

# 从等效译论看汉语歇后语的英译

## 中 文 摘 要

随着社会的发展，科学技术的进步，国际间经济、政治、文化等领域的联系日益加强。不同民族间的文化交流更加频繁，文化融合趋势势不可挡。经济全球化和经济多元化带来的是文化的多元化。语言是文化的载体，翻译是跨文化交际的桥梁和主要桥梁，语言和文化密不可分。语言具有双重性质：一方面它是文化的一部分，另一方面，语言又是文化的载体。作为语际间转换的翻译，在很大程度不能仅限于对字面意义的传译，还应包括对文化内涵的传译。因此，翻译离不开文化。而翻译不仅仅是两种语言之间的相互转换，也是两种文化之间的交流。向外国翻译和介绍博大精深的中国文学和文化，不仅是文化多元化和文化全球化的需要，也是让中国文化走向全球、让世界了解中国、实现中国文化现代化的需要。

汉语歇后语是中国文化的一个组成部分。歇后语研究是语言学中比较热门的话题。歇后语作为我国丰富的民族语言的一部分，来源于广大劳动人民的口头语言，是我国劳动人民在长期的生活实践中借以表达自己思想感情的一种语言形式。它最大特点，在于它生动活泼、具体形象，有的富于想象力和幽默感，有的还具有较强的讽刺意味。它以生动形象、妙趣横生而为人民群众和广大读者所喜闻乐见。恰当地运用歇后语，可以增强语言的感染力。因此，歇后语不仅在我们的日常生活中常见，而且在文学作品中也得到广泛运用。对汉语歇后语及其英译的研究很有必要，而且是有实际意义的。

因此，本文认为，以现代语言学理论和翻译理论为依托，从语言文化对比与跨文化交际的角度出发，运用等效翻译原则的理论，利用归化与异化相结合的翻译策略及表现这两种翻译策略的直译与意译及其相结合的翻译方法对汉语歇后语及其英译，进行系统、深入的研究，以求在汉语歇后语英译中实现其意义与文化信息传达的最佳效果，即等效。

关键词：等效翻译理论；异化；归化；汉语歇后语；英译；效果

# **ON C-E TRANSLATION OF CHINESE TWO-PART ALLEGORICAL SAYINGS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EQUIVALENT EFFECT THEORY**

## **ABSTRACT**

With the development of the society, the advancement of science & technology as well as the advent of globalization, communication and cooperation between countries in the fields of economy, politics, culture, science & technology, etc., is increasingly accelerated. Cultural exchanges between nations have become more and more frequent. The trend of cultural integration is inevitable and irresistible. What economic globalization and economic pluralism bring is multiculturalism. In international communication, translation is playing a very important role. Language, culture and translation are closely related. Language is the carrier of culture; translation is the bridge and major channel for cross-cultural communication. Translation, to a great extent, is not merely the conveyance of the literal meaning of words but also the conveyance of the cultural implications of the language. So, translation is not only the transmission of two languages, but also the communication between two cultures. To translate and introduce the extensive and profound Chinese culture and literature is the need of multiculturalism, cultural globalization and the need of getting the Chinese culture to go global and become known to the world.

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is also a part of Chinese culture. In recent years, the study of Chinese two-part allegorical saying has become a heated topic in the study of linguistics in China. Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a kind of the most typical idioms of the Chinese nation and a language loved, quite popular, lively, implicit and profound with meaning among the people, which is reflected not only in its rich and profound content but also in its vivid and colorful expressions. Varied rhetorical devices are used widely, flexibly and frequently in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings so as to achieve a vivid, refined, lively, witty and humorous effect of expression, and to display fully the Chinese people's creative talents in language. It is a branch of Chinese humor. The use of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings can make the language used in speech implicit, profound, interesting and amusing, and cause people to ponder over, thus making the expressions vivid, lively and humorous. Chinese two-part allegorical saying comes from the people. The special effect of its use in sarcasm and ridicule, which will make the language used more trenchant, more concise, bitterer and straightforward, is determined by its witty and tactful writing strategy. The use of

Chinese two-part allegorical sayings used in literary works will make them vivid and easy to understand, and add more splendors to their artistic quality. The appropriate use of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings can enhance artistic appeal of the language. Accordingly, it is widely applied not only in daily life but also in many literary works. Therefore, the study of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and their Chinese-English translation (C-E translation) is quite necessary and of great significance.

Therefore, this thesis proposes that, on the basis of the theories of modern linguistics and translation and starting from the perspective of linguistic and cultural contrasts as well as cross-cultural communication, the translator can apply equivalent effect theory to achieve the optimum effect of conveying the meanings and the cultural messages in the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, namely, the equivalent effect, by means of the translation strategies of foreignization and domestication as well as the translation methods of literal translation, liberal translation and the combination of both. For this purpose, the author of this thesis makes a further and systematic study of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and their C-E translation.

**KEY WORDS:** equivalent effect theory; foreignization; domestication; Chinese two-part allegorical saying; C-E translation; effect

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

In the Chinese language system, there is a unique linguistic structure and phenomenon called “Xie Hou Yu” (歇后语), or Chinese two-part allegorical saying. Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a part of Chinese idiom but is somewhat different from the other forms of Chinese idiom. The difference between Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and other Chinese idiom lies in their structure and the profoundness in meaning. Chinese two-part allegorical saying, as a unique kind of Chinese idiom, is quite popular among the people and widely used in daily life and literary works.

According to Wen Duanzheng, Chinese two-part allegorical saying, a typical idiom, is vivid, witty, full of humor and image (温端政, 2002: 1). It is the crystallization of wit and wisdom of the Chinese people and the Chinese language. It is also a reflection of the Chinese people's daily life as well as their production and social practice. Without it our language would become dull and dry. For this reason, analyses should be made upon the various factors of Chinese two-part allegorical saying. And the research made on this topic will turn out to be worthwhile.

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is also a part of Chinese culture. In recent years, the study of Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a heated topic in the study of linguistics in China (李行健, 2001: 5) . Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a kind of the most typical idiom of Chinese nation and a language loved, quite popular, lively, implicit and profound with meaning among people, which is reflected not only in its rich and profound content but also in its vivid and colorful expressions. Varied rhetorical devices are used widely, flexibly and frequently in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, so as to achieve a vivid, refined, lively, witty and humorous effect of expression, and to display fully the Chinese people's creative talents in language. It is a branch of Chinese humor. The use of Chinese two-part allegorical saying can make the language used in speech implicit, profound, interesting and amusing, and cause people to ponder over, thus making the expressions vivid, lively and humorous, such as in *The Scholars* (《儒林外史》), one of the well-known classical novels in Chinese literature, such Chinese two-part allegorical sayings as “猪八戒吃人参果——全不是滋味”, “半夜里不见了枪头子——攮在贼肚里” are employed successively in Chapter 6 to satirize the steersman after 严贡生 (贡生, scholars recommended by local prefecture or county governments to the Imperial College for further study in the capital city under the imperial examination system in the Ming and Qing Dynasties ) lost his rice wafer mixed with walnut; and in *A Dream of Red Mansions* (《红楼梦》), another well-known novel in Chinese literature, Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are also found to have been applied. For example, in

Chapter 36 when Jia Lian and Jia Zhen were flirting with Sister You, she used such two-part allegorical sayings as “清水下杂面——你吃我看”, “提着皮影人子上场——好歹别戳破这层纸儿” and “偷来的锣鼓——打不得” to bitterly and sharply satirize the two playboys of the rich feudal family.

Chinese scholars who have made outstanding achievements in the study of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are: Sun Zhiping (1982; 1988), Ning Ju (1982), Wen Duanzheng (1999; 2002; 2005), Li Xingjian (2001), Li Yanbo (2001) and so on. They have made studies of definition, origin, nature, usage and rhetorical devices of Chinese two-part allegorical saying and put forward their own view-points respectively. The translation of Chinese two-part allegorical saying is also very important. And Chinese scholars who have made contributions to the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical saying include: Guo Jianzhong (1996), Bao huinan (2001; 2004), Chen Jun (2001), Han Qingguo (2002), Jin Huikang (2004), Chen Wenbo (2005), Yin Binyong & Jia Cen (2006) and the like. They have made some preliminary and helpful research on the linguistic structure of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and their translation. But these researches are not systematic and thorough. Despite all these, they are of help to our research on Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and their C-E translation.

With the development of globalization, translation is playing a very important role in today's world. The study of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and their Chinese-English translation (i.e. C-E translation) is quite necessary and of great significance.

From the viewpoint of translation, it is difficult to deal with the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. Translation is not merely rendering one language (the source language, or SL) into another language (the target language, or TL). Translation is actually a cultural communicative activity. Its purpose is to exchange ideas and culture by means of converting one language to another. The object of translation is language and culture. The main task of translation is to convey cultural messages. The response, impact, and appeal the TL receptors receive and appreciate from the TL text should be roughly equivalent to those of the original receptors from the original or SL text. Therefore, while translating, the translator should do his utmost to make the response, impact and appeal the TL receptors receive and appreciate from the TL text roughly equivalent to those of the original receptors from the original or SL text so as to seek the equivalent effect.

Translation is a cross-lingual and cross-cultural communicative activity, just as Duff thinks that, “translation is the process of conveying message across linguistic and cultural barriers; it is an eminently communicative activity”(Duff, 1989:5). In the process of translation, the translator has to overcome two kinds of barriers: one is linguistic barriers and the other cultural ones. That is to say, one has to overcome language barriers and cultural differences while translating because there are some cultural differences between different languages. As far as language is concerned, no barrier is greater than the unique structure of the SL; in terms

of culture, no barrier is greater than the peculiar traits of that nationality. If some striking ideas of peculiar traits of the nationality are conveyed in the unique linguistic structure, translation will become more difficult. Chinese two-part allegorical saying belongs to this type of unique linguistic structure (金惠康, 2004: 455). Chinese two-part allegorical saying is deeply rooted in the Chinese civilization with a time-honored history, with unique ways of expression and rich cultural implications of the nation. The unique linguistic structure like Chinese two-part allegorical sayings cannot find its counterpart or equivalent expression in other languages, especially in English. The meaning it expresses is deeply rooted in its national culture and of striking national traits. Therefore, in the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, there is no doubt that one of the biggest problems is to overcome barriers linguistically and culturally (包惠南, 2001:155). While doing the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, the translator has to take into consideration not only their unique structures and striking backgrounds of the national culture but also the response, impact and appeal the TL receptors receive and appreciate from the TL text that are roughly equivalent to those of the original receptors from the original or SL text. As far as the strategy of translation is concerned, a good translation should be a perfect unity of foreignization and domestication. This is a guarantee for the equivalent effect in translation. And there is no doubt that approaches to achieve the equivalent effect in translation, as far as the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical saying is concerned, are mainly literal translation (or word-for-word translation), liberal translation or free translation and the combination of literal translation and liberal translation, for the purpose to seek the equivalent effect in form (or structure) or in spirit, or in both. This is where the importance of this study lies.

## Chapter 2 A General Survey of Translation and Principle of Equivalence

### 2.1 Translation and Its Nature

#### 2.1.1 The Definition of Translation

What is translation? This is a very basic question that must be made clear in the study of translation. It is of great significance that a comprehensive definition on translation be supplied. How, then, should translation be defined?

