or earlier. Catford defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)." While such a definition, according to Sager, tends to center around the importance of maintaining some kind of equivalence between ST and TT promotes innovation. Jakobson sees translation in semiotic terms as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language", understanding the translation process as a substitution of "message in

one language not for separate code-units but for entire message in some other language". An approach based on the importance of preserving the effect of the original is reflected in Nida and Taber's definition: "translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style." From descriptive angle, Toury proposes a definition that is target-oriented, stating that a translation is "taken to be any target-language utterance which is presented or regarded as such within the target culture, on whatever grounds". Vermeer, rejecting notions of translation as a two-stage process of decoding and recoding, offers a similarly non-normative definition of translation as "'information' about a source text in another language" ⑧ Vernay (1974) defines translation as—"an act which transfers information given in language A into a language B in such a way that the amount of relevant information received in language B will be identical with that in language A" (1974:237, translation and italics my own). However, these notions are not treated as theoretically interesting, and so one of the key factors in translation is missed out. Relevance theory helps to spell out the crucial role played by the above-mentioned factors, not only with regard to general translation principles, but also to rather specific ones. ⑨

Compared with the above-mentioned, relevance theory claims that there exist two psychologically distinct modes of using language: the descriptive use and the interpretive use. Sperber and Wilson state that "a language utterance is said to be used descriptively when it is intended to be taken as true of a state of affairs in some world"; "an utterance is said to be used interpretively when it is intended to represent what someone said or thought". Based on this statement, translation in the framework of relevance theory is regarded as an interlingual interpretive use. The translation is intended to restate in one language what someone else said or wrote in another. In principle it is, therefore, comparable to quoting or speech-reporting in intra-linguistic use. One of its primary distinctions setting it off from intra-lingual quoting or reporting is that original text and translation belong to different languages. It follows that, as an instance of interpretive use, translation will also be constrained by faithfulness. In other words, the translator will design his translation in such a way that it "resembles" the original closely enough in relevant respects.[14] With this, interpretive resemblance comes into being as

the crucial factor in interpretive use of the translation between the original utterance and that used to represent it. Such interpretive resemblance between SL and TL consists in their sharing of common explicatures and implicatures. In interpretive use the principle of relevance comes across as a presumption of optimal resemblance: what the reporter intended to convey is (a) presumed to interpretively resemble the original—otherwise this would not be an instance of interpretive use—and (b) the resemblance it shows is to be consistent with the presumption of optimal relevance, that is, is presumed to have adequate contextual effects without gratuitous processing efforts. Translation in essence is a two-stage communication activity. On the one hand, it involves the communication between source text communicator and the translator. On the other hand, it includes in translator and the receptor-language audience. So from the RT point of view, translation falls naturally under the interlingual interpretive use of language: the translation is intended to restate in one language what someone else said or wrote in another language.

C. Poetry translation in light of relevance theory

1. Feasibility of the translation in terms of relevance theory

In the framework of relevance theory, translation is regarded as communication. Relevance theory approaches communication from the point of view of competence rather than behavior: it tries to give an explicit account of how the information –processing faculties of our mind enables one to communicate with one another. Its domain is therefore mental faculties rather than texts or processes of text production. The important concept 'cognitive environment' of relevance theory has brought forth a new angle to study translation. Moreover, the intention of the communication is classified into the content of communication and other factors, for instance, the purpose, content, nature, even criterion of translation are all taken into consideration in light of principle of relevance. Studying translation in the framework of relevance theory is actually a shift from descriptive study to explanative study. Relevance theory is not a descriptive-classificatory approach. It does not try to give an orderly description of complex phenomena by grouping them into classes, but tries instead to understand the complexities of communication in terms of cause-effect relationships, which,

applied to our mental life, are taken to mean computational, and particularly inferential, relationship. Furthermore, because it is tied with a psychological optimization principle, relevance theory provides a natural basis for an empirical account of evaluation and decision-making. Relevance theory is a pragmatic theory, which focuses on the relationship between semantic representation and language users. It will inevitably provide a powerful tool for the research on the relationship between the translator and the source text at the same time on the relationship between the translator and the target text as well. In the processing of translation, relevance theory cannot merely make the translator aware of the pervasive influence of the cognitive environment on the interpretation of the source text but help him to distinguish different aspects of meaning when coming across 'jungle of meaning' that seems so bewildering and overwhelming sometimes.

2. Roles played by a translator

When thinking about what achievement translation should arrive, the sweeping agreement would probably be that it should communicate the meaning of the original accurately and clearly to the readers of the target language. That is: 1) Translating the meaning of original; 2) Preserving the assumptions the original communicator intends to convey; 3) Meeting the audience's expectation. Based on these three main goals, the task and role of the translator becomes especially crucial.

The claim that translation generally falls under interpretive use is significant in that it offers an explanation for one of the most basic demands made in the literature on translation—that is, that a thorough understanding of the original text is a necessary precondition for making a good translation. This is naturally entailed if translation is based on interpretive use: in order to produce such a translation, the translator obviously needs to know the interpretation of the original, aiming at complete interpretive resemblance, his knowledge of the original interpretation would have to be very good indeed.[20]

If a communicator uses a stimulus that manifestly requires more processing effort than some other stimulus equally available to him, the hearer can expect that the benefits of this stimulus will outweigh the increase in processing cost—otherwise the communicator would have failed to achieve optimal relevance. One of the factors that affect processing cost is the structural complexity of the stimulus. Another is frequency of use: the more commonly a

certain type of structure occurs in stimuli, the less processing effort it seems to require.

On the translator's part, translation, as a form of communication, should meet one requirement at least: to guarantee the success of communication. Success of communication lies in its efficiency, and efficiency, in turn, is "defined with respect to a goal". Thus the translator's essential task is to "reset parameters as goals" so as to achieve communication efficacy.[1]

Chapter Two

Cultural Translation of *Yuefu* Poetry in terms of Relevance Theory

A. *Yuefu* poetry: a novel genre in the then Chinese culture

1. *Yuefu* as a generic term

The origin and organization of the Music Bureau (*yuefu*), an imperial institution in the Han Dynasty, are relatively clear and have been the concern of a number of literary studies. The poetry that shares this name, *yuefu shi,* or Music Bureau poetry, is a particularly complex genre whose nature, on the other hand, has been usually dismissed with conventional classification. The term Music Bureau comes from the Han-Wei period. In the time of Emperor Xiao of the Han, Xiahou Guan was his Director of the Music Bureau (*yuefu ling*), and this is when the title for the office began. During his reign, Emperor Wu (ca.115 B.C.) set up the Music Bureau, which collected poems for the nightly performance; Emperor Wu was instrumental in expanding the scope of the Music Bureau, if not responsible for its inception, and that his name has been consistently associated with the Bureau and its activities, which, not incidentally, has lent considerable weight to all considerations of the institution. It is probably safe to say that the Music Bureau as is now conceived of was a product of Emperor Wu's personal initiative. There were tunes from the areas of Zhao, Dai, Qin and Chu. Having collected these popular songs, musicians put them to [new] music, which apparently also had come from afar. Of the *yuefu* song texts, some were composed to fit music, such as the poems to "three modes" of the Wei period—these were songs created to fit the music of strings, pipes, bells and stone chimes. As commonly described, the activities of Music Bureau in the Han Dynasty were twofold: (1) to collect and compose music by imperial command; and (2) to perform that music at certain court functions, both ritual and social. Based on the functions and activities of the Music Bureau, *yuefu* poetry came into being. First, *yuefu* referred to hymns (texts and tunes) composed at the Music Bureau for ritual purposes. Second, the term included texts selected by the Music Bureau from works of known authors and set them to music at the Bureau, also used at state ceremonies. Third, it means anonymous songs

collected by the Music Bureau from various parts of China (the Chu region was the richest source) and from abroad. Most of these already had tunes; for those that did not, music was composed at the Bureau. In form, *yuefu* poems are mostly written in lines of uneven length. Later, the term *yuefu* is sometimes used in a very broad sense to include all poetic genres that were originally accompanied by music, notably long and short lines. So anonymous folk songs attributed to the Han period are referred to by the term *yuefu*. One of the duties of Music Bureau was to collect folk songs from various parts of the empire, and hence the term *yuefu* came to be used to designate such early folk songs. [①]

Generally speaking, *yuefu* poetry consists of two types. One of them is folk songs, the other literati poems. "The most important period of *yuefu* poetry was during the Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties," [②] during which period the folk poems found as "old version", scattered throughout central part of Guo Maoqian's collection, were normally called "anomymous" poems and are assumed the primacy of *yuefu* poetry. The assumption that literati poems are chronologically second in Guo Maoqian's corpus of *yuefu* poems certainly can hardly be disputed. Even if one doubts the genre's identity, one must still admit that there *were* early anonymous poems that provided the model for certain literati imitations. At the subcategory, usually subchapter level, poems with shared (or derived) titles are listed chronologically, with any "old version" listed first, clearly indicating Guo's understanding of this sequence of derivation. Moreover, Guo and earlier commentators have explicitly discussed the derivations. For example, after quoting a number of sources referring to "Mulberry Along the Lane" (Moshang sang), [③] Guo concludes the introduction to the "old version":