*Encyclopedia Britannica* defines “translate” as “the act or process of rendering what is expressed in one language or set of symbols by means of another language or set of symbols”. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) defines it as “to turn from one language into another”; and *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary Of The English Language* defines it as “to turn into one’s own or another language” (孙致礼, 2003:1). *Columbia Encyclopedia* defines “translation” as “the art of recomposing a work in another language without losing its original flavor”(陈德彰, 2005: 1-2). These definitions are different in diction, but they express the same idea that translation is a language transferring activity. But transferring “what” is a question, it seems that they cannot offer any answer to this question. The following definitions about translation would be even closer to the nature of translation.

- 1) Translating is the replacement of textual material in one language (source language) by equivalent textual material in another language (target language) (J. C. Catford, 1965: 20).
- 2) Translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text (Newmark, 1988:5).
- 3) Translating consists in producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning, and secondly, in terms of style (Nida & Taber, 1969:12).
- 4) Translation consists of studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text, analyzing it in order to determine its meaning and then restructuring this same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context (Larson, 1984:3).
- 5) Translation is the process of conveying message across linguistic and cultural barriers; it is an eminently communicative activity (Duff, 1989:5).
- 6) Translation is a process which occurs between cultures rather than simply between languages (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997:35).

According to these definitions, we can see that “the soul of translating is transferring

meaning between the source and target languages"(王东风, 2005).

The above-mentioned definitions have described what is being done in the process of translating from different angles. However, many other translation theorists think that translating should be better considered as a semiotic transformation. Abdulla (1994: 66) holds the same view. He defines "translation" as "the interpretation of the verbal signs from a source language by means of verbal signs in a target language". Hatim and Mason (1990:105) defines translation in this way: "Translating can now be envisaged as the process which transforms one semiotic entity into another, under certain equivalence conditions to do with semiotic codes, pragmatic action and general communicative requirements". It can be seen that translation is better considered as a semiotic activity.

In the thesis, the author takes the definition given by Toury, the (literary) translation theoretician and semiotician, as the one he follows. To Toury, translation is a cross-systemic transference inscribed in the broad general framework of a semiotics of culture. In the widest of its possible senses, translation is, as Toury defines, "...a series of operations, or procedures, whereby one semiotic entity, which is a (functional) constituent (element) of a certain cultural (sub)system, is transformed into another semiotic entity, which forms at least a potential element of another cultural (sub)system, providing that some informational core is retained 'invariant under transformation', and on its basis a relationship known as 'equivalence' is established between the resultant and initial entities. Not only discrete signs, on the one hand, and entire messages, on the other, can have a semiotic value, but also, e.g., the rules and norms which govern the combination of (elementary and complex) signs into higher order, more complex ones, or into messages, institutionalized models for the establishment of culturally significant texts, etc.; and all these can also be transferred over and across systemic borders, with the appropriate transformations"(Toury, 1986:1112-1113).

Therefore, the author here defines translating as the communicative act of decoding the linguistic signs of the source language (SL) and encoding them in the target language (TL) by way of semantic structure with the optimal meaning of the source text (ST) retained or held constant in the target text (TT). On the whole, translation involves overcoming the contrasts between language systems. Source-language syntactic structures have to be exchanged for TL structures; lexical items from each language have to be matched and the closest equivalents selected.

### 2.1.2 The Nature of Translation: Communication

Various descriptions have been given to the nature of translation in view of a certain aspect, such as:

- Translation is a science.
- Translation is an art.
- Translation is a skill.
- Translation is a craft.
- Translation is an operation.
- Translation is a language activity.
- Translation is communication.

Among them the first two may be the most influential and controversial, which evolve into two seemingly never-compromising schools in the field of translation, namely, the school of science and the school of art. The former maintains that translating should respond with the message of the original by means of the transformation of linguistic equivalence. The latter advocates re-creating a literary work by using expressions of another language, emphasizing the effect of translation.

But the author of this thesis agrees that translation is communication.

According to Nida (2001), “ Translation means communicating, and this process depends on what is received by persons hearing or reading a translation. Judging the validity of a translation cannot stop with a comparison of corresponding lexical meanings, grammatical classes, and rhetorical devices. What is important is the extent to which receptors correctly understand and appreciate the translated text. Accordingly, it is essential that functional equivalence be stated primarily in terms of a comparison of the way in which the original receptors understood and appreciated the text and the way in which receptors of the translated text understand and appreciate the translated text ”(Nida, 2001: 86). Ladmiral’s remarks about the nature of translation are thus: “Moreover, translation is a particular case of communication. It is a meta-communication, a second-degree communication which, from one language to another, is brought to bear on the first-degree communication which it takes as its object. This means that translation proceeds to an objectification of the SL communication which it globalizes in order to make it the content of the message it has to translate into the TL ” ( Hewson & Martin, 1991:31).

It is known that translation involves two cultures, two languages, ST author, translator and TT reader and so on, which is much more complicated than any other kind of communication. It is a particular case of communication, not a direct one between the ST author and TT reader. The process of translation consists of two communicative events: one is the communicative event between translator and ST writer; the other is between the translator and TT readers (杨涛、邓志勇, 2004).

From the above, it can be seen that translation means communication. As far as its process

is concerned, translation is communication. What's more, language and culture are two indispensable parts. Language is a component of culture and plays a very important role in culture. Language and culture rely on each other. Without language, culture would be impossible. Language is the base of entire culture, and that it is only in language that culture can be well presented and passed down from generation to generation. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture; it reflects culture. Language reflects the characteristics of culture and predicts the developing orientation of culture. In the broadest sense, language is the symbolic representation of a people. The development of language often embodies the change of culture. It comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approaches to life and their ways of living and thinking. To understand a language, one must know well about its culture and vice versa. So it is quite reasonable to say that learning a language is, in a way, learning the culture and custom of the country where the language is spoken.

There is also a close relationship between culture and translation. Translation is difficult because language is not only the carrier of culture but also subjects to the culture it carries. Therefore, the mere mastery of two languages is not enough to become a good translator. In his essay "*Cultural Comparisons in Translation*", the late Professor Wang Zuoliang (1984) said: "... A translator must be a real culturist. It's said that a translator must grasp two languages: indeed, he must. But without understanding the social cultural connotation in one language no one can really master the language"(王佐良, 1984). Eugene A. Nida, a famous American translator and translation theorist, also emphasized the importance of the mastery of the cultures in translation in his book *Language, Culture and Translating*. He pointed out that, "For truly successful translating, biculturalism is even more important than bilingualism, since words only have meanings in terms of the cultures in which they function"(Nida, 1993:110). Here Nida believes that in translation, the need to overcome cultural barriers is greater than that to overcome language barriers. A translator should know foreign culture as well as the culture of his own people. Therefore, translation is, as a matter of fact, a transmission of cultural messages from one language to another, i.e., translation cannot exist without the cultures. In language learning, learning a language is a kind of learning the culture and habit of the country where the language is spoken. As far as translation is concerned, translating a SL text is a kind of translating the SL culture and habit of the country where the SL is spoken (卢红梅, 2006: 10).

It can be seen that the nature of translation is communication. Actually translation is not merely rendering the message of one language (the SL) into another language (the TL). Duff thinks that "translation is the process of conveying message across linguistic and cultural barriers; it is an eminently communicative activity" (Duff, 1989: 5). Therefore, Translation is a

cross-linguistic, cross-cultural communicative activity. Translation means communication.

## 2.2 Principle of Equivalence

“Equivalence” is one of the key concepts in the theory of translation. Different translation scholars use the notion of the equivalence in different senses. Thus large varieties of the term “equivalence” have been put forth in translation criticism. Besides “translation equivalence”, the seemingly most general term, there are also “formal equivalence”, “dynamic equivalence”, “functional equivalence”, “stylistic equivalence”, “textual equivalence”, “communication equivalence”, “linguistic equivalence”, “semantic equivalence”, “pragmatic equivalence”, “equal value equivalence”, “ideational equivalence”, “reader equivalence” and so on; to say nothing of the ostensibly free use of related terms such as correspondence ( e.g., Catford’s “formal correspondence” ), sameness, invariance, similarity and analogy. And it is certainly tedious to go through all of them here.

And as Bell says, “the idea of total equivalence is a chimera.” That is perhaps why translation theoreticians employ all kinds of modifiers such as “dynamic”, “functional”, “pragmatic”, “ideational”, “equal value”, etc. before the very term “equivalence”. And in inter-lingual translation, the languages involved in it are certainly different from each other. Even if the translation involved two languages which originated from the same language family or which once had great influence upon each other because of historical or other reasons, as is the case with English and German, and English and French respectively. Therefore, the languages involved in translation “are different in form having distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings” ( Bell, 1991: 6 ).

To shift from one language to another means altering the forms. And the altered forms form a contrast to the ST forms. And there is no doubt that the altered forms convey meanings, which cannot but fail to coincide with the ST forms totally. So, in inter-lingual translation, however similar an expression is to the ST message, it is never synonymous absolutely, to say nothing of being equal or equivalent in all senses or nuances. This can be compared with synonyms in a language. There is never any absolute synonymy between words in the same language. Synonymous words differ from each other in one or another of their nuances. Therefore, it can never be expected that there is any synonymy between different languages. As George Steiner (1975: 45 ) has said, “No two historical epochs, no two social classes, no two localities use words and syntax to signify exactly the same things, to send identical signals of valuation and inference. Neither do two human beings.” Thus, it is hard for people to achieve equivalence in inter-lingual translation.

The fact that in the process of translation, something is always “lost”, or “gained”, as some people contend, suggests that equivalence is preserved at one level or another. Though translators are often accused of “betraying” the author’s intentions with the notorious Italian Proverb “traduttore traditore” ascribing to them, they strive hard to preserve the ST message in one main aspect or another, for example, formally, dynamically, functionally, or taking into account the readers.

For this reason, “text in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees ( fully or partially equivalent ), in respect of different levels of presentation (equivalence in respect of context, of semantic, of grammar, of lexis, etc.) and at different ranks (word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase, sentence-for-sentence) ” (Hartmann & Stork, 1972: 713; Bell, 1991: 6). They may also be equivalent at such ranks as word-for-phrase, word-for-clause, word-for-sentence, phrase-for-sentence, and even sentence- for-phrase.

### 2.3 Equivalence and Meaning in Translation

In translation, meaning and equivalence relate to each other closely. According to Nida (1982), “Translation means translating meaning”. He argues that if one is to translate meaning, the aim is to find the closest natural equivalent. But such an equivalent is not merely one which reflects the lexical content of the original statement but also one which is equivalent on other levels. Translating meaning implies translating the total significance of a message in terms of both its lexical or propositional contents and its rhetorical significance.

Accordingly, Nida proposes the concept of “dynamic equivalence”, which is based on what he called “the principle of equivalent effect” where “the relationship between the original receptors and the message” (Nida, 1964:159). He defines the goal of dynamic equivalence as seeking “the closest natural equivalent to the ST language.” The three essential terms in this definition are: *equivalent*, which points to the SL message; *natural*, which points toward the receptor language; and *closest*, which binds the two orientations together on the basis of the highest degree of approximation (李明, 2005:128).