Lu Ji's poem by the derived title "Sun Rises in the Southeast Corner to Shine" with the line "Brushing the Mulberry tree it rises to shine" sings about how good and cordial the beautiful woman was. It starts out like the "old version" but ends differently. There are also the poems entitled "Picking Mulberry Leaves" that are derived from this poem. A quantitative evaluation of the genre reveals a much different impression of the relative importance of the folk and literati poems. This evaluation has parallels in the perceived importance of the Han versus the post-Han material. For instance, there are only sixteen "old version" in the most reliable source (Shen Yue's *Song Shu*), and the total listed by Guo Maoqian is less than

seventy-five. While the latter, mostly in the Southern Dynasties, "anonymous" poems are more numerous, they do not come anywhere near the number of literati poems. Of the five and a half thousand poems in the Guo Maoqian's corpus, no more than five percent are designated either "old" or "anonymous," while eighty percent are literati, with the remainder in odd categories, such as ritual poems and the pre-Han songs. Of course, it could be argued that quantity is not quality, that the best *yuefu* poetry is still the small number of folk poems, around which the literati ones are just so much literary remains. Such a contention is difficult to counter, but the unquestioning presentation of that argument suggests that a closer look at those literati poems might be informative. The common, and certainly logical, assumption is that without the folk poems the literati imitations could not come into being.

2. *Yuefu* poetry and Chinese culture

From the point of view of socio-linguistics, every culture has its special background and uniqueness. As cultures are diverse, their background will be diverse too. Based on this point, the frequent problems in culture translation are due to the cultural 'gap' or 'distance' between the source language and the target language.

Involving into the translation of classical Chinese poetry, certainly including *yuefu* poetry, the essence of the translation is cross-culture translation. While some words in classical poetry are culture-bound and have no direct equivalents, tough problems in poetry translation would appear sometimes. So is the translation of *Yuefu* poetry in the Han Dynasty. The quality of *yuefu*'s English version is definitely affected by the influence of culture. In this thesis, the main focus will be on the translation of Han *yuefu* poetry from the point of transmission of cultural information by using Relevance Theory in particular. To be more specific, the main attention in this thesis will be paid to transmission of *yuefu* poetry's cultural information from one language to another which mainly deals with cultural explications and implications on the semantic level.

Not only does poetry closely connect with the culture but also reflect the culture. So rendering of the poetry certainly should not be satisfied with the field of the linguistic meaning. Cultural conveying should also be stressed in the rendering of the poetry, which is the tough task of the translator, for only by doing this can the translator cater to the recipients' expectations.

Yuefu poetry reflects the culture of that time. It is one of the most shining gems of Chinese culture. It reflects the spectrum of human life, feelings, values, sentiments and hardships of common people in the Han dynasty. The folk songs in the Han style and narrative poems are the most precious and elegant works of art presented by Chinese history. With complex social life, appearance of prosperous cities and the city people flowing together with literary creation in the north and the south and the progress of poetic style, the narrative poems with a splendid sight and the Han style are massively produced. This is a bright page in literary history. *Yuefu* folk songs definitely reflect the width of social life with depth, and at the same time make the Han *yuefu* poetry itself more vivid and splendid. Opening the poetry-roll of *yuefu* songs, the devastating exposition of the cruelty of rulers and hatred towards war will come into sight immediately. Some poems show the stern resistance to the oppression of feudal society on the youth in marriage. The famous long narrative poem "Southeast the Peacocks Flies" is the best illustration. There is also another poem to show woman's bravery, brightness and tact when facing violence and wickedness. "Mulberry along the Lane" exposes this theme. Apart from the mentioned previously, there still exist other poems realistically reflecting the people's happiness and suffering. Just like the essence of the *yuefu* poetry identifing "lament due to the sufferings". [4]

As culture has many different definitions, various researchers hold that culture consists of various elements. Penetrating from the different points of views of these elements, a much more delicate and accurate study of cultural difference can be caught and also make the translation of cultures from one language to another more accurate and Bassnett, the representative scholar of cultural studies, views translation as the "performative" aspect of intercultural communication. [5]

Eugene A. Nida and Peter Newmark[6] propose that culture includes the following five aspects.

(1) Ecological culture;

(2) Material culture (artifacts);

(3) Social culture: work and leisure;

(4) Organization, customs, activities, procedures, concepts;

(5) Gestures and habits.

This thesis will only focus on the study of material cultures, social cultures and historical cultures which can be classified into the fourth kind of the above-mentioned cultural elements.

There are usually two methods of transferring cultural message from the source text to the target text. One is to find out a substitute in target language which is culturally equivalent to the culture-loaded words. The other is to offer an explanation to the culture-loaded words by interpreting the connotative meaning or adding background information of them.

The two methods mentioned are both target-oriented, reflecting a translation strategy as "domesticating approach", meaning that a transparent, fluent style is adopted to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for the target language reader by leaving the reader in peace and moving the writer toward him. [7] Opposed to it is "foreignizing approach", this approach means to produce a target text which deliberately breaks target conventions by relating something of the foreignness of the original and in which the translator leaves the writer in peace and moves the reader towards him. Though 'domesticating' and 'foreignizing' approaches are two definitely different strategies in transmitting cultural elements in poetic translation, they are not isolated ones without any relationship with each other. Even "the construction of the foreign depends on domestic cultural materials."[8] That is to say, not one of them is better than the other when they are adopted in cultural transmission in which the above two strategies are mutually complementary in fact. From the perspective of relevance translation theory, the crucial point of a successful translation is the fulfillment of optimal relevance. Therefore no matter what method the translator chose, if it can make the translation processing easy and at the same time follow the principle of optimal relevance, it is the justified one. In practice, none of these in poetic translation alone can assure a target text with optimal relevance. Just like the above-mentioned, because of the exist of gap between source and target cultural background, simple method will more likely lead the readers to be confused if necessary additional explanation to the source cultural elements are not offered.

B. Material cultures and the translation of *Yuefu* poems

The Han *yuefu* folk songs which possess the tradition of the realism "are felt in the sadness and happiness, and set out due to long matters." [⑨] Through these mirror-like songs and poems, one can see through the cultures and customs in the Han Dynasty. The Han *yuefu* poetry consists of a big sums of works, most of them in song style and are preserved in histories of the period where they are given a specific historical context and assigned to a known author. Quite different in nature are the poems of those anonymous folks songs attributed to the Han period. They seem to be genuine folk songs of the early period and reflect the life and hardships of the common people. Some use lines of irregular length. Others are predominantly or entirely in five-character or seven-character lines. This part will strive for analysis of those poems which have the quality of anonymous authorship and balladlike character, for only does one penetrate into those especially narrative long works can he discern the realistic scenes of the people's life.

Among the great number of *yuefu* folk songs, the most famous and excellent ones should be "Southeast the Peacock Flies"[⑩] and "Mulberry along the Lane." Owing to their narrative character, some nouns which own apparent material concept emerge frequently. Hence correctly comprehending these nouns becomes the key point to understand and transmit material cultures of the poems and also make the successful translation of the poems possible.

"Southeast the Peacock Flies" is the oldest five-character narrative poem. It occupies a significant position in the history of Chinese narrative poetry. In this poem some important material nouns emerge repeatedly. For each poem cannot be composed without being affected by its proper existing history background, hence understanding those key nouns correctly will become very crucial to reproduce the realistic life of that period for the correct translation of poems. The word "床" in this poem emerges at least three times. Yet the only word "床" at the same source text was translated into completely different versions.

In "Southeast the Peacock Flies", there are sentences like this:

   (1) 阿母得闻之，捶床便大怒："小子无所畏，何敢助妇语！" [⑪]

Four English versions are found about this long narrative poem. The following part is versions in turn:

Version One:

At these words, Zhongqing's mother thumps her **bed,**

Flies into a rage and goes ahead:

"How dare you speak like this, unfilial son!"

(by Wang Rongpei)[1]

Version Two:

The mother was angry at his word;

Her strumming on the **stool** was heard.

(by Xu YuanZhong)[2]

Version Three:

At this the mother's fury knew no bound.

She ranted wildly, strumming on her **stool:**

"Is reverence for aged parents dead?

(by Yang Xianyi)"[3]

Version Four:

His mother, hearing this,

pounded on her **chair** in a fit of rage.

"Little one, have you no caution?

How dare you speak up for your wife!"