In Nida’s view, translating is not to get something completely identical, but to produce “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message” in the receptor language. Later on, he replaces “dynamic equivalence” with “functional equivalence” to emphasize the “communicative functions of translating” because he argues that “translating means communicating”. He claims emphatically “equivalence cannot be understood in this mathematical meaning of identity, but only in terms of proximity, i.e. on the basis degree of closeness to functional identity” (Nida, 1993: 116-117). In a word, translating is not simply a matter of seeking other words with similar meaning, but of producing analogues

communicative value in another language. Value refers to meaning, stylistic connotations or communicative effect (Nord, 2001:36).

## Chapter 3 An Overview of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Chinese two-part allegorical saying, a unique kind of Chinese idiom, is quite popular among the people and widely used. But what is Chinese two-part allegorical saying? How does it originate? What is the nature of it? And how does it develop? These have to be dealt with in this section.

### 3.1 The Definition of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Chinese two-part allegorical saying, a unique kind of Chinese idiom, also called Enigmatic Folk Simile, is “a sentence composed of two parts, with the first part as a riddle and the second as the answer to it. Usually with the first part stated and the second unstated, the connotation lies in the second part”(《现代汉语词典》, 1984: 1273). A definition given in *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (Chinese-English Edition, 2002) is “two-part allegorical saying, of which the first part, always stated, describes a riddle, while the second part, sometimes unstated, carries a message as the answer to the riddle”(《现代汉语词典(汉英双语)》, 2002: 2118). And the definition given in *A Chinese-English Dictionary* (Revised Edition) is “a two-part allegorical saying, of which the first part, always stated, is descriptive, while the second part, sometimes unstated, carries the message, e.g. 泥菩萨过河——自身难保 like a clay idol fording a river—hardly able to save oneself (let alone anyone else)”(《汉英词典(修订版缩印本)》, 1997: 1376).

Chinese two-part allegorical saying belongs to the category of common sayings, except that it has a particular structure of a riddle. A two-part allegorical saying, in its nature, is similar to a set phrase for it explains the meaning of a set phrase in two parts, the first part being a simple and concrete analogy, and the second an abstract interpretation. The first part often appears as a vivid simile and concrete analogy, while the second part is the explanation of the first part. Formerly, only the first part of a two-part allegorical saying was stated and the second remained unstated so as to offer food for thinking. When only the first part is used, it will be quite difficult to those who know little about that, thus making readers rack their brains to catch what the real meaning or the connotation of this expression is (郁福敏, 郭珊琏, 1999: 21). That is the two-part allegorical saying in its real sense. But now it is quite common to state the both parts. As it contains an analogy, the two-part allegorical saying is vivid and full of imagery.

e.g. 千里送鹅毛, 礼轻情义重

姜太公钓鱼, 愿者上钩

戴着草帽亲嘴——差得远  
黄鼠狼给鸡拜年——没安好心

### 3.2 The Origin of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Just as mentioned above, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is quite popular among the people and widely used. It is a special linguistic form created by people in their daily life and social practice. It is composed of two parts, with the first part appearing as a vivid simile, like a particular structure of a riddle, and the second as an explanation of the simile, just like a definite answer to the riddle, natural and appropriate. Usually in a certain context, with the first part stated and the second unstated, the connotation lies in the second part. That is to say, the second part is omitted, or “xie qu”(歇去). But people can catch what the real meaning or the connotation of this expression is. This is why it is called “xiehouyu”(歇后语), i.e. Chinese two-part allegorical saying.

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is the unique form that can be found only in Chinese. Most Chinese two-part sayings are full of the ethnic coloring of Chinese, including ancient Chinese people, places and events; some contain the customs or religious beliefs as well. Compared with other types of idioms, they are neither elegant nor explicit. Still, Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are most popular among people for their peculiar forms and strong local flavor, and widely used in an oral context. People of all social strata like to use them in their conversations or articles. Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are humorous and witty, and the use of them in literary works can make a striking impression on the readers.

The term “xiehou”(歇后) appeared early in the Tang Dynasty. It has been said that Zheng Wu Xiehouti (郑五歇后体), a kind of two-part allegorical poem, has been mentioned in 《旧唐书·郑綮列传》. But as a special linguistic form and phenomenon in the language, it has made its earliest appearance in the period of pre-Qin. “亡羊补牢，未为迟也”，which means that it is not too late to mend the fold even after some sheep have been lost, can be found in 《战国策·楚策四》(崔慧明, 孙玉华 2006: 1-2). This is what we call “Chinese two-part allegorical saying”.

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is Chinese-specific. It is a unique form and phenomenon that cannot be found in any other languages. It is full of the ethnic coloring of Chinese. With strong sense of humor, wittiness and life, it offers much food for thought and is popular among people. In the ancient times, Chinese two-part allegorical sayings spread far and wide mainly among the people, although few can be seen written down. For instance, such statement “千里寄鹅毛，物轻人意重，复斋所载宋时谚也” has been recorded in Qian Daxin(钱大昕)'s 《恒言录》(夏雨, 楚风, 2000: 1). Such Chinese two-part allegorical saying

is still in use today.

### 3.3 The Classification of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Generally, there are two forms of expression in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings in terms of rhetorical devices: one is using allegory and the other is using puns. That is to say, usually there are two kinds of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings: figurative two-part allegorical sayings (比喻性歇后语) and pun-featured two-part allegorical sayings (双关性歇后语) (陈文伯, 2005: 258). But there is still another kind that is neglected by people. It is allusion-featured two-part allegorical sayings (含有典故的歇后语), that is, Chinese two-part allegorical sayings with classical allusion.

#### 3.3.1 Figurative Two-part Allegorical Sayings (比喻性歇后语)

Most of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings use allegory or analogy, and in such two-part allegorical sayings, the allegorical part, or the first part, usually has a vivid image while the second part carries the figurative meaning, which can be inferred from the allegory. Usually, the original images play an important role in the connotation of the whole idiom or even in the whole sentence and paragraph, and the omission of them may cause confusion to the readers.

e.g. 刘备摔孩子——收买人心  
 徐庶进曹营——言不发  
 黄鼠狼给鸡拜年——没安好心  
 兔子尾巴——长不了

#### 3.3.2 Pun-featured Two-part Allegorical Sayings (双关性歇后语)

Chinese two-part allegorical sayings of this kind use puns in the second part and they have literal meaning and metaphorical meaning at the same time. Usually the second part is a homophonic pun, which has the same or similar pronunciation but different characters. “外甥打灯笼——照舅（旧）” is an example, which means that “things will remain what they were before”. Here, “舅” and “旧” have the same pronunciation but neither the characters nor the meanings are the same.

e.g. 和尚打伞——无发（法）无天  
 猪八戒的脊梁骨——悟（无）能之背（辈）  
 猪鼻子插大葱——装象（相）  
 鞋里长草——荒（慌）了脚  
 狗撵鸭子——呱呱叫

(宁渠, 1982: 2)

### 3.3.3 Allusion-Featured Two-part Allegorical Sayings (含有典故的歇后语)

Apart from the two kinds of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings mentioned above, there is still a third type, i.e. allusion-featured two-part allegorical sayings. Allusion-featured two-part allegorical sayings refer to those originating from historical events, fables, mythologies, legends, etc., whose characteristics are of a distant origin and a long history of development, full of relatively strong national coloring, widely used among the people and established by the people through long social practice.

e.g. 八仙聚会——又说又笑  
秦叔宝卖马——穷途末路  
王羲之写的字——横竖都好  
白骨精骗唐僧——计不成又生一计  
宋襄公失败的教训——对敌人不能讲仁慈

### 3.4 The Nature of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a unique form of the Chinese language. It is an exotic, enchanting flower and one of the dazzling pearls in the treasure-house of the Chinese language. It is unique because it is Chinese-specific. It conveys profound truth in simple and popular words. Like other Chinese proverbs and idioms, Chinese two-part allegorical saying indicates sense in a smooth, clear and unique style, with vivid images, witty, pungent and trenchant language, offering much food for people to ponder over. It is a special form of humor. As far as its nature is concerned, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a unique rhetorical device of Chinese. There is no two-part allegorical sayings in English, or any other language (金惠康, 2003: 316). In other words, Chinese two-part allegorical saying cannot find its counterpart in English, or any other languages.

### 3.5 The Significance of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Since it is a unique form and phenomenon of the Chinese language, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is certainly of its great importance. Like any other forms of Chinese idiom, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is closely connected with Chinese history, social system and living conditions of the nation and so on in content; and in its form, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is well presented by its unique information in nearly every means of expression. Many Chinese two-part allegorical sayings reflect people's ways of life as well as their conceptions of the world, and contain the features of Chinese culture. All Chinese two-part allegorical sayings created by people in their life and social practice are a well

integrated part of the language. They come from the people and express people's thoughts and experiences as well as profound truth with the fewest words possible but most impressive and humorous. They are not only used by people orally, but also widely used in many great classical works of Chinese such as *A Dream of Red Mansions* (《红楼梦》), *The Pilgrimage to the West* (《西游记》), *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (《三国演义》), *Outlaws of the Marsh* (《水浒传》), *The Scholars* (《儒林外史》), *The True Colors of Officialdom* (《官场现形记》), *Plum in the Gold Vase* (《金瓶梅》) and the like, and even in many modern Chinese works. The great success of many great literary works partly lies in its proper and creative use of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

The significance of Chinese two-part allegorical saying can be seen clearly in the following aspects: 1) People use Chinese two-part allegorical sayings to give life to every object or character in their works or their conversations; 2) A lot of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are used to construct meanings keeping with their attitude or assessment of people and events; 3) The use of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings makes the language powerful, terse, witty and rich in connotations; 4) People use Chinese two-part allegorical sayings to make their language in literary works or conversations colorful and full of aesthetic value.

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is very important and the use of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings should not be indiscriminate. The choice of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings should depend on whether a Chinese two-part allegorical saying has some positive images or meaning or not. Some may have their reference value, but others may have some backward, negative and ugly images, vulgar interests, or even decadent ideas, which should be completely abandoned. That is to say, humor and amusement cannot be unconditioned.

### 3. 6 The Development of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Originally, Chinese two-part allegorical saying comes from the people. It has been named as “rest-ending sayings”, “post-pause expressions”, “Enigmatic Simile” and “Chinese wisecracks” and so on (韩庆果, 2002). It is generally accepted as “Chinese two-part allegorical saying” in present-day.

Chinese two-part allegorical saying also evolves with the development of our age, the society as well as science and technology. Some new things or contents concerning about economy or business are reflected in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. For instance,

全国粮票——到处通行

自由市场做买卖——讨价还价

鞋帽厂广告——评头品足

鞭炮厂产品——名声在外

These new things appearing in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings reflect the change and development of the society (姜志芳, 2006: 192).