(by Burton Watson)[4]

The word "床"[5] in ancient times refers to a kind of sitting tool. Our forefathers always have the habit of sitting on the ground. Only can the respectable ones who have high status have the quality to sit on the bed, the word "床" is repeated several times in *Southeast the Peacock Flies* . It refers to a sort of tool for sitting in this sentence. In Sentence "阿母得闻之，捶床便大怒", Version Two and Version Three translated it into "stool", Version Four into "chair". Only Version One translated it into "bed". "Stool" in modern English refers to a sort of seat without a back or arms, usually for one person. "Chair" means a moveable seat with a back and sometimes with arms, for one person to sit on. "Bed" indicates a thing to sleep or

rest on, especially a piece of furniture with a mattress and coverings.[9]

From the above four versions, it is not difficult to draw the conclusion that Version Two and Version Three use the same word "stool". Version Four uses "chair". Both of these two words in modern English have the meaning referring to a sort of sitting tool, regardless of whether it can be movable or not, and regardless of whether it has back and arms or not. In light of principle of relevance, the translator provides the target readers with properly communicative clues which attach to the source hypothesis of the original with consideration of recipients' cognitive environment and minimal processing effort. The stimulus and the cognitive environment (contextual effects) match with each other and result in the meaning communicated by the source text. In this way the target readers can reach the original meaning the source text intended without extra efforts. Thus Version Two, Three and Four are faithful to the source text. Version One is more likely to make recipients misunderstand and get confused about the source text.

(2) "新妇初来时，小姑始抚床，今日被驱遣，小姑如我长。"

Version One:

　　　　She says, "When I came as a newly-wed,

　　　　You learned to walk by holding to the **bed**."

　　　　　　　　(by Wang Rongpei)[1]

Version Two:

　　　　"When your brother and I were wed,

　　　　You came around our nuptial **bed**."

　　　　　　　　(by Xu Yuanzhong)[2]

Version Three:

　　　　"When to this house I first came as a bride,

　　　　Dear sister, you were just a naughty child."

　　　　　　　　(by Yang Xianyi)[23]

Version Four:

　　　　"When I first came here as a bride,

<div style="text-align:center">You could barely stand up by holding to the **bed**."</div>

<div style="text-align:center">(by Burton Watson)[③]</div>

The word "床" in "扶床" also means the "seat"—for "扶床" in ancient times stands for a kind of etiquette, that is the young takes the "bed" (still here means the seat) for the elder. According to *Yu pian* (《玉篇》) " '扶' means '持'; '持' means '握'" [②] Words like "扶", "持"and "执" in ancient Chinese have mutual implicature. "床" in *Shuo Wen* (《说文》) indicates that it is a place to take seat instead of a place for sleeping nowadays. When sitting, you will be served to take it for a seat by the younger. Offspring should greet their parents, uncles and aunts; when the elder attends table, the "bed" was offered to sit by the younger. So even "床" in sentence "小姑始扶床" also means a sort of sitting tool which is different from a piece of furniture with a mattress and coverings to sleep or rest on.

In Version One, Two and Four, character "床" is translated into the same word—"bed". Translators do not catch the difference between expressed meaning and the intended explicature. Their interpretations of the original will only be adequate to the degree that it is based on a thorough understanding of the original culture context. Misunderstanding will emerge, let alone faithful translation. Version Four avoids this problem and ambiguity arises. Therefore, it is difficult to fulfill the optimal relevance and cope with target readers' expectation.

(3) "媒人下床去, 诺诺复尔尔。"

Version One:

<div style="text-align:center">When the go-between takes his leave,</div>

<div style="text-align:center">He has achieved more than he can believe.</div>

<div style="text-align:center">(by Wang Rongpei)[③]</div>

Version Two:

<div style="text-align:center">The go-between learned what they said,</div>

<div style="text-align:center">To his lord's house he went ahead.</div>

<div style="text-align:center">(by Xu Yuanzhong)[②]</div>

Version Three:

When he heard this, the official go-between

Agreed to everything the brother asked.

Then to the Prefect's house they hurried back

To tell the happy outcome of their work.

（ by Yang Xianyi ）®

Version Four:

The matchmaker got down from his **seat,**

With "Yes, yes," and then "Fine, fine!"

(by Burton Watson)®

Version One, Two, and Three do not give the direct translation about word "床" instead of obscuring the meaning of "床". Different from this, Version Four provides a definite one of "seat". The translator is well-equipped to research the meaning expressed in the original text, the contextual background in which it was intended to be interpreted, and the successful interpretation resulting from the combination of the two. A comparative study shows that Version Four renders "床" into "seat", while the other three do not indicate important explicatures of the original. So the possible reasons that account for this under-perfection of versions may be their lack of background knowledge about the classical poetry as well as Chinese culture.

From the perspective of Relevance Translation Theory, the task of the translator is to provide exact communicative clues for target text readers in order to arouse their cognitive context. Yet a thorough understanding of the original text is a necessary precondition for making a good translation. A faithful translation should be a transmitting or transferring of the information which the original text conveyed to its readers and simultaneously makes the recipients of the translation understand the message with ease. Taking this point into consideration, the translator first of all should have a correct understanding of the original. Having used the intended message obtained from the original, the translator should convey to the target language audiences a literal interpretation of the source text. However, there are some cultural gaps in fact. Those cultural gaps will affect recipients' cognitive environment which comprises a potential huge amount of varied information for the simple reason that

languages differ in many properties. In fact, if the linguistic properties of the original were reproduced, the result would not be a translation at all, but an actual quote from the source text in the source language. For this reason what mattered about translation were not the actual linguistic properties of the source language text, but rather the 'communicative clues' they provide to the intended translation. Apart from understanding the original text correctly, the crucial task of the translator is to choose definite 'communicative clues' which can be used to check whether they give rise to the same interpretation when processed in the same context. Meanwhile, if the recipient can not recover the original intended interpretation by using 'communicative clues' provided by translator, that means it does not provide necessary reference to the intended interpretation of the original, to be direct, the translator fails in his translating of the source text. He does not succeed in providing a source of hypotheses about the communicator's intention which can arouse communicative clues to the target readers. Not taking the hearers' context and cognitive environment into consideration, he can not convey the exact information that original writer wants to convey and what the target readers expect.

C. Social cultures and the translation of *Yuefu* poems

The folk songs and long narrative poems of the Han *yuefu* poetry are well-known by the realistic characteristics in reflecting customs of that era. It shows not only the daily life of the people but the spiritual world of the feudal society as well. When reading it, one can see through the cultures, customs in the Han Dynasty and "watch the custom and know it well."

In "Southeast the Peacock Flies", when Lan Zhi says goodbye to her sister-in-law, the last two sentences are:

" 勤心养公姥, 好自相扶将.

初七及下九, 嬉戏莫相忘."

Here are four versions:

Version One: When the maidens spend their festive days,

Remember me while you sing and play.

(by Wang Rongpei)^⑦

Version Two:　　When maidens hold their festive days,

　　　　　　　　Do not forget me while you play.

(by Xu Yuanzhong)^⑧

Version Three:　　When all the maidens hold their festivals,

　　　　　　　　Forget not her who once looked after you.

(by Yang Xianyi)^⑨

Version Four:　　When the seventh and the twenty-ninth come round,

　　　　　　　　Remember the games and good times we had together.

(On the 7th and 29th days of the month, women were allowed to rest from their work. Some commentators take the 7th to refer to the festival of the Herdboy and the Weaving Maiden held on the night of the 7th day of the 7th month, when girls prayed for skill in weaving and needlework.)

(by Burton Watson)^⑩

In the Han Dynasty women have leisure time to relax and entertain themselves every year. During this period they get together happily and play various games trying to enjoying themselves. The date of the playing puts on "初七"^⑪ and "下九".^⑫ This custom probably can be traced back to the Western Han Dynasty. "初七" here is the variant of a famous Chinese idiom "七夕" which is also named Daughter Day (女儿节) or Qi Qiao Festival (乞巧节). The so-called "七夕" is the 7th day of the 7th month. People hold traditional festival games on "七夕". Except from those entertainments, women in particular will pray for skill in weaving and needlework. In ancient times, the 29th day of the month was called "上九", the 9th day of the month was named "中九" and the 19th day of the month "下九". When coming upon "下九"of every month, people will lay up wine to women for their distraction. So women of that period also look upon "下九" as their own festival. These two customs consist in the culture of the Han Dynasty. However, it is probably not possessed in modern readers'

cognitive environment, let alone the recipients of other languages. When translators transfer these Chinese customs into other languages, cultural default emerges due to default of relevant cultural background knowledge shared by the author or translator and his intended readers. Because cultural default attaches to the cultural knowledge outside of the source text, people living in the same social-cultural environment generally share the same cultural background knowledge. A translator usually directs his versions at readers from other cultural community; therefore, only leaving some key linguistic elements or the context in the version is not feasible. The source text writer and the target language reader sometimes do not share the same cognitive environment for they are not in the same language-culture communities. What is transparent to the source language reader in the form of cultural default is often obscure to the target language reader. In this situation, the translator, serving as a bridge between text writer and target language reader, should take into account the decoding ability of the TL reader. The missing information neglected by cultural default can only be recalled by stimulating the cultural assumption prototypes stored in target reader's long-standing memory. Yet it is this cultural assumption prototype that the target reader shorts. So there is a breakdown for the target reader in the comprehension of the real-world relationships described by the original text. In order to remove the comprehending obstacles of recipients, the translator should be aware of the gap and attempt to form compensation about the slot of the cultural background assumption in his translating process. As mentioned previously, no matter what method the translator adopts to solve the problem, whether domesticating or foreignizing, if it accords with the optimal relevance principle, it is a justified one. In practice, not any one of them in poetic translation alone can always assure a target text with optimal relevance. To free from being confused or misunderstanding in comprehension of the target reader, the necessary additional explanation to the source cultural elements should be given by proper expression in the version.