With the advent of the Age of Information and Internet, Chinese two-part allegorical saying has developed a new type of its own: Chinese two-part allegorical sayings for cyber. For example,

上网掉线——窍（敲）不通

网上胡侃——谁也不知道谁

网上恋爱——往（网）情深

网上配对儿——不是真夫妻

美眉喊 mm——没两样

The appearance of these Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is to meet people's needs to get online, especially those netizens(网民). This shows us the characteristics of Chinese two-part allegorical saying's development with the time and the society.

## Chapter 4 Characteristics of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

### 4.1 Structural Characteristics of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

As a kind of idiom in Chinese lexical system, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is unique in both the structure and its means of expression when compared with other forms of Chinese idiom and proverb.

As far as the structure is concerned, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is Chinese-specific. Usually with the first part stated and the second unstated, the connotation lies in the second part. This is the only form in Chinese vocabulary. In terms of means of expression of semantic or linguistic meaning, Chinese two-part allegorical saying has two kinds of meaning: the literal meaning and the extended meaning, with the first part having the literal meaning and the second part the extended meaning. And there is a close relationship between the literal meaning and the extended meaning.

#### 4.1.1 A Structure with Double Levels of Meaning

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a structure with double levels of meaning, which refers to that Chinese two-part allegorical saying has not only a literal meaning but also an extended meaning. The extended meaning (of words) is a new meaning as the extension of the original on the basis of the literal meaning of the original, e.g. “鉴” originally meant “mirror” and has come to mean “warning” by extension (《现代汉语词典（汉英双语）》, 2002: 2292). The extended meaning is the actual meaning, or the pragmatic meaning, of the Chinese two-part allegorical saying. It is the extended meaning that a Chinese two-part allegorical saying uses and reflects in a pragmatic sense.

The double levels of meaning of the Chinese two-part allegorical sayings have called the attention of many Chinese scholars. Mr. Wen Duanzheng (温端政), who has made outstanding achievements in the research of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and has suggested calling Chinese two-part allegorical saying (“歇后语”) “Yin Zhu Yu” (“引注语”), insists on calling the literal meaning of the Chinese two-part allegorical saying “本义”, namely the original or primary meaning, and the extended meaning of the Chinese two-part allegorical saying “别义”. Mr. Li Xingjian (李行健) also emphasizes Chinese two-part allegorical saying has a duality in meaning. People often say that a word or a sentence has a meaning behind what is openly said or stated (“言外之意”), or say “指桑骂槐” ( meaning “point at one but abuse another”), which actually indicates that a word or a sentence, besides its literal meaning, usually has an extended meaning. As for the literal and extended meanings of Chinese two-part allegorical

sayings, we can see the relationship between the two in the following example:

(1) “他心里很踌躇：答应带路吗？在逃兵荒的时候，泥菩萨过河，自身难保。不带吗？南军对我们老百姓是好的，难道叫他们送死不成？”（李六如《六十年的变迁》第一十三章）

From example (1), it can be seen that the literal meaning of “泥菩萨过河，自身难保” is: a clay Buddha is easy to melt and be washed away by the water when crossing the river, therefore he is hardly able to save himself, not to speak of blessing and protecting others. The extended meaning of this Chinese two-part allegorical sayings refers to that a person who is in danger or has no ability cannot guarantee his own safety, not to speak of helping others (尹斌庸、佳岑, 2006: 111-112). Obviously, the extended meaning of “泥菩萨过河，自身难保” originates on the basis of its literal meaning. It compares a weak person in strength and ability to a clay Buddha so as to indicate the state of “being unable even to fend for oneself (much less look after others)”, which seems more vivid and appropriate. It is also true to “外甥打灯笼——照旧（舅）” in another example as follows:

(2) “以往有了什么事情，和珅召集他们，都是走走过场。今天，那几位还是外甥打灯笼——照旧（舅），谁也不言语。”（郭沫戈等《刘公案》第六十九回）

It also can be seen in example (2) that “外甥打灯笼——照旧（舅）” has double meanings: the literal meaning and the extended meaning. Literally, it indicates “the nephew holds a lantern for his uncle”. The extended meaning is “things stay unchanged or remain the same”. It is necessary to point out that the forming of the extended meaning of this type of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is distinctive. It is not extended by the relevance of its literal meaning but by the relevance of phoneme. That is to say, it is realized by homophonic device in the pun. Maternal uncle is 舅, while the son of his sister is 外甥. Since 舅(jiu) is pronounced the same as 旧(jiu), meaning “old, usual, unchanged”. “照舅”(“hold a lantern for his uncle”) homophonically puns “照旧”, which means staying unchanged or remaining the same. That is to say, “照旧” is extended from “照舅”, which indicates the close relationship between the literal meaning and the extended meaning of Chinese two-part allegorical saying (尹斌庸、佳岑, 2006: 155-156).

#### 4.1.2 A Structure Composed of Two Parts

“Xie Hou Yu”(歇后语), or Chinese two-part allegorical saying, is also referred to as “譬解语” or “引注语”. This is a precious result of modern Chinese linguists’ analysis and cognition of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. Although the naming is different, people’s understanding of this linguistic phenomenon is consistent with one another. No matter what people call Chinese two-part allegorical saying, either “前譬——后解” or “前引——后注”, it is generally thought that Chinese two-part allegorical saying is composed of two parts, with the first part as a riddle and the second as the answer to it. It is also pointed out that the name

of Chinese two-part allegorical saying is inconsistent with its content, i.e., it is not rest-ending or post-pause.

As far as the literal meaning is concerned, the first part of Chinese two-part allegorical saying tells a person, an object or an event, and the second explains some certain attribute (property, characteristic, etc.). There is a close relationship between both parts and they are indispensable. For example,

(3) “肖汉正在用酒，忽然降临了一个不速之客，并指桑骂槐地发了一顿牢骚，使他丈二和尚——摸不着头脑。”（闻逸《龙公案》第六十五回）

(4) “孙洁书明知借车就是抢车，肉包子打狗——去不复返的事，但形势明摆着，他若敢说个不字，别说车要被抢走，命也得搭上。”（木青《匪患世界》第二十章）

In example (3), the first part of “丈二和尚——摸不着头脑” indicates a person ---- a giant monk who is four meters high, and the second part indicates a characteristic of the person, which means he is so high that nobody can touch his head. But the extended meaning of it means “cannot make head or tail of something” or “to feel completely at a loss” (尹斌庸、佳岑, 2006: 187-188). And in example (4) the first part of “肉包子打狗——去不复返” indicates an event ---- throwing a meat bun at a dog in an attempt to drive it away, and the second part illustrates a feature of this event: once the meat bun is thrown at a dog, it cannot come back because the dog may eat it (尹斌庸、佳岑, 2006: 129-130).

As far as the extended meaning is concerned, it can be seen that the first part of Chinese two-part allegorical saying is absolutely necessary for the formation and expression of the extended meaning, though the statement of the extended meaning lies in the second part. The roles that the first part plays in the formation and expression of the extended meaning are reflected as follows:

Firstly, the existence of the first part of the Chinese two-part allegorical saying makes the extended meaning more vivid and concrete. Take “肉包子打狗——去不复返” for example, its extended meaning refers to something given out but hardly returnable or someone going without coming back just because people use the vivid illustrational description “肉包子打狗”(throwing a meat bun at a dog in an attempt to drive it away) as a comparison, which adds some liveliness and vividness to the extended meaning. One more example, in “猪八戒照镜子——里外不是人”, the extended meaning is “being in an awkward or embarrassing situation of being blamed everywhere”. This is because, in its original meaning, Zhu Bajie (猪八戒) is very ugly, with a pig's head and a human body. If he looked at himself in a mirror, he could not be like a human being either inside or outside the mirror. It is with the image of “Zhu Bajie (猪八戒) looking himself in a mirror” as a foreshadowing that makes the situation of “being awkward or embarrassed” more vivid and sensible.

Secondly, in some Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, the first part makes the emotional

coloring of the extended meaning more distinct and enhances its expression force. As far as the meaning conveyed is concerned, the commendatoriness (褒义) or derogatoriness (贬义) of Chinese two-part allegorical saying is quite obvious and so is its emotional tendentiousness. It should be pointed out that the expressive force of Chinese two-part allegorical saying lies, to a great extent, in the first part. Take “老鼠钻风箱——两头受气” and “中秋节的月亮——正大光明” for example. In “老鼠钻风箱——两头受气”, the basic sense of the extended meaning refers to a person being bullied or blamed by both sides and being at a loss about what to do. With the comparison of “老鼠钻风箱” in the first part, this Chinese two-part allegorical saying has a strong sense of derogatoriness, indicating that a person being bullied or blamed by both sides and being at a loss about what to do is as unpopular as a mouse, whose situation is bad but not worth being sympathized with and has only himself to blame. It is also true to “中秋节的月亮——正大光明”. The extended meaning means a person who is honest and upright. It is with “中秋节的月亮” as the analogy that makes the commendatoriness of this saying more sensible and striking.

Thirdly, the existence of the first part distinguishes itself from some other synonymous sayings. In Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, some are identical or similar in their extended meanings, thus forming synonymous or near-synonymous sayings, whose meanings, to some extent, are subtly different from one another's in emotional coloring. This subtle difference is indicated by means of the first part of the two-part allegorical saying. For example,

(5) “你小子坐飞机放炮仗——响(想)得高! 庄稼院儿的后生, 不言不语地要上省城考吹号?  
你能挣来那碗饭?” (达理 《大山里的号声》)

(6) “当个副主任还嫌小, 真他妈的屎壳郎坐飞机——响(想)得高!”  
(苏炳镇 《夫妻之间》第一章)

In examples (5) and (6), the extended meanings “坐飞机放炮仗——响(想)得高” and “屎壳郎坐飞机——响(想)得高” are the same, both referring to that the ideas are super-human and impractical. Yet the derogatoriness of the latter is more striking than the former. It is the difference in the first parts that results in the subtle difference between these two allegorical sayings.

Generally speaking, the realization of the extended meaning of the Chinese two-part allegorical saying is based on its literal meaning. From the perspective of rhetorical analysis, the extended meaning can also be realized by means of some positive rhetoric devices. Relatively, though a Chinese two-part allegorical saying is composed of two parts, the number of words of which is more than that of Chinese idioms, proverbs and common sayings, it is a kind of set phrase with relatively compact structure. Therefore, the rhetoric device used in Chinese two-part allegorical saying is usually a combination of two rhetoric devices. The extended meaning is, more often than not, realized by means of the combination of pun and

analogy.

e.g. (7) “哎，咱侄媳妇可是山头上吹喇叭——站得高，响（想）得远！这点道理还用你点拨么！”

（柳吟 《穆桂英全传》第六回）

(8) “也犯不着气他们。俗话说得好，‘千里搭凉棚——没有个不散的筵席’，谁守谁一辈子呢？”

（曹雪芹 《红楼梦》第二十六回）

From the perspective of rhetorical analysis, it can be seen that “山头上吹喇叭——站得高，响（想）得远” in example (7) employs a combination of “(象)山头上吹喇叭(一样)——站得高，响得远” (analogy) and “响（想）得远”(homophonic pun). The same is true to “千里搭凉棚——没有个不散的筵席” in example (8), in which “千里搭凉棚——没有个不散的筵席” is actually “(像)千里搭凉棚(也终要散去一样)——没有不散的筵席”，a combination of analogy (“(像)千里搭凉棚(也终要散去一样)，没有不散的筵席”) and semantic pun (“没有不散的筵席”) (“筵席” means “聚会、聚合”).

## 4.2 Rhetorical Characteristics of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

As an expressive linguistic form in modern Chinese, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is characterized by its vividness, refinedness, humor and deep implications in content, which offers food for thought. All this is achieved through its figures of speech, or rhetorical devices. This section makes an exploration of rhetorical devices in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

### 4.2.1 Rhetorical Devices in Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

The rich content of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings can be expressed through rhetorical devices, or figures of speech, which contribute much to the expressive and emotional power of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

#### 4.2.1.1 Comparison

Comparison is a most basic and most widely used rhetorical device in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. Based on the similarity and association between objects, as well as the basic characteristics of analogy in the process of a man's thinking, comparison can skillfully turn an abstract and profound philosophy into a concrete and plain image. Being enlightening, fresh and impressive, comparison can set off the innate characteristics of an object better than other literary devices such as expansion, reasoning, analysis, etc.

Comparison has three determinants: subject or tenor (the thing described), reference or vehicle (the thing compared) and indicator of resemblance (such as “宛如”，“好似”，“像”，“如”，“若”，“同”). These three determinants may or may not appear simultaneously in a Chinese

two-part allegorical saying. With the omission of the indicator of resemblance, only subject or tenor and reference or vehicle appears simultaneously in a Chinese two-part allegorical saying.

e.g. 芝麻开花——节节高  
 老太太戴花——老来俏  
 和尚头上的虱子——明摆着

(宁渠, 1982: 2)

Usually, there are two striking features in comparison. First, comparison in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings has a wide range of materials. The content of comparison can be: (1) anything in real life, e.g. “天上的星星——没有个确数”, “绣花枕头——包草”; (2) every season of the year, e.g. “三月扇扇子——满面春风”, “三九天喝凉水——一下凉到底啦”; (3) various types of person, e.g., “大姑娘上轿——头一回”, “光棍梦见娶媳妇——净想好事”, “两个哑巴亲嘴——好的没法说啦”. Second, comparison is rich in imagination. This feature finds its expression first in creating rich and colorful Chinese two-part allegorical sayings from different angles and with full play of imagination in the same kind of things or persons, and then in creating Chinese two-part allegorical sayings with make-up images as their materials. As for the former, taking “老太太” for example, many Chinese two-part allegorical sayings can be found with “老太太” as their reference, e.g. “老太太戴花——老来俏”, “老太太打呵欠——望无牙(涯)” and “老太太的脸蛋——纹皱皱(文绉绉)”; as for the latter, there are two cases: one is that the reference, or the thing compared may be existent in the real world. Though the fact is not so common, it may exist and people can make it up with imagination, e.g. “和尚头上的虱子——明摆着”, “孔夫子搬家——净是书(输)”; the other is that the thing compared may not exist, just a sheer product out of people’s artistic imagination, a product whose characteristics are exhibited by extreme exaggeration or illusion though it is impossible to happen, and a product indicating some certain problem and leaving people deep impression, e.g. “高射炮打蚊子——大材小用”, “嗓子里挂铜锣——声音响亮”.

(宁渠, 1982: 17)

#### 4.2.1.2 Metonymy

In Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, metonymy is also a comparison frequently used, in which neither the subject nor indicator of resemblance is used. Instead, the reference is described as if it were the subject itself. In appearance only the reference exists in a metonymy, but in reality it is the subject that is being emphasized, for the subject and the reference have fused into one.

e.g. 色盲看图画——分不清青红皂白  
 缺牙啃西瓜——道道多

#### 4.2.1.3 Pun

Pun is another basic and most widely used rhetorical device in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. There are two parts in a Chinese two-part allegorical saying, i.e., the former part and the latter part, both of which have some intrinsic relations. In the latter part lies the actual meaning though in many Chinese two-part allegorical sayings the literal meaning and actual meaning are inconstant. It is the use of pun in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings that causes this inconstancy.

Pun is the use of a word, or words formed or sounding alike but has different meanings in such a way as to play on two or more possible applications. This kind of rhetorical device is also frequently used in Chinese idioms, especially in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. It carries two meanings, one of which is literal and the other implied.

e.g. 打破沙锅——纹（问）到底

棺材上画老虎——吓死人

Usually, there are two types of puns used in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, one is semantic pun (语义双关) and the other is homophonic pun (谐音双关), which has the same or similar pronunciation but different characters. That is to say, pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical sayings fall into two types: semantic pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and homophonic pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

##### 1) Semantic pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical sayings

The latter part of a semantic pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a polysemic word, the literal meaning of which is the revelation of the former part of the two-part allegorical saying, and the extended meaning or figurative meaning of which lies in the actual meaning. For example, in “三年不漱口——张臭嘴”, the literal meaning is “a mouth with awful smell”, and the actual meaning contains the figurative meaning “a person who speaks obscenities”.

##### 2) Homophonic pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical sayings

The latter part of a homophonic pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical saying is based on the homophone to achieve the purpose and effect of pun. The latter part is the direct statement of the image in the former part. The relationship between the direct statement and the actual meaning conveyed is, either in individual word or in grammar as a whole, homophonic. That is, to achieve its ideographic (expressive) function by transferring of homophones. For example, in the Chinese two-part allegorical saying “张飞妈妈姓吴——吴氏生飞（无事生非）”, the latter part “吴氏生飞”, a direct statement of the former part, is the literal meaning; the true meaning, however, lies in “无事生非”, meaning “making much ado about nothing”, or “making trouble out of nothing”. The realization of the actual meaning can only be achieved through the transferring of the homophonic words. More examples are “乌龟

吃萤火虫——心里明白”(A tortoise which has swallowed a firefly—bright inside), “老鼠爬秤钩——自称自”(A mouse climbs onto a steelyard hook—weighing itself in the balance, meaning chanting the praises of oneself) and “抓着胡子过河——牵须(谦虚)过渡(度)”(crossing a river by catching hold of other’s beard—being too modest).

#### 4.2.1.4 Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the use of a form of words to make something sound even bigger, smaller, louder, etc. It is a device that is put to daily use in emphatic assertions, denials and boasts. The use of hyperbole in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings can give full play to people’s imagination, make up some new and vivid images, and achieve a witty, humorous comic effect in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

e.g. 鞋底下抹油——溜之大吉  
巴掌心里长胡须——老手  
鞋里长草——荒(慌)了脚

#### 4.2.1.5 Personification

Personification is a figure of speech to give human feelings, qualities and abilities to animals, or life and personal attributes to inanimate objects, or to ideas, abstractions and events. It is used in many Chinese two-part allegorical sayings to make the inanimate things lifelike, to make living things lovable or hateful, or to make some certain animals personified with the images of some certain types of people.

e.g. 泥菩萨过河——自身难保  
老虎念经——假装善人  
井底青蛙——见识浅

#### 4.2.1.6 Antithesis

Antithesis is the deliberate arrangement of contrasting words or ideas in balanced structural forms to achieve force and emphasis. The form of the expression is very important for effect, for the force of the emphasis, whether for profundity of judgment, for humor or for satire, depends chiefly on the juxtaposition of direct opposites, of glaring contrasts. This figure of speech is widely used in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings for its ways of expression are diverse and flexible, which makes Chinese two-part allegorical sayings orderly and well-balanced in structure, concise and intensive in content, and most important of all, expressive.

e.g. 长生果——不老实  
千日拜佛, 一朝得子——没白费功夫

八月十五的月饼——一盆子来，一盆子去

#### 4.2.1.7 Contrast

Contrast is a kind of figure of speech in which two opposite things or phenomena are set against each other in one phrase, clause or sentence, so as to make their difference or opposition seem sharper and clearer.

e.g. 俏媳妇戴凤冠——好上加好

穿新鞋走老路——因循守旧

Contrast used in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings falls into two classifications: one is affirmative contrast, to which the first one of the above-mentioned examples belongs; the other is negative contrast, into which the latter falls.

#### 4.2.1.8 Rhetorical Question

Rhetorical question is frequently used in the stated part in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. In a rhetorical question the speaker, though having a definite opinion of his own, deliberately raises a question, to which he does not expect an answer from readers, and in which his intention is revealed instead. This is a rhetorical mood of affirming or denying something more strongly and emphatically than that could be done in ordinary language.

e.g. 老虎拉车——谁敢（赶）？

一个人拜把兄弟——你算老几？

#### 4.2.1.9 Chiasmus (回文)

Chiasmus is a figure of speech, which refers to inversion in the second phrase of order followed in the first. It is used more and more frequently in Chinese language because of its diversified rhetorical functions such as being good at expressing sophisticated ideas and deep thought. This kind of figure of speech can also be found in Chinese two-part allegorical saying. The use of Chiasmus makes Chinese two-part allegorical saying more concise and orderly in structure, which helps to achieve a sense of beauty in circles and a sense of musical beauty in rhyme.

e.g. 观音斋罗汉，罗汉斋观音——互相帮助

两个钱买一个糖人——玩了没吃的，吃了没玩的

瘸拐李把眼挤——你糊弄我，我糊弄你

#### 4.2.1.10 Analyzing the Form or Structure of a Word or Character (析字)

Analyzing the form or structure of a word or character is a rhetorical device in which the form or structure of a word or character is dissected and then reorganized. The use of this kind

of rhetorical device in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is characterized by a sentiment of implicit humor.

e.g. 自大上加一点——臭

两个山字一摞——请出

心字头上一把刀——忍了吧

#### 4.2.2 Rhetorical Functions of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

A lot of rhetorical devices are employed in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, making it possess rhetorical functions as follows:

First, for vividness. For instance, in conveying the meaning of Chinese “坏透了” we may find many words in modern Chinese to express such meaning, but why there still appears such a synonymous form as “头顶长疮，脚底流脓——坏透了”？It is because Chinese two-part allegorical saying has a special rhetorical function, i.e., its vividness. The comparison in this Chinese two-part allegorical saying not only indicates the real life of the people, but is refined by the people through their artistic treatment. Therefore, it is typical of its vivid language and striking image.

Second, for wittiness. Take “戴草帽亲嘴——隔得太远” for example. In order to convey the abstract message “差得远”，hyperbole is employed in this Chinese two-part allegorical saying with the super-realistic but witty and interesting image of “戴草帽亲嘴”.

Third, for sarcasm. To a certain extent, Most Chinese two-part allegorical sayings have the emotional coloring of sarcastic wittiness and derogatoriness. For instance, “脱裤子放屁——多此一举” is of a sarcastic sense; “锥子抹油——又尖（奸）又滑（猾）” has a sense of reprimanding; and “兔子的尾巴——长不了” possesses a sense of cursing somebody. The sarcasm of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings derives, firstly from the things of derogatory sense and those dishonorable images in people's traditional conception in the comparisons, e.g. “挨刀的肥猪——不怕开水烫” and “屎壳螂打喷嚏——满嘴喷粪”；secondly from the derogatory modifiers in the comparisons, e.g. “烂鱼开了膛——一副坏心肠” and “笨鸭子——上不了架”；thirdly from certain physical defects of the persons in the comparisons, e.g. “瞎子点灯——白费蜡”，“聋子的耳朵——摆设” and “麻子脸照镜子——个人观点”；lastly, the use of contrast makes the sarcasm of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings stronger and more striking, e.g. “屎壳螂戴花——臭美”，in which people make a contrast between the derogatory term “屎壳螂” and the commendatory term “花”，vividly conveying the meaning of “臭美”，thus making this two-part allegorical saying have a strong derogatory sense.