When reading "勤心养公姥，好自相扶将。初七及下九，嬉戏莫相忘。", the target language readers without traditional Chinese cultural background cannot trigger any assumptions stored in their minds, and they cannot use the potential context to interpreting the poem very well. They would be puzzled about the cultural meaning of "初七" and "下九". Are there any other days on which the women in the Han Dynasty enjoy themselves? Why do

they choose their own festivals on "初七" and "下九" not other days? On coming upon the poem, those who have not experienced the Chinese literary history and cultural customs cannot keep associating what the poem implies with their experience. The target language readers who have not shared the same cultural background assumption or cognitive environment can hardly get the implied meaning. So the "vacuum of sense" is created. Version One, Two and Three choose the same diction –"festive day" and "hold their festival" to convey the implied cultural meaning for these three translators—Wang Rongpei, Xu Yuanzhong and Yang Xianyi are all Chinese themselves. They share the same cultural background with the poet. Being aware of the cultural gap, they succeed in transferring the implied information in their versions and fulfill the principle the optimal relevance. Quite differently, Version Four adopts the method of "foreignizing" and apart from conveying direct semantic symbols, the translator also provide necessary additional cultural information in the notes. As a foreign translator, Burton Watson consciously realized the slot in comprehending, yet he does not get a thorough and correct understanding of the cultural background with the result that an error is committed. "下九" in Chinese culture refers to the 19th day of the month and yet the translator views it as the 29th of the month.

D. Historical cultures and the translation of *Yuefu* poems

Every change in language is always bound to follow the progress of social history. The development of language is closely linked with the development of the economics and culture. In fact, language is an integral part of culture. Historical culture refers to the culture which is formed under specified historical conditions as well as those whose form is due to the precipitation of social relics. Because of the different developing processes of history among countries, various historical cultures come into being in this period. The poetry is one of its important representations in contents. Different culture may give birth to different social structure which includes economical and political structures. In ancient China, politics is always felt more acutely. The official title may be unique from those of any other culture. Owing to the intimate relationship between language and culture, translation of language cannot be considered only a word to word transfer between linguistic symbols. So the

translator should be aware of this respect in translating classical poems.

Besides "Southeast the Peacock Flies", another excellent poem is the outstanding "Mulberry along the Lane".⊕ When Luo Fu, the beautiful, brave and bright heroine, praises her husband, she said:

"十五府小吏，二十朝大夫，

三十侍中郎，四十专城居。"

There are five different versions about these two sentences.

Version One:　At fifteen he was a clerk of minor sort;

Twenty saw him an official in the court.

Thirty years a chancellor for the crown;

At forty he is magistrate in the town.

(by Wang Rongpei)⊛

Version Two:　At fifteen he was a junior clerk;

At twenty he did a courtier's work;

At thirty he wore chamberlain's gown;

At forty he was lord of a town.

(by Xu Yuanzhong)⊛

Version Three:　At the age of fifteen

He kept prefecture minutes,

A scribe in his twenties,

At thirty a minister;

Now, being forty,

He governs a district.

(by Yang Xianyi)⊛

Version Four:　At fifteen he was a grandee

At twenty he was a minister at court

At thirty he was a Palace Gentleman

At forty he is a Prefect Mayor.

(by Joseph R. Allen)⊛

Version Five: At fifteen he was county clerk,

At twenty, provincial court councilor,

At thirty, palace attendant,

At forty, lord governor.

(Co-edited by Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo)⑨

The above five different versions of the poem reflect respective cognitive environments or pre-stored information of the translator in their mind. "小吏"⑨ in Version One is translated into "a clerk of minor sort" and Version Two is translated into "a junior clerk". Version Four uses "grandee" and Version Three uses "keep the prefecture minutes". "Clerk" in modern English refers to a person employed in an office, a shop, etc to keep records, accounts, etc. "Grandee" means formerly Spanish or Portuguese nobleman of high rank. "Kept the prefecture minutes" hints that he is in the position of a secretary. "小吏" in ancient time means an officer with a quite low position in status. So Version One and Two focus on the lowness of the status. It shows the deep cultural meaning of the original and fulfills the optimal relevance principle. Version Five only conveys the explicature and misses the implicature of the original. Version Three and Four did not comprehend the original correctly and so led to mistranslating.

"朝大夫" in the Han Dynasty refers to an official title which is above the *shi* "士" (a social stratum between the *dafu* '大夫' and multitude) and under the *qing* "卿" (an official title of a high rank in feudal society)⑩ Both Version One and Two imply that Luofu's husband works in the court and takes the position of the official. "Scribe" in Version Three means that a person who makes copies of writings before printing was invented. "Minister" refers to (US secretary) a person at the head of a government department or a main branch. These two versions do not catch the main ideas of the original correctly. Version Five stresses provincial court instead of court and misunderstanding will be led.

"侍中郎" ⑪originally indicates a high rank of official title with special honor in the court. "chancellor"、"chamberlain" and "minister" all express the honorable title in the court and they can so arouse the proper communicative clues in target reader's mind. "Palace gentleman" and "Palace attendant" do not expose intrinsic quality of the title and use second

communication situations to lead to intended implicature of the original to be missed. As Gutt states, the translator's or interpreter's task is to ensure that the receptor language text he comes up with '__is the most relevant 〔ostensive stimulus〕 the communicator could have used to communicate'.❷

It is universally acknowledged that cultural default will inevitably cause trouble in interpretation. Hence the translator should take the responsibility to avoid any confusion or understanding on the recipients of the target text and tries his best to employ feasible strategies to rebuild cultural default in the translation. "One of the preconditions of authentic literary interpretation is a reconstruction of the historical, cultural and sociological background in which the piece of literature in question was written."❸ The process of translation can be divided into two stages including comprehension and expression; and the former constitutes the logical precondition of the latter. A thorough understanding of the original text is a necessary precondition for a good translation because the reconstruction will be inevitably affected by the translator's own first interpretation in the mind. On the first stage, a successful translator needs to have a good command of the original language and the culture in question. In particular, the translator should have the ability to recognize the cultural default in the original text and recover relevant background information from his semantic memory to interpret it properly.

As relevance theory points out, the communicator can intend to convey all of the assumptions weakly, without intending to convey any one of them strongly. This brings out afresh the general link-up between the requirement of preserving all and only the 'communicative clues' of the original and that of preserving the original interpretation. The very nature of 'communicative clues' is to guide the audience to the intended interpretation, hence different clues will lead to different interpretation—if the contextual information used is the same. On this argument, the way one can know whether two text in language A and B share all their communicative clues is by checking whether they give rise to the same interpretation when processed in the same context. Therefore, when translating cultures, translator should make his versions purport to interpretively resemble the original completely in the context envisaged for the original by arousing the precise 'communicative clues'.

Apart from the literal utterances, "loose talk" or "loose use" of the language is always

appeared in actual utterance and works and there is no abstract discontinuity between the literal utterances or text and its metaphorical implicatures. In general, the wider the range of potential implicatures and the greater the hearer's responsibility for constructing them, the more poetic the effect, the more creative the metaphor. A good creative metaphor is precisely one in which a variety of contextual effects can be retained and understood as weakly implicated by the speaker. In the richest and most successful cases, the reader can go beyond just exploring the immediate context and the entries for concepts involved in it, accessing a wide area of knowledge, adding metaphors of his own as interpretations of possible developments he is not ready to go into, and getting more and more very weak implicatures, with suggestions for still further processing. The surprise or beauty of a successful creative metaphor lies in the condensation, in the fact that a single expression which has itself been loosely used will determine a very wide range of acceptable weak implicatures.[2] The next chapter will mainly focus on the nature of metaphor understanding and its translating in the framework of relevance theory.