### 4.3 Cultural Characteristics of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Any language is a tool for conveying ideas and communicating. The most important function of the language is communication. This statement itself indicates psychological, cultural and social elements concerning language. Language and culture are closely interwoven. Language is the product and result of the whole cultural system, and the medium forming and linking up other elements of culture. Therefore, language is always related to the culture of that nation.

Language plays an important role in all the activities of human beings. It is also seen as one component of culture and the carrier of culture at the same time, because it has three features in relationship with culture as follows: 1) Language expresses cultural reality because the words that people utter refer to common experiences; 2) Language embodies cultural reality because the members of a community not only express experience, but also create experiences through language; 3) Language symbolizes cultural reality because it is a system of signs having its cultural value.

Language comprises human beings' historical and cultural backgrounds, approaches of life, ways of thinking and modes of living. Being an intrinsic part of culture, language carries and mirrors culture. Language and culture are inter-related with and inter-dependent of each other, so understanding one requires understanding of the other.

There is a very close relationship between language and social and cultural psychology. Therefore, it is necessary and reliable for us to trace the historical tracks left in the language so as to know something about a nation's history, culture and the society.

As a part of Chinese idiom, Chinese two-part allegorical saying is an indispensable part of the Chinese language. As a miniature of Chinese culture, it displays us a society with a long history of thousands of years to us and enables us to gain some knowledge of the nation's social realities of politics, economy, law, religion, daily life, local conditions and customs from ancient time till today, as well as people's psychology, aesthetic standards and outlooks on values and the world. The study of these cultural elements helps us understand the function and magic of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings in communication.

Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are also rich in cultural characteristics, which can be shown as follows:

#### 4.3.1 Religious Awareness and Superstitious Beliefs

As a social and historical phenomenon and a kind of social ideology, religion has left its tracks on Chinese two-part allegorical saying. Most Chinese two-part allegorical sayings from religion are concerned with Buddhism and Taoism, with the gods and Buddha (菩萨), the

village god (土地爷), the Eight Immortals (八仙) and the musical instruments used in a Buddhist and Taoist mass as their objects described. Much religious cultural information reflects clearly the relationship between religion and Chinese culture as well as the daily life of the Chinese people.

e.g. 佛爷的桌子——碰不得  
泥菩萨过河——自身难保  
老和尚念经——句句真言

All these Chinese two-part allegorical sayings indicate the widespread influence of religion, especially Buddhism and Taoism, in China. But what is worth mentioning here is that most Chinese two-part allegorical sayings concerning the gods and Buddha are derogatory, e.g. “泥菩萨洗脸——越洗越难看”, “老寿星的额头——宝贝疙瘩”. People laugh, joke, and curse in rage without taboo and fear while using these two-part allegorical sayings, which objectively reflect such a fact that not all religions can take root in the heart of the people. Though the awareness of the gods and Buddha exists widespread, few people believe in them. That is why the gods and the Buddha have become the object that people joke and make fun of.

Besides, such Chinese two-part allegorical sayings as “阎罗王审案子——全是鬼事” and “判官手中的笔——生死由你” reflect, to some extent, people’s superstitious ideas.

#### 4.3.2 Aesthetic Attitudes and Outlook on Values

There are quite a few Chinese two-part allegorical sayings concerning figures of speech about some plants and animals, from which we can see clearly people’s aesthetic attitudes and their likes and dislikes, for instance, “猪鼻子插大葱——装象 (相)”, “大麻籽喂牲口——不是好料” and “狗拿耗子——多管闲事”. Among these Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, most of them are concerned with comparison with dog (狗) and mouse (老鼠), the meanings of which are mostly derogatory. For instance, “狗咬吕洞宾——不识好人心”, “狗坐轿子——不识抬举”, “老鼠过街——人人喊打” and “老鼠尾巴上绑鸡毛——从来不是什么正经鸟” are ironic. With the vivid comparisons of the former parts, these Chinese two-part allegorical sayings have more striking derogatory sense and indicate people’s aesthetic attitudes and outlook on values. While conveying their ironic and derogatory sense and achieving their purpose of sarcasm, these Chinese two-part allegorical sayings sound witty, humorous and easy to understand, with rich implications and far-reaching significance. Furthermore, they make people feel both funny and annoying.

#### 4.3.3 Living Habits and Customs and Characteristics of Localities

China is a large nation. The Chinese nation has always been engaged in farming and

cultivating, and living on the fixed, limited land. With a large population, eating has always been a very important issue in China. Ever since the ancient time, there goes a very famous saying “People regard food as their prime want (民以食为天)”, which indicates eating is the most important thing and top priority in people’s daily life. China is also a nation with vast area. People’s food components, habits and social customs vary from place to place, which is also reflected in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and makes them possess some striking features of local color. For instance, “小葱拌豆腐——清二白” records people’s eating habits and customs in the northern part of China. Because of the clearness between green and white, people tends to compare this to the clear-cut attitude toward certain things or situations. Another example, in expressing “哑巴吃××——心中有数”, there are different expressions in different regions. Some say “哑巴吃饺子”; some say “哑巴吃粑粑”; others say “哑巴吃汤圆”. This obviously has something to do with the local people’s eating and living habits and customs respectively. In their food and drink, people of the Han nationality seem fond of “甜” or “甘”(sweet) particularly. There are such sayings as “苦尽甘来”, “同甘共苦” in Chinese idioms, “不吃苦中苦, 难得甜上甜” in Chinese proverbs, so are there in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, e.g. “蜂蜜沾白糖——甜上加甜”, “强扭的瓜——不甜”, “嘴上抹蜜——说得甜”, “蜜饯枣子——甜透了” and so on. All these suggest that “甜”(sweet) has become the synonym of “美好” and “幸福”(happiness) in people’s mind and people long for a happy life.

#### 4.3.4 Historical Tracks and Traits of the Times

Some typical objects or social phenomena of the ancient times have been recorded in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. With the changes of the times, these objects and phenomena do not exist any more. But they have been left in some of the language as some cultural relics. For instance, “天桥上的把式——光说不练”, “懒婆娘的裹脚布——又臭又长” and “丫环女带钥匙——当家不做主” indicate a certain social history and striking traits of the times. In these above-mentioned Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, the ancient objects or social phenomena like “天桥”, “裹脚布” and “丫环女”, which were typical in the ancient times, but do not exist today any more. They impress us mostly as historical or cultural relics. What they remind us is that they are some certain typical things in some certain times or society.

#### 4.3.5 Traditional Thoughts and Ideologies

Some traditional thoughts and ideologies are strikingly indicated in the Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

Some of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings reflect simple dialectical thoughts, e.g. “塞翁

失马——焉知非福”; some indicate the backward notions of the authority of the husband, of woman’s subject to son after her husband’s death, of woman’s miserable situation of having no position in the family and in society, and of the ancient times, e.g. “寡妇死恩——没指望了”; others show people’s conducts and thoughts fettered by the doctrine of the mean, e.g. “出头的椽子——先烂”.

#### 4.3.6 Business and Economic Activities

With the development of the age and the society, something concerning about business and economic activities is also reflected in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. For example,

全国粮票——到处通行  
自由市场做买卖——讨价还价  
鞋帽厂广告——评头品足  
鞭炮厂产品——名声在外

In conclusion, Chinese two-part allegorical sayings have displayed a bright and colorful world of Chinese culture before us. They also offer us their rich and varied content in culture and thoughts. We should take a dialectical and historical point of view toward them. It is necessary to analyze, differentiate, assimilate and carry forward Chinese two-part allegorical sayings from the perspective of dialectical materialism and historical materialism.

## Chapter 5 C-E Translation of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings from the Perspective of Equivalent Effect Theory

As it has been mentioned before, translation is a cross-lingual and cross-cultural communicative activity. In the process of translation, the translator has to overcome two kinds of barriers: one is linguistic and the other cultural. That is to say, one has to overcome language barriers and cultural differences while translating. This is because there are some cultural differences between different languages, such as Chinese and English. As far as language is concerned, no barrier is greater than the unique structure of the SL; in terms of culture, no barrier is greater than the peculiar traits of that nationality. If some striking ideas of peculiar traits of the nationality are conveyed in the unique linguistic structure, translation will become more difficult. The unique linguistic structure or special expression with a strong color of nationality is hard to be transferred into another language (杜建慧、杨金良等, 1998: 195). Chinese two-part allegorical saying belongs to this type of unique linguistic structure (金惠康, 2004: 455). Therefore, the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings should overcome not merely language barriers and also cultural obstructions.

### 5.1 Guiding Principles for Translating Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a special phenomenon in the Chinese language. The C-E Translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is subject to the general principles of translation.

The so-called “principle of translation” and “criterion of translation” are actually the two sides of the same thing. The former lays emphasis on the translator, who should follow them while translating, whereas the latter on the reader or critic, who may use the criteria to evaluate a translation. The criterion of translation functions as a plumb-line for measuring the professional level of translation and as a goal set for translators to strive after. Different kinds of the criteria of translation, if used by different translators as their principles or guidelines in their actual translating work, may bring about quite different translations of the same original works.

As yet there is no theory of translation in the technical sense of “a coherent set of general propositions used as principles to explain a class of phenomena”, but there are quite a few “theories” in the broad sense of “a set of principles which are helpful in understanding the nature of translating or in establishing criteria for evaluating a translated text.” In general, however, these principles are stated in terms of how to produce an acceptable translation

(Eugene A. Nida, 1998:11, 155). The criteria of translation have attracted the attention of all translation theorists. They have put up many different kinds of criteria of translation. Of the various kinds of criteria of translation, the following three main types are representatives.

### 5.1.1 The Trinity Principle of Faithfulness, Expressiveness and Elegance

In the past decades, whenever the question of principles of translation is under discussion, the “Three-character Guide” —“信、达、雅” (faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance) formulated by Yan Fu in his *Preface* to the translation of T. H. Huxley’s book *Evolution and Ethics and Others Essays* (《天演论》译例言, 1898) is thought of and supported as the one and only maxim all translators must observe in China.

“Faithfulness” is an important question of the principle of translation. “True translation demands that the translator be faithful to the content, language and style of the original at the same time. By faithfulness to the content and style of the original the translator must be true to its whole text, not to metaphrase individual phrases or sentences. Only by thus doing can he come up to the standard of translation which conveys not only the meaning but also the spirit of the original work. If he doesn’t take this into consideration, the result will go contrary to his wishes. He could never achieve faithfulness of translation, should he lack a correct understanding of it, disregard the internal relations in the text, but mechanically sticks to the literal meaning of isolated words” (刘重德, 1991: 32). “Expressiveness” means reproduction of the original in standardized popular language. Without expressiveness, mere faithfulness would mean work to no avail. Yan Fu’s explanation of “elegance” is “using the classical Chinese language before the Han Dynasty.” According to the new requirements of present-day translation, it seems wrong. But now some people explain “elegance” as “safe and sound preservation of the taste, shade and style of the original” (黄龙, 1988: 90).

In general, the way these three characters were propounded is praiseworthy and commendable. It is lexically succinct, readily acceptable and universally desirable.

Liu Zhongde, a Chinese translation theorist, absorbs the quintessence of Yan Fu’s trinity principle and proposes the three characters “信、达、切” (faithfulness, expressiveness and closeness) as a set of principles of translation for reference, which seem more comprehensive and practical. According to his explanation, “faithfulness” means “to be faithful to the content of the original”; “expressiveness” is “to be as expressive as the original”; and “closeness” refers to “to be as close to the original style as possible”. (刘重德, 1994: 9)

The formulation of translation theories, however, involves primarily in the Western world, although in China people have discussed extensively their traditional “Three-character Principle” of an ideal translation, namely, faithfulness, smoothness and elegance, but without ever coming to any conclusion about the relative importance of the principle. In the author’s

opinion, what they say is not completely right. After many decades of development, the trinity principle has become perfect and played a very important role in translation practice.

### 5.1.2 Eugene A. Nida's "Equivalent-Effect Principle"

#### 5.1.2.1 Definition and Understanding of Equivalence

"Equivalence" is one of the important concepts in the theories of translation in the West. It has been understood as "accuracy", "adequacy", "correctness", "correspondence", "fidelity" or "identity". It is a variable notion of how the translation is connected to the foreign text.

Equivalence is always the desirable result of translation; however, "absolute correspondence between language is not always possible" (Nida, 1964: 185) since no two languages are identical, either in meaning given to corresponding symbols or in the ways in which symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences. Nida therefore emphasizes the "reproduction" of the message rather than conservation of the form of the utterance, "roughly equivalent to" rather than "absolute rendering" of all of the content and form of the original.

Nida distinguishes equivalence into two types: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. In such a translation, one is constantly concerned with such correspondence as word-to-word, sentence-to-sentence, and concept-to-concept, which means that two languages are constantly compared to ensure accuracy and correctness. This type of translation deals with equivalence in terms of structure and meaning. The translator tries to produce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original. Nida suggests that these formal equivalents should be used wherever possible if the translation aims at achieving formal rather than dynamic equivalents, such as verse translation. But there are not always formal equivalents between language pairs, he therefore asserts that "sometimes, formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and hence distorts the message, so as to cause the receptor to misunderstand or to labor unduly hard" ( Nida, 1969: 201 ). Dynamic equivalence is based on "the principle of equivalent effect" ( Nida, 1964: 159 ), according to which a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original in such a way that the TL wording will trigger the same impact on the TL audience as the original wording did upon the SL audience. In a dynamic translation, the focus of attention is directed not so much toward the source message as toward the receptor response. Nida also admits that the response can never be identical, for the cultural and historical settings are different, but there should be a high degree of equivalence of response, or the translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose ( Nida, 1964: 24 ). The translator's purpose is not to give a literal, word-to-word equivalence pointing toward the SL message, but to transfer the meaning of the text as best expressed in the words of receptor language. He

clearly puts forth the idea that “The form must be altered to preserve the content of the message” (Nida, 1969: 5), and that “Some certain rather radical departures from the formal structure are not only legitimate but even highly desirable” (Nida, 1969: 13).

In his definition of dynamic translation which “consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (Nida, 1969: 12), Nida clearly defines the importance of achieving equivalence in meaning and style. “Style” here can be roughly interpreted as an alternative for the formal features of the text. This definition proposes an equivalence of two levels, meaning and style, and it clearly attaches greater importance to meaning than to style, or the formal features. Nida gives priority to the meaning since he believes it is the content of the message that is of prime importance for translation. In his book *From One Language to Another* (1988), Nida adds another implication to the concept of equivalence, i.e., functional equivalence, which requires not only the equivalent content of the message, but also, in so far as possible, an equivalence of form.

It is generally believed that the success of a translation is measured by how closely it measures up to its accuracy, naturalness and communicativeness when rendering one language into another.

A satisfactory translation is always possible, but in most cases a perfect or an ideal translation is hard to acquire due to the extremely complicated nature of inter-lingual communication. According to the famous American translation theorist Eugene A. Nida (1964), since “there are, properly speaking, no such things as identical equivalents”, one must in translating seek to find the closest possible equivalent.

Therefore, a good translation is required to be “equivalent”, or “roughly equivalent” to the original in terms of both meaning and style.

### 5.1.2.2 Essence of “Equivalent-Effect Principle”

Rather than attempting to defend literal or free translating or trying to reconcile the two by aiming at a compromise or some “golden mean”, it is more helpful to approach the problem from a different perspective and attempt to discover what can perhaps be best called a “dynamic equivalent translation.” (Jin Di & Eugene A. Nida, 1984: 8, 85) In Nida’s book *Towards a Science of Translating*, he says, “In such a translation (dynamic translation) one is not so concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source language message, but with the dynamic relationship, that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (1964:159). In the book *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Nida further gives the definition of “dynamic equivalence”, that is, “Dynamic equivalence is

therefore to be defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language" (1969: 25). It is evident that Nida's translation theory lays emphasis on the substantially same responses of the receptors in the source language and the target language.

In 1993, Nida's new book *Languages, Culture and Translating* was published. He further perfects his translation theory. Allowing for the differences in the language and culture of the bilingual communication, he begins to classify the equivalence as two levels: the minimal equivalence and the maximal one. A minimal, realistic definition of functional equivalence could be stated as "The readers of a translated text should be able to comprehend it to the point that they can conceive of how the original readers of the text must have understood and appreciated it." Anything less than this degree of equivalence should be unacceptable. A maximal, ideal definition could be stated as "The readers of a translated text should be able to understand and appreciate it in essentially the same manner as the original readers did" (Eugene A. Nida, 1993: 11, 118). The minimal level of equivalence is the minimal standard that the translators must go after. However, the maximal level of equivalence implies a high degree of language-culture correspondence between the source and target languages and an unusually effective translation so as to produce in receptors the capacity for a response very close to what the original readers experienced. So It can be seen that the maximal level of equivalence is rarely, if ever, achieved, except for texts having little or no aesthetic value and involving only routine information.

In Nida's works, he repeatedly emphasizes his viewpoint. In general it is best to speak of "functional equivalence" in terms of a range of adequacy, since no translation is ever completely equivalent. A number of different translations can in fact represent varying degrees of equivalence. This means that "equivalence" cannot be understood in its mathematical meaning of identity, but only in terms of proximity, i.e. on the basis of degrees of closeness to functional identity. (Eugene A. Nida, 1993: 11,173) If we have understood this point, we need not make a great fuss about the word "equivalence".

### 5.1.2.3 Equivalent-Effect Principle's Significance on Guiding Chinese-English Translation Practice

As for the role and significance that the equivalent-effect principle produces on the Chinese-English translation practice, it is extreme for us to think that the principle is useless.

"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" ( Nida, Eugene A. & Charles R. Taber, 1969: 12). This definition not only reflects the essence of the equivalent-effect principle advocated by Nida, but also points out the approach that can

be realized. This approach can be understood as trying to obtain the realization of the closest natural equivalent both in meaning and style.

### 1) Realization of the Closest Equivalence

Because of the differences in language and culture, it is very difficult to attain the absolute equivalence in Chinese-English translation. However, relative equivalence can be realized in the possible range. Of course, Chinese and English belong to different language families, so there are different expressions. In this case, a successful translator always accommodates the content and form and reproduces the spirits of the SL. In fact, an experienced translator can find the correspondent roles in the two languages and use the expressive and exact words, realizing the closest equivalent.

### 2) Realization of the Natural Equivalence

While striving for the closest equivalence, we should pay more attention to the fluency and naturalness of the target language so as to guarantee its readability.

For example, “离开了咸菜缸又跳进了萝卜窖” is a peculiar expression in Chinese culture, which means “becoming worse and worse”. If this phrase is translated into “to jump out of the pickles vat into radish cellar”, the readers who are unfamiliar with Chinese culture will be at a loss. Under this circumstance, the version “to jump out of the frying pan into the fire” is more natural. Of course, translators should try their best to preserve the main culture information of the SL.

#### 5.1.2.4 Limitations of Equivalent-Effect Principle

Any translation theory has its target. Nida's equivalent-effect principle is based on the translation of the Bible and takes the propagation of Christian teachings as its aim. Consequently, he stresses the readers' responses and goes after the realization of the equivalent-effect principle. For the translation of such styles mainly conveying information as advertisements, science and the Bible, it is truly an effective method. But for literary translation, it seems improper to regard this principle as the sole standard of evaluating and measuring the version. The author agrees with Peter Newmark's viewpoint that “‘equivalent effect’ is the desirable result, rather than the aim of any translation, bearing in mind that it is an unlikely result in two cases: (a) if the purpose of the SL text is to affect and the TL translation is to inform (or vice versa); (b) if there is a pronounced cultural gap between the SL and the TL text.” (Newmark, 2001: 4, 48) So the author holds that the equivalent-effect principle can also be applied in translating text of other styles.

#### 5.1.3 Peter Newmark's Semantic and Communicative Translations

According to Buhler, the three main functions of language are the expressive, the

informative he called it “representation”— and the “vocative” (“appeal”) functions: These are the main purposes of using language (Peter Newmark, 2001: 21). The characteristic “expressive” text-types are: 1) Serious imaginative literature; 2) Authoritative statements; 3) Autobiography, essays, personal correspondence. The typical “informative” texts are concerned with any topic of knowledge, but texts about literary subjects, as they often express value judgments, are apt to lean towards “expressiveness”. The format of an informative text is often standard: a textbook, a technical report, an article in a newspaper or a periodical, a scientific paper, a thesis, minutes or agenda of a meeting. The core of the vocative function of language is the readership, the addressee and we take notices, instructions, publicity, propaganda, persuasive writing (requests, cases, theses) and possibly popular fiction, whose purpose is to sell the book/entertain the reader, as the typical “vocative” text.

Peter Newmark thinks that different translation methods should be adopted according to the different functions of various works. For the “expressive” texts, “semantic translation” should be used so that the language form of the version should be as close to the one of the original as possible so as to keep its semantic content. But for the “informative” and “vocative” texts whose focus is on the readers’ responses, it is better to adopt “communicative translation”.

Peter Newmark puts a great emphasis on “communicative translation”. He thinks that communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership (Newmark, 2001: 44-48). This kind of translation can get rid of the restraint of the original language form and make good use of the advantages of the TL to the effect that the version is fluent, natural, concise and can be easily understood and accepted by the reader.

By the way, Peter Newmark attaches great importance to the combination of theory with practice. He says, “Translation theory is pointless and sterile if it does not arise from the problems of translation practice, from the need to stand back and reflect, to consider all the factors, within the text and outside it, before coming to a decision” (Newmark, 2001: 9).