Chapter Three

Translation of Metaphors in *Yuefu* Poetry

A. The concept of metaphor

As a rhetorical device, metaphor is frequently used in all languages. Peter Newmark defines metaphor as "any figurative expression: the transferred sense of a physical word; the personification of an abstraction; the application of a word or collocation to what it does not literally denote, i.e., to describe one thing in terms of another."[①] According to Sperber and Wilson, by uttering a metaphor the speaker intends to communicate a complex thought. Instead of trying to convey it literally, thus causing the hearer (and herself) to increase the processing efforts, she chooses to communicate in a more easily expressed assumption which shares some logical and contextual implications. The exact subset of implications of the utterance that will be taken to be shared by the speaker's thought—and consequently to be intended —is yielded each time by the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance. Metaphor is thus considered to be a sub-variety of loose use of language, where what matters is not the truthfulness/literalness of a proposition but its degree of faithfulness to the content of a thought. In essence, figurative language and literal language differ only in the degree to which the propositional form of an utterance resembles the speaker's thoughts. As always, increase in the figurativeness of an utterance "must be offset by some increase in contextual effects." This increase in contextual effects usually takes the form of a range of implicatures being weakly conveyed; the more figurative an expression, the wider the range of implicatures it is likely to convey. According to Sperber and Wilson, the relationship between the propositional form and the thought of the speaker is described as the metaphorical processes. Every utterance with a propositional form resembles the thoughts of a speaker. The propositional form interprets the speaker's thought. So "a metaphor involves an interpretive relation between the propositional form of the utterance and the though it represents."[②]

Metaphors and variety of related tropes (e.g. hyperbole, metonymy, and synecdoche) are simple creative exploitation of a perfectly general dimension of language use. The search for optimal relevance leads the speaker to adopt, on different

occasion, a more or a less faithful interpretation of her thoughts. The result in some cases is literalness, in others metaphors. Metaphors thus requires no special interpretive abilities or procedures: it is a natural outcome of some very general abilities or procedures used in verbal communication.③

It is widely used in all kinds of works of literature, even in our daily conversations. The relationship between the propositional form of an utterance and the thought this utterance is used to represent can be showed in the following diagram which locates translation in the relevance-theoretical framework.
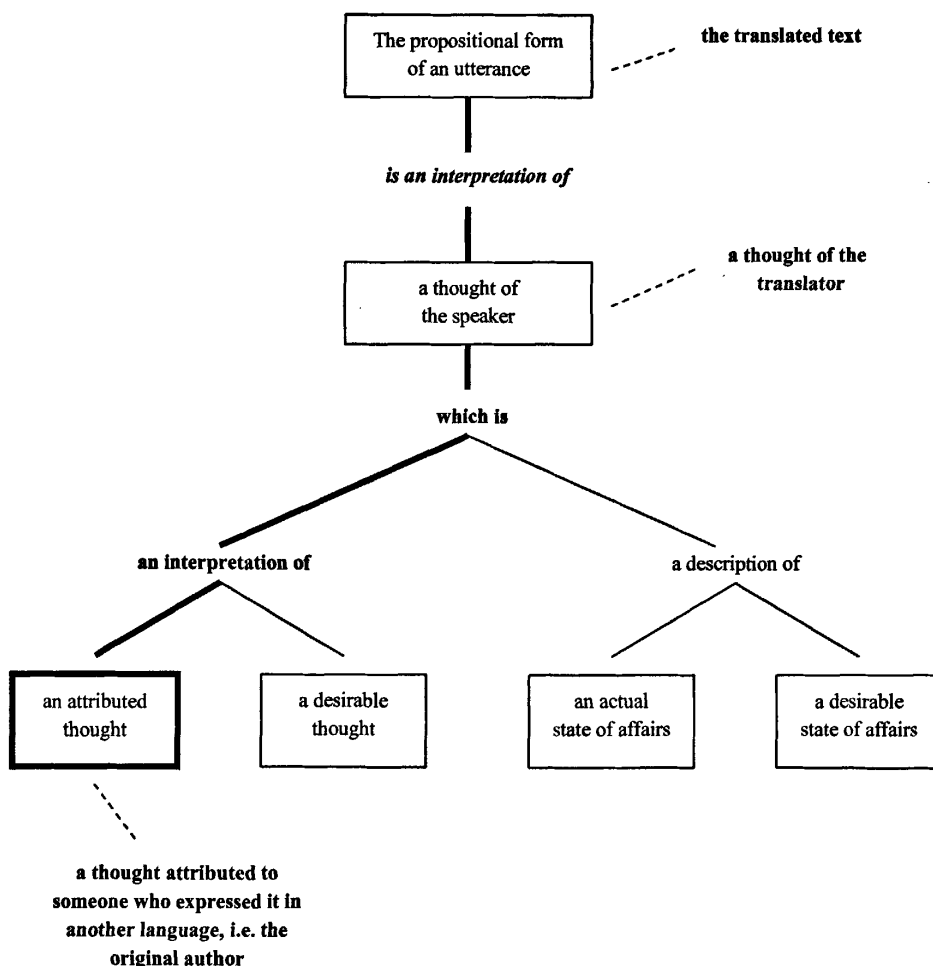

Figure 1
The place of translation in relevance theory
(based on Sperber and Wilson 1986:232)④

The bolded lines (going down the centre and then to the left) indicate that in translation the propositional form of the utterance($\sim$ 'translated text') is an interpretation of a thought of a speaker ($\sim$ translator) which is an interpretation of a thought attributed to someone who expressed it in another language ($\sim$ the original author).

In general, the relationship is one of resemblance rather than identity between propositional forms. These two propositional forms share logical properties, more specifically logical and contextual implicatures.

B. Analysis of metaphor in light of relevance theory

1. Primary communication situation and second communication situation

As pointed out in previous chapters, one of the central claims of relevance theory is that human communication works by inference: the audience infers from the stimulus what the communicator intends to convey. However, in the actual communications, the derivation of speaker-intended interpretation depends not only on correct decoding but just as much on the use of the right, that is, speaker-intended, contextual information.

If the sentence 'we will finish our work and call it a day' is said to you by a bank clerk as the customers try to come in, it would normally be taken to suggest that you should not enter. However, if the bank clerk were your friend with whom you had planed to go to the cinema for the evening, it would more likely be intended to suggest to you that you should wait for her since she would be shortly ready and go with you. The meaning accessible from decoding would be the same in both instances. Yet the difference in interpretation would be due to the difference in the contextual information used in the interpretation process.

It follows that for communication to be successful the text or utterance produced must be inferentially combined with the right, that is, speaker-envisaged, contextual assumptions. These communicational situations where this condition is fulfilled can be called *primary communication situation*. However, it can happen—for various reasons—that in interpreting a text an audience or target reader may fail to use the contextual assumptions intended by the communicator and perhaps use others instead. Such situation is referred to as *secondary communication situations*, and in most cases they will lead to misinterpretations. When a

stimulus is interpreted in a potential context that differs in information from the one envisaged by the original communicator (for example, different linguistic communities), one is dealing with a secondary communication situation.

2. The effect of context in the translation of metaphor

As mentioned before, when translating a same text from the original language to target language in different contexts, the meaning available from decoding would be the same in both situations—the difference in interpretation would be due to the difference in contextual information used in the interpretation process. In translating practice, various misinterpretations can crop up in secondary communication situations for the simple reason that any aspect of interpretation is dependent on context.

> Context determines the disambiguation of linguistically ambiguous expression: wrong contextual assumptions can lead to the choice of the wrong semantic representation of such expression.
> Context is usually needed to determine the propositional form of an utterance: again mismatches of context can lead to the derivation of a wrong propositional form.
> Context is needed to determine whether a propositional form is intended as an explicature, or whether it serves only to convey implicatures. This plays an important role in the identification of literal versus loose or metaphorical talk.②

Thus the sentence 'That man is a slaughter' as either literal or metaphorical will depend on whether its propositional form is taken as an explicature or not. If one asks for that man's profession, the answer above will only convey that he works as a butcher. Opposed to this situation, if one knows that person's ferocious appearance and behaviors, the above statement is a evaluation to him. The implicature used here will be apparently different from the previous one. Since this depends on the contextual assumptions available, the use of inappropriate context can lead to misunderstandings. That is to say proper context is chosen to derive the speaker-intended implicatures of source text. When one uses the wrong context, derivation can be led to or it can cause intended implicatures to be missed. Having related with the context, secondary communication situations can give rise to wide range of

misinterpretations in that some ambiguities encoded in the source text cannot be resolved correctly. Some rhetorical usages, for instance, metaphorical expressions are always taken in regard with literal ones or vis.versa. The explicature is viewed as implicature in the translating process and the speaker-intended implicature can be missed and so forth. What is important at this point is the reason for the misinterpretation of the metaphor. In all the cases considered, they arise from a mismatch in context: the source text is interpreted against a context different from the one intended by the communicator.

From all that has been said so far, there really exists a large wide range of secondary communication situations which occur not merely in translating practice but in daily conversations as well. The misinterpretations or mistranslations arise mostly due to the person addressed or the translator did not choose to use the contextual assumptions envisaged by the communicator or source writer. In fact, it comes as no surprise that translation can find itself in secondary communication situations, and where it does, it follows naturally that mistranslation may arise, just as they do in other situations of secondary communication.

In light of relevance theory, the proposition the source language expressed is often not identical but merely in a relation of resemblance with the original writer or speaker's thought, who just applies it as an reasonably priced means through which the target reader, constrained by considerations of relevance, can recover a range of implicatures.

3. Explicatures vs. Implicatures

In light of relevance theory, translating process involves in the arousing of the stimulus to the part of the target reader, which is caused by the communicating clues provided by the translator. To interpret stimulus of the source text, the target reader has to draw out the explicatures and implicatures based on the optimal relevance. Compared with explicatures, it is much more difficult to balance the effects and efforts of implicature in the target text. Moreover, implicatures are always context-bound. So it is necessary for the translator to engender alternative implicit meanings in different languages, or they will be lost except some justifiable methods are chosen to make them explicit in the translation.

Due to the different culture backgrounds, which cause different cognitive environments in the different community, some metaphors can be used to convey only one single implicature, the majority of them are chosen by the author to express a wider range of

implicatures. In this situation, only those that are aimed to transfer a single implicature can be explicated without losing contextual effects. And special attention should be paid that if a metaphor has the intention to suggest a series of implicatures, any attempt to explicate it will only transmit one of those implicatures at the expense of other ones and may badly weaken the ability of the translated text to convey a set of assumptions including explicatures and implicatures that approximate those of the original text. Gutt analyzes three aspects in which implicatures differ from explicatures: (a) implicatures can convey a range of thoughts rather than a single thought; (b) implicatures communicate those thoughts with varying degree of strength; and (c) implicatures force the communicator and the receptor to share the responsibility for deriving the thoughts conveyed. [①]

4. Dynamic equivalence

From the perspective of the overall objectives of dynamic equivalence, it focuses at the comprehension of the 'message' of the original, and this 'message' is defined as "the total meaning or content of a discourse; the concepts and feelings which the author intends the reader to understand and perspective" (Nida and Taber 1969: 205) It certainly seems necessary for the translator to seek to overcome obstacles to comprehension arising from the differences in background knowledge between the old and the new audience. Therefore, when translating metaphors, the emerge of mistranslation is mostly due to the target reader's lack of contextual assumptions necessary to arrive at those main points which are in turn contextual implications. The problem arisen can be solved in two different ways: a) by supplying the contextual assumptions needed or b) perhaps by spelling out the contextual implications themselves. When coming across the translation of metaphor, the most important thing the translator should pay attention to is the existence of a double interpretive resemblance: on the one hand, the metaphor in the source text interpretively resembles a thought of the source-text author; on the other hand, since the translation of the metaphor is presented in virtue of their resemblance with an original, it seems that they fall naturally under the category of interpretive use. In this sense, an important point about interpretive resemblance is that it is not an absolute but a comparative notion. Utterances can interpretively resemble one another to varying degrees, depending on the number of implicatures and /or explicatures that they share. Sharing them all is impossible in secondary communication situations due to the fact

that inference is context-dependent and the target text readers cannot access the interpretation of the source text in the very same context that the author envisaged. In any case, "the importance of preserving the properties of the original does not lies in their intrinsic value, but in the influence they have on the interpretation of the stimulus".⑦

As Sperber claimed, metaphors and monotonies are all implicatures which involve in loose use of language. So the process of their translation resembles the same procedures as an ordinary utterance does and by searching for optimal relevance when using a series of contextual assumptions, their metaphorical meaning can be obtained. In other words, only in this way can the implicature of the source text come into use.

C. Translation of metaphors in *Yuefu* poems

"They fought South of the Wall" follows the character of *yuefu*'s narrative poems and describes a vivid and authentic picture after the cruel battle. In this poem, sentence like "枭骑战斗死，驽马徘徊鸣"⑧ uses two metaphors to convey the author's implied meanings and feelings toward different persons fighting in the battle. There are five different versions about this poem, each one reflects translator's respective understanding of the implicature encoded in the poem.

Version One: The gallant horses died in battle array;

The wounded horses pace the ground and neigh.

(by Wang Rongpei)⑨

Version Two: Brave horsemen fought here and died;

Their jaded steeds linger on, neighing.

(by Yang Xianyi)⑩

Version Three: The riders fought and were slain:

Their horses wander neighing.

(by Arthur Waley)⑪

Version Four: The brave horsemen have fought and died,

their weary mounts wander here and there, neighing.

(by Burton Watson)^❷

Version Five: The brave war steeds have died in battle,

The worthless nags neigh, running hither and thither.

(co-edited by Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo)^❸

This poem belongs to one sort of songs—"Naoge". One important grouping of songs is of the eighteen "Naoge", preserved in the *Song shu*. Some of these are so textually corrupt that they are either unreadable or readable only in part. Although some of the "Naoge" — those textually best preserved —treat "popular" motifs, many of these pieces belong to a court context. The category "Naoge" refers to the military music in the Han Dynasty. It exposes violent feelings against war and indignant emotions to the cruel war. In this poem, the first scene that comes into our sight is an intolerable picture with dead warriors deserted on the wilds. After describing the cruel scene of the battle, the following lines begin to paint the natural panorama of the surroundings. Though it looks like a description of landscape with horrible calmness, actually it serves as a foil to reflect the darkness of the war. "枭骑"and "驽马" ^❹ here all have two different meanings and the author uses metaphorical expression to convey the deep emotions toward the war. The explicature of "枭骑" means the brave steed being good at fighting and "驽马" refers to inferior horse. The metaphorical meaning of "枭骑" conveys the sense of a brave warrior. Simultaneously, "驽马" here hints a person of mediocre ability who barely manages to survive in the battle. Version Two、Three and Four all translate the "枭骑" into a warrior like 'brave horsemen' or 'the riders'. The author uses these two metaphors to illustrate poetic effects. In general, the wider the range of potential implicatures and the greater the target reader's responsibility for reconstructing them, the more poetic the effect, the more creative the metaphor. Version One and Five convey the semantic representation of the original text and only the explicature is transmitted. The metaphorical meaning of the original text is missed and at the same time the implicature of the original is ignored. In a word, when coming across a metaphor, the translator should establish a communicative clue to find a range of contextual effects which can be retained as implicatures. The concept of "枭骑" and"驽马" is constructed. The idea is that certain elements of the encyclopaedic entry of "枭骑" and "驽马" which are highly accessible in the

particular context are carried over into the construction of the new concept which, as a constituent of the explicature, warrants the particular implicatures derived.

Another example of metaphor-using in *Yuefu* poems is the "Poem of Reproach"(or "Song of Reproach")⁰ attributed to Lady Ban, a court lady of the last third of the first century B.C. Different versions about this poem can be found .

Version One:

Songs of Reproach

新裂齐纨素，	New cut, fine plain silk of Qi,
鲜洁如霜雪，	fresh and pure as frost or snow.
裁为合欢扇，	It was cut into an acacia-patterned fan,
团团似明月。	Perfectly round like the bright moon.
出入君怀袖，	it goes in and out of your bosom and sleeve,
动摇微风发。	Stirring in motion, a gentle breeze comes.
常恐秋节至，	it ever fears that the autumn will come,
凉飘夺炎热。	And cool gusts will eliminate blazing heat.
弃捐箧笥中，	it will be cast away in the storage box,
恩情中道绝。	Grace and love broken midway.

(by Stephen Owen)⁰

Version Two:

Songs of Regret

(The poem is of uncertain date, though it has traditionally been attributed to Lady Pan. *Yueh-fu* style, 5-ch.)

To begin I cut fine silk of Ch'i,

White and pure as frost or snow,

Shape it to make a paired-joy fan,

Round, round as the luminous moon,

To go in and out of my lord's breast;

When lifted, to stir him a gentle breeze.

But always I dread the coming of autumn,

Cold winds that scatter the burning heat,

When it will be laid away in the hamper,

Love and favor cut off midway.

(by Burton Watson)[1]

Version Three:

A Song of Regret

The satin, cut from the loom not long ago,

Is fair and pure as frost and snow.

It's made into a fan with loving taste,

Shapen as the moon, bright and round-faced.

The fan bobs in and out of your wide sleeve,

Stirring gentle breezes morn and eve.

However, it always fears that autumn stays

When cold winds drive away the sultry days.

It's cast aside and laid up on the shelf;

No longer in favor, it is left by itself.

(by Wang Rongpei)[2]

Version Four:

The Fan

Fine, freshly woven silk of Qi

Is white as frost or snow;

A piece, embroidered, makes a fan

As round as the bright moon.

My lord keeps the fan about him,

Its motion makes a gentle breeze for him;

But I dread the coming of autumn

When cold winds steal away the sultry heat.

And the fan is tossed, unwanted, into a casket,

Its short term of favor ended.

(by Yang Xianyi)⊕

Lady Ban was the favorite of Emperor Cheng, who later cast her away when he became enamored of the notorious Zhao Feiyan and her sister. The poem thus gains a special weight in the anticipation of Lady Ban's loss of favor. The lady is of use when the emperor feels the "heat", but she realizes that his passions will eventually cool (in autumn) and she may be put aside. Rather than a poem comparing a court lady to a fan, one might well have a poem actually on a fan, implicitly compared to a court lady in the last couplet. The theme of this poem concerns about a favorite court lady anxious for the continuation of imperial favor and the fan metaphorically refers to the court lady herself at this level the poem was first composed. Considering the time of composing this poem, power is clearly an issue needed to be careful about. The fan owner /emperor has the power to put away the fan /favorite. The poem acknowledges such power and resists it. The cleverness of a poem composed around the central figure of the fan is one of the things that argue for third-century date. Not only is the woman the fan, the fan is figured with an "acacia" pattern, *hehuan* (合欢), which is also the "union of lovers," a pattern of circles that suggests union, as does the roundness of the moon, to which the fan is also compared. The fan produces "breeze" or "wind," *feng* 风, which is also the term for song and implicit criticism. People who are treated as mere tools by a person with power may speak back in protest, to instill shame and gratitude for past service. The comparison of the court lady as a fan creates a disjunction. "Poem of Reproach" anticipates the man's desertion not simply before the fact, but when favor is still new—for the fan is made of silk "newly cut." The speaker attempts to forestall desertion, to create sympathy and shame and thus to achieve the permanence. Thus the speaker's helplessness and passivity in "Poem of Reproach" are the counterpart of a veiled persuasive intent in the face of imperial power. The response is a desperate and shadowed pleasure in the present. In the "Poem of Reproach" there is no interval of pleasure, only a fear that the autumn will come, a constant anxiety that seeks to forestall the anticipated future. The anxious and continuous anticipation of autumn seems to facilitate forms of resistance. Figural displacement and concealment are often associated with women and women's motives in the elite tradition or with

disempowered courtiers who figure themselves as women. The putative Lady Ban hides her face, withered by anticipated aging, behind the figure of a fan—and hiding the face is, of course, another use of the fan. ⑩

According to Sperber and Wilson, relevance is the function of cognitive effects and processing effort. Moreover, human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance. The optimal interpretive expression of the source text should be the target reader information, which is relevant enough to be worth processing, and require the least processing effort. So "metaphors are a type of indirectness argument."⑪

In "Songs of Reproach", Lady Ban imagined herself as a fan and then predicated her suffering in future. The deeply sad emotions are only conveyed in the poetic lines. The metaphorical meaning of the fan actually defines the fate of court lady. So when translating, the translator should not only pay attention to the level of semantic representation but the metaphorical level or its implicatures as well and try his best to identify it in his version. Usually, the crucial task of the translator is to reach "dynamic equivalence" between the source text and his version. The poem seems like narrating a fan but actually reveals a favorite court lady anxious for the continuation of imperial favor. This metaphorical meaning should be conveyed in the versions. Burton Watson in Version Two uses the sentence "But always I dread the coming of autumn" substitutes the third person of the fan and directly uses the first person of Lady Ban to express her anxiety and helplessness. The communicating intention is to transmit the contextual implicatures of the source text. This version spells out the contextual implicatures themselves for the simple reason that this metaphorical image is not a traditional or conventional one, contextual assumptions and implicatures are not a matter of linguistic, but of inferences that have to do with people's beliefs—cultural, religious and so forth; consequently their explication is not warranted under linguistic translation. So in order to convey the meaning of the original, the translator can supply the contextual assumptions needed or spell out the contextual implications themselves. It is also the case in Yang Xianyi's version. He translates the same poetic line into "But I dread the coming of autumn" and makes the poetic implicature more apparent to the target reader in order to achieve the optimal relevance. The other versions neither provide proper contextual assumptions needed nor speak out the contextual implicatures themselves directly and fail to cope with the target reader'

expectation. In this occasion, the propositional form of the fan intended as an explicature serves only to convey implicature unsuccessfully.

Lin Yutang once said: "What the translator should be faithful to are not the separate words of the original but the meaning they form. The second semantic aspect of faithfulness is that the translator is required not only to transfer meaning, but to set the conveyance of spirit as his aim." His perspective seems to hinge on Professor Wang Rongpei's "transfer of meaning and conveyance of spirit." So the crucial task of translator is to transfer the content of the original which includes both explicatures and implicatures. Only when one has a thorough and clear understanding of the words and the original text as a whole can he get the spirit of the original. In a word, first and foremost, what the translator should do is to convey the information of the original with closest resemblance to the writer's intention when having resource to the principle of relevance theory.

Conclusion

In the framework of relevance theory, translation is regarded as communication. The essence of translation practices as an interlingual quotation from the perspective of relevance theory, where the quotation works from the original language to the target language. Based on this point, what the translator pursues is the optimal relevance in explicatures and implicatures of the source text and the target text. However, due to the existence of cultural default, in the process of translating classical Chinese poetry, the translator is more likely to be involved in a dilemma of how to transfer the discrepancies between source and target contexts for it is crucial in the correct understanding of the original and the production of the versions. *Yuefu* poetry not merely identifies characters of classical Chinese poetry but also contains prolific cultural information because of its particular composing era. Traditional method of translation (domestication or foreignization) stresses the adherence of the one single means to the whole target text and neglects the existing of actual context and target reader's cognitive environment so it fails to satisfy the goal of the closest resemblance between the source and target text in both explicatures and implicatures. Different from the traditional means, relevance theory provides a more flexible and justified method to solve the tough problem in translating classical Chinese poetry. Relevance theory is fully employed in this thesis to analyze the translation of the *yuefu* poetry and some positive results are achieved.

Nevertheless, relevance theory is still in its developing stage and the application of its principles including optimal relevance principle to the translation studies is merely an attempt. Although many theses and articles concerning this aspect have shown its potential interpretability in solving tough issues in the translating processes, some improvement and perfection about this theory should still be done.

Although this thesis is completed and some main points about *yuefu* poetic translation in culture are discussed, there still exist some limitations. Due to the wide range of classical Chinese poetry studies, its beauty of form, beauty of rhyme, even beauty of brevity in diction are not all involved in this thesis and few academic theses adopt relevance theory to study the translation of *yuefu* poetry from the above-mentioned perspectives. It is necessary to put *yuefu*

poetry under discussion from the new perspectives in light of relevance theory though it is a challenging job. It will be a better solution to test the feasibility and validity of relevance theory in translation of *yuefu* poetry at the same time provide a new method to study classical Chinese poetry translation as well.

Notes

Introduction

[1] Eugene A. Nida. *Language, Culture and Translating*. Shanghai: Foreign Language Education Press, 1993: 39.

[2] Joseph R. Allen. *In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry.*

[3] 汪榕培. 汉魏六朝诗译后感. 外语与外语教学. 1997,(2). The original in Chinese is: "传神达意". 第一: "传神" 就是传达原作的神情，包括形式(form)、语调(tone)、意象(image) 、修辞(figures of speech) 等等; "达意" 就是表达原作的意以，尤其是深层意义(deep meaning), 尽量照顾表层意义（surface meaning)。第二，这四个字不是并列结构（ "传神" 和 "达意" 不是并重的），而是偏正结构（"传神"是"达意"的定语）。

[4] 李贻荫. 三评〈玉台新咏〉英译本－比较〈孔雀东南飞〉的两种译法. 《外语教学》. 1989, (3).

[5] Joseph R. Allen. *In the Voice of Others—Chinese Music Bureau Poetry*. New York: University of Michigan, 1989:233.

Chaper One

[1] Sperber and Wilson. *"Loose talk,"* in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 86. Reprinted in Davis, S. (ed.) 1991 ---1986a.

[2] Sperber, D. & D. Wilson. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blakewell, 1995, 63.

[3] Ernst-August Gutt. *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004: 27.

[4] Sperber and Wilson. *"Loose talk,"* in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 86. Reprinted in Davis, S. (ed.) 1991 ---1986a., 39.

[5] Ernst-August Gutt. *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004: 28.

[6] Ibid., 32.

[7] Dan Sperber and Deirder Wilson. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2001: 151.

[8] Shuttleworth, Mark and Moira, Cowie. *Dictionary of Translation Studies.*Shanghai:

Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press,2004:181.

[9] Ernst-August Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004:119.

[10] Ernst-August Gutt. *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004: 172.

[11] 赵彦春. 关联理论对翻译的解释力. ＜现代外语＞. 1999, (3)：273-295.

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[1] Burton Watson. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984: 69.

[2] Joseph R. Allen. *In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry*. New York: University of Michigan, 1989:55.

[3] Ibid., 211.

[4] 李春祥.《乐府诗鉴赏词典》（前言）. 北京：中州古籍出版社，1990.《汉书• 艺文志》云："自孝武立乐府而采歌谣，于是有代赵之讴，秦楚之风。皆感于哀乐，缘事而发，亦可以观风俗，知薄厚云。"

[5] Susan Bassnett. *Researching Studies:* The case for doctoral research, in Peter Bush and Kirsten Malmkfar (eds) Rimbaoud's Rainbow. Literary Translation in higher education ［M］. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1998: 105-118.

[6] Peter Newmark. *A textbook of translation* ［M］. Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd., 1988:95.

[7] Shuttleworth, Mark and Moira, Cowie. *Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004, 43.

[8] Shuttleworth, Mark & Moira, Cowie. *Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004:59.

[9] 李春祥.《乐府诗鉴赏词典》（前言）. 北京：中州古籍出版社，1990.《汉书• 艺文志》云："自孝武立乐府而采歌谣，于是有代赵之讴，秦楚之风。皆感于哀乐，缘事而发，亦可以观风俗，知薄厚云。"

[10] 袁行霈.《历代名篇赏析集成》. 北京：中国文联出版社,1988:290.《孔雀东南飞》是一篇民间诗歌，作者的姓名已经无从查考。在现存书籍中，这首诗最早见于南朝徐

陵编的《玉台新咏》，题目是《古诗为焦仲卿妻作》，后来宋朝郭茂倩辑《乐府诗集》、元朝左克明辑《古乐府》、明朝冯惟讷辑《古诗记》，以及其他由明清人编纂的许多古代诗集里，也多予以收录。全诗三百五十多句，计一千七百六十五字。所以王世贞称它为"长诗之圣"，清朝沈德潜也说是"古今第一首长诗"。

[11] Ibid., 290.

[12] 汪榕培.《汉魏六朝诗三百首》.湖南：湖南人民出版社，1996:109.

[13] Xu Yuanzhong. *Song of the Immortals: An Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry.* Beijing: New World Press, 1994: 76.

[14] 林希，杨宪益，戴乃迭.《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》．北京：外文出版社，2001:109.

[15] Burton and Watson. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984: 83.

[16] 林廉."〈孔雀东南飞〉的几处注释"．《语文建设》，1996，（10）．"床"，古代常指坐具，古人席地而坐，只有位尊者才有资格坐床。

[17] 霍恩比．《牛津高阶英汉双解词典(第四版)》.北京：商务印书馆，1989:112，221.

[18] 汪榕培.《汉魏六朝诗三百首》.湖南：湖南人民出版社，1996:113.

[19] Xu Yuanzhong. *Song of the Immortals: An Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry.* Beijing: New World Press, 1994: 98.

[20] 林希，杨宪益，戴乃迭．《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》．北京：外文出版社，2001:112.

[21] Burton and Watson. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984:85.

[22] 林廉."〈孔雀东南飞〉的几处注释"．《语文建设》，1996，（10）．"扶床"指古代的一种礼节，是少者搬床给长者坐（此处'床'亦指坐具）。据《玉篇》："扶，持也；持，握也。"古汉语中"扶""持""执"可互训。《礼记·内则》记子女侍奉长者之礼："父母舅姑将坐，奉席请何向。将衽，长者奉席请何趾，少者执床与坐。御者举几。"《注》："衽，卧席也。将衽，谓更卧处也。长者奉此卧席而铺，必问足向何所。床，《说文》云：'安身之几坐。'非今之卧床也。将坐之时，少者执此床以与之坐。"

[23] 汪榕培.《汉魏六朝诗三百首》.湖南：湖南人民出版社，1996:121.

[24] Xu Yuanzhong. *Song of the Immortals: An Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry.* Beijing: New World Press, 1994: 106.

[25] 林希，杨宪益，戴乃迭.《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》. 北京：外文出版社，2001:116.

[26] Burton and Watson. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984: 88.

[27] 汪榕培.《汉魏六朝诗三百首》. 湖南：湖南人民出版社，1996:115.

[28] Xu Yuanzhong. *Song of the Immortals: An Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry.* Beijing: New World Press, 1994:108.

[29] 林希，杨宪益，戴乃迭.《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》. 北京：外文出版社，2001: 112.

[30] Burton and Watson. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984: 85.

[31] 刘庆芳.“〈孔雀东南飞〉风俗事项考释”.山东师大学报, 1997,（5）.诗中“初七”指为农历七月七日，旧时妇女在这天晚上乞巧（用针做各种游戏）。此说当本南朝梁宗懔《荆楚岁时记》：“七月七日为牵牛织女聚会之夜。是夕，人家妇女结彩缕，穿七孔针，或以金银玉石为针，陈瓜果于庭中以乞巧.”七夕晚上的另一项活动就是守夜.人们对天下拜，并说出心愿，主要是乞福, 乞寿.

[32] Ibid., (5).“下九”，古时称每月十九日。宋无名氏《兰采杂志》：“古人以二十九日为上九，初九日为中九，十九日为下九。每月下九，置酒为妇女之欢…女子于是夜为藏钩诸戏，以待月明，至有忘寐而达曙者。”伊世珍《琅记》中解释说：“九为阳数……每月下九置酒为妇女之欢，名为阳会。盖妇女阴也，以待阳成。

[33] 袁行霈.《历代名篇赏析集成》. 北京：中国文联出版社,1988:267.《陌上桑》属汉代乐府的“相和歌辞”，又名《艳歌罗敷行》。共三解，“解”是乐章的段落。本首诗描写的是一个使君调戏采桑女子罗敷遭到严词拒绝的故事。它揭露了封建官僚的丑恶，表现了劳动妇女坚贞不阿的品质和勇敢机智的性格。

[34] 汪榕培.《汉魏六朝诗三百首》.湖南：湖南人民出版社，1996:89.

[35] Xu Yuanzhong. *Song of the Immortals: An Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry.* Beijing: New World Press, 1994:67.

[36] 林希，杨宪益.《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》. 北京：外文出版社，2001: 36.

[37] Joseph R. Allen. *In the Voice of Others—Chinese Music Bureau Poetry.* New York: University of Michigan, 1989: 210.

[38] Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo. *Sunflower Splender: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1922:16.

[39] 吕叔湘.《现代汉语词典》. 北京:商务印书馆, 1998:778. "吏"旧时指没有品级的小公务人员.

[40] Ibid., 231. 古代官职，位于卿之下，士之上. 卿, 古时高级官员. 士, 古代介于大夫和庶民之间的阶层.

[41] 余行迈. "两汉侍中制度初探".《陈乐素教授九十诞辰纪念文集》. 广东人民出版社, 1992:375. 侍中是皇帝身边的侍从, 在西汉确实用为加官, 而且是贵幸之职, 往往以九卿、将、尉加之。汉成帝时的王莽家族中, 王商为侍中、中郎将, 王凤为侍中、卫尉, 王音为侍中、太仆, 王莽为侍中、骑都尉。到了东汉, 侍中已非加官了, 而是专任之官名, 秩比二千石。侍中之选, 或用姓族、或用名儒。

[42] Ernst-August Gutt. *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004: 66.

[43] Ernst-August Gutt. 1990. "A Theoretical Account of Translation-Without a Translation Theory," in *Target 2* (2).

[44] Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson, Relevance: Communication and Cognition. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. 2001,236.

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[2] Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson, Relevance: Communication and Cognition. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. 2001,231.

[3] Sperber, Dan and Wilson, Deirdre. 1986/91. *"Loose talk," in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 86. Reprinted in Davis, S. (ed.) 1991 ---1986a, 237.

[4] Ernst-August Gutt. *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004: 214.

[5] Ibid., 76.

[6] Ibid., 224.

[7] Ernst-August Gutt. 1990. "A Theoretical Account of Translation-Without a Translation Theory," in *Target 2* (2).

[8] 李春祥.《乐府诗鉴赏词典》. 北京：中州古籍出版社，1990:14.《战城南》属乐府

《鼓吹曲・汉铙歌十八曲》之一。据《古今乐录》所载，"汉铙歌"古辞存二十二曲。曲名皆取篇中首句。铙歌是汉代的军乐，然而它的歌辞却不限于战阵之事。

[9] 汪榕培. 《汉魏六朝诗三百首》. 湖南：湖南人民出版社，1996:83.

[10] 林希，杨宪益，戴乃迭. 《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》. 北京：外文出版社，2001:7.

[11] Arthur Waley. *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems.* New York, Alfred • A • Knopf Mcmxxii, 1919: 26.

[12] Burton and Watson. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984:79.

[13] Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo. *Sunflower Splender: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1922:51.

[14] 林希，杨宪益，戴乃迭. 《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》. 北京：外文出版社，2001:3. "枭骑"古时指善战的骏马。在诗中暗指勇敢的骑马战士。"驽马"即劣马。这里隐喻庸碌偷生的人。

[15] 袁行霈.《历代名篇赏析集成》. 北京：中国文联出版社,1988:287.《怨歌行》此诗在《昭明文选》、《玉台新咏》、及宋人郭茂倩的《乐府诗集》中均有收录，题为汉班婕妤所做。班婕妤是汉成帝时的女官，被选入宫后，先为少使，很快得宠，为婕妤，其真实姓名已不可考，只能以姓氏、官名流传于世了。

[16] Stephen Owen. *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry.* Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006:223.

[17] Burton and Watson. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984:77.

[18] 汪榕培.《汉魏六朝诗三百首》.湖南：湖南人民出版社，1996:79.

[19] 林希，杨宪益，戴乃迭. 《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》. 北京：外文出版社，2001:60.

[20] Stephen Owen. *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry.* Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006: 223-225.

[21] Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson, Relevance: Communication and Cognition. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. 2001,231.

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林希，杨宪益，戴乃迭.《古诗苑汉英译丛：乐府》. 北京：外文出版社，2001.

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Acknowledgements

On completion of this thesis, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed to it directly or indirectly.

I would like to extend my thanks first to my supervisor, Professor Li Zhengshuan, who has helped me in many ways. He always gives me inspiring encouragement and precious advice. His profound insight into poetry translation studies and effective guidance have enlightened me in this field. Through all the process of paper writing, he has instructed me strictly from the brainstorming to the arrangement of the whole structure of the thesis.

I am also grateful to Professor Duan Xiaoying, Professor Ji Shenglei, Professor Song Huiling, Professor Guo Qunying, Professor Pan Bingxin, Professor Gao Guixiang and other teachers from whom I have learned a great deal.

Finally, the special thanks will also go to my parents and my fiancé whose attention and help always encourage me to complete this thesis.

攻读学位期间科研成果

文章名称	发表刊物（出版社）	刊发时间	刊物级别	署名次序
On Wordsworth's Love of Nature	《当代教育文汇》	2006 年 10 月	省级	独立
贯融中西文化，细刻精雕诗歌翻译之美—试论互文性与诗歌翻译	《翻译研究》	2007 年 11 月	省级	独立