## 5.2 Strategies of Translation

Translation is a communicative activity between two languages, which is determined by many factors, such as social, cultural, political backgrounds, etc. All these factors are continuously changing. Translation is not just the transformation between two languages, but also the communication between two different cultures. Therefore, translation is a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural activity. The C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is no exception. The important task of all the translators is to promote the mutual understanding of people with different cultures, so it is inevitable for translators to meet with

all difficulties in handling cultural differences in the challenging and demanding job of translation.

A translation strategy is a method adopted by a translator to deal with the two basic problems in translation: cultural difference and linguistic incompatibility. To solve the urgent problem of cultural differences, different translators have different strategies. The German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher argued that “there are only two. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him” (Venuti, 1995:19-20). These two different strategies are defined respectively as domestication and foreignization by Lawrence Venuti from a cultural standpoint.

### 5.2.1 Strategy of Foreignization

#### 5.2.1.1 Foreignization

Foreignization is “a term used by Lawrence Venuti (1995) to designate the type of translation in which a target text is produced which deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original” (Schuttleworth & Cowie, 1997: 59). Among all those who advocate foreignization, Venuti is the most famous. He said, foreignization is “an ethnoreactive pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad”, and it “signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language”(Venuti, 1995: 20). In his view, “A translated text should be the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader gets a glimpse of another culture, and resistance, a translation strategy based on an aesthetic of discontinuity, can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures” (Venuti, 1995: 306) .

In foreignization, the translator strives to preserve as much as possible the alien flavor of the SL, and when the readers of the TL want to read the translation version of a foreign language material, they must be ready to face what is unfamiliar and exotic. Thus, by keeping the cultural images and difference of the source text, the target text can not only contribute to a better understanding of different culture of the TL readers, but also facilitate the readers' adoption of new things, both linguistic and cultural.

“Lingual foreignization can be anatomized into three different levels: words, grammar and style, whose foreignization is closely associated with the cultures concerned.”(Venuti, 1995: 19) But, in this thesis the author's study is mainly concerned with the foreignization of the translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings into English.

### 5.2.1.2 Reasons for Adopting Foreignization

Schleiermacher acknowledged that most translation was through the strategy of domestication, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home. But he much preferred a foreignizing strategy, an ethnnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad. (Baker Mona, 1998: 241-242)

Professor Guo Jianzhong (郭建中) summarized the reasons for foreignization as: 1) It is necessary to enable readers of target text (TT) to understand a foreign culture, which is usually the reason why they read it; 2) The translator should trust readers' understanding of distinctive foreign cultural items with their intelligence and imagination; 3) The cultural transplantation from SL to TL will enrich target culture and the expression of TL; 4) Translation is supposed to play the role of exchanging culture, which is the basic purpose of translation; 5) If those phenomena cannot be delivered in SL world, TT cannot be considered as "faithful to ST".

(郭建中, 1998: 279).

### 5.2.2 Strategy of Domestication

#### 5.2.2.1 Domestication

Domestication is "a term used by Venuti to describe the translation strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers." (Schuttleworth & Cowie, 1997: 43-44) And Venuti regarded it as "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home." (Venuti, 1995: 20) Eugene A. Nida is a representative of those who advocate domestication. According to Nida's concept of "dynamic equivalence", "a translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture" (Nida, 1964:165). And "dynamic equivalence" is actually "an egregious euphemism for the domesticating translation method and the cultural agendas it conceals", (Venuti, 1995:118) In the light of Nida's "functional equivalence", not only should the form of the translation accord with the norms of the TL, but also the cultural factors should be dealt with in line with the canons of the TL. Nida and other advocates of domestication prefer to bring the foreign (source) culture closer to the reader in the TL, and they are in favor of the translation in which the TL culture is exploited in order to make the translated texts natural, intelligible and familiar to the TL readers.

#### 5.2.2.2 Reasons for Adopting Domestication

Professor Guo Jianzhong (1998) also summarized the reasons for domestication as:

1) Generally speaking, it is not realistic to impose the norms and cultural system of SL on TL. As a result, translation is supposed to overcome obstructions from culture as well as language; 2) Since translation is communication, one of the duties of the translator is avoiding cultural clashes which may lead to various misunderstandings. So, it is necessary for the translator to consider carefully the connotation of cultural items when translating a text into another culture; 3) Readers will understand TT better if its content and form are within their knowledge of the realistic world. Therefore, source cultural information should be transformed into target cultural information as much as possible. Besides, as a “disseminator” in intercultural communication, a translator is supposed to convey meanings in source culture to readers in target culture by eliminating estrangement; 4) The translator cannot hold too high an expectation of readers’ intelligence and imagination, but should try to make the world reflected by SL closer to the world of TL readers; 5) In view of communication, an effective way of communication in one culture may not work equally in another; even each word in ST gets an equivalent in TT, readers of TT may not always have the same or similar responses as ST readers do, for they usually try to understand TT by using their own cultural concepts. Therefore, translating meaning, to a certain extent, is to get a “cultural equivalence” between the two cultures. (郭建中, 1998: 279)

### 5.2.3 Dialectical Relation Between Domestication and Foreignization

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that whether to take foreignization or domestication for cultural elements in translation is a complicated problem. They are a dialectical unity of contradictions, which are complementary to each other and have their respective characteristics. It can be convincingly summarized that both of the two strategies may be justified in their own right if the purpose of translation, the types of source texts, the intention of the author and the stages of cultural communication, etc. are taken into account. Each strategy has its advantages and limits. It is impossible for one to translate a piece of writing or a book using only one strategy or method of translation, because either the advocacy of foreignization as the sole strategy or the advocacy of domestication as the sole strategy is unavoidably one-sided and dangerous. As a matter of fact, foreignization and domestication are indispensable and supplementary to each other and the idea that truly successful translation will depend on the unity of the two strategies should be kept as a golden mean in every translator’s mind. Keeping a good balance between the two extremes might be an ideal for dealing with the cultural elements in translation.

### 5.2.4 Determining Factors in Choosing Translation Strategies

Translation is not only the transformation between two languages, but also a

communication between two different cultures. The essence of translation is the communication between two different cultures. The controversy between domestication and foreignization is the focus of the continual controversies in translation and it has a long history both in China and in the West. Traditionally, it is seen as the extension of the controversy about literal translation and free translation, which cares little about cultural features of the source text and has never stopped in translation history. Actually, the basic divergence of this controversy consists in whether the bias is in favor of the SL readers or of the TL readers.

What strategy is to choose, after all? Domestication will present an easy reading with items familiar to readers, while foreignization will introduce foreign culture and new expressions with items fresh to readers. In the context of translation, domestication and foreignization should serve the balance between the above two aspects. In the past, domestication was the dominant strategy, but now as people understand more about the outside world, foreignization will be the preferred strategy (孙致礼, 2002).

The author of this paper holds that these two strategies are a dialectical unity of contradictions in general, the use of one should not repel the other, instead, they are frequently used interchangeably, supplementary to each other, connected with each other and penetrated into each other. Both of them are valuable when the variant factors -- the motivation of the writer, the genre of the source text, the purpose of the translation, and the response of the readers are taken into consideration. Translators cannot totally adopt one translation strategy in translating, but they can choose one of them as the major strategy. Only when the translators combine the two strategies together, choose different strategies according to different conditions, and use the acceptable translation to deliver the information of cultural communication, can translation be regarded as the faithful instrument of cultural communication among different countries. As two major strategies in translation, domestication and foreignization are the two aspects of one contradiction (孙致礼, 2002). They complement each other in translation.

### 5.2.5 Differences of Foreignization/Domestication from Literal/Free Translation

Free translation is “a type of translation in which more attention is paid to producing a naturally reading TT than to preserving the ST wording intact; also known as sense-for-sense translation, it contrasts with literal and word-for-word translation” and literal translation is “sometimes understood as including the related notion of word-for-word translation”. Linguistically, Barkhudarov (1969) defines literal translation as a translation “made on a level lower than is sufficient to convey the content unchanged while observing TL norms” and free translation as a translation “made on a level higher than is necessary to convey the content unchanged while observing TL norms”. Free translation is generally more “TL-oriented” than

literal translation. (Shuttleworth & cowie, 1997: 62-63, 95-97)

Foreignization / domestication and literal/free translation are closely related. Both have levels of linguistic form and content, but foreignization/domestication mainly refers to cultural content. Besides, free translation and domestication are both TL-oriented, while literal translation and foreignization are both SL-oriented. The two pairs, therefore, are confusable, and even regarded as basically equal, as pointed out by Professor Sun Zhili (孙致礼), “Foreignization is basically the equivalence of literal translation, while domestication of free translation” (孙致礼, 2002).

However, free translation and domestication cannot be identified as the same; neither can literal translation and foreignization. Shortly, literal/free translation refers to whether the linguistic form of TT follows that of ST when the translator tries to preserve the original content. And the key to recognizing foreignization and domestication is whether there is expressions unfamiliar to TT readers in translation of cultural differences.

Generally speaking, literal translation overlaps foreignization when translating particular cultural items of SL into TL literally, and free translation overlaps domestication when using cultural image of TL to replace that of SL.

Actually, foreignization/domestication and literal/free translation belong to different categories: the former is translation strategy; while the latter is translation method/skill, which is guided by the former (刘艳丽、杨自俭, 2002).

### 5.3 Methods of C-E Translation of Chinese Two-Part Allegorical Sayings

Translating methods are undoubtedly the core problems we are confronted with in translation. There are many kinds of translating methods: literal translation, free translation, transliteration and the combination of literal translation and free translation and so on. Among these methods, literal translation and free translation are the two main translating methods, which are commonly adopted by us. Literal translation is to preserve the content and the form of the source language in accordance with the cultural tradition, while free translation is just to preserve the content and the main language functions, having to give up the literal meaning of the source language because of some cultural and social limitations.

While dealing with the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, one needs to pay attention not only to the unique structure of the Chinese language and the striking cultural backgrounds of the Chinese nation, but also to the degree to which the receptors of the message in the TL respond.

It is known to all that the criterion and the method of translation are often determined by the purpose of translation and the readers of the translated text. The C-E translation of Chinese

two-part allegorical sayings is really a hard nut to crack, especially when it comes to translating analogies or puns. In most cases, one cannot change the image of a figure of speech or the figure of speech itself. And one cannot neglect it and not translate it. While translating the pun in a Chinese two-part allegorical saying, the translator is required to translate not only its meaning, but also where the pun lies. Therefore, it is almost impossible for one to choose a way so-called “clever translation” while translating puns.

Translation is a cross-cultural activity. Basically, according to the strategy of translation in cross-cultural communication, there are several ways that can be employed in translation, namely literal translation (or word-for-word translation), free translation (or sense-for-sense translation) and the combination of literal and free translations. In addition, there are also some other methods of translation that can be used in cross-cultural translation.

In C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, as far as cultural images and messages are concerned, translation methods such as literal translation to retain the original image, literal translation with a note and abridged translation to retain the original image can be used under the guidance of the strategy of foreignization, while guided by the strategy of domestication, the methods like free translation to shift or abandon the original image and corresponding can be employed. Furthermore, the combination of literal translation and free translation can also be applied in C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings for the strategies of foreignization and domestication are indispensable and complementary to each other.

So, from the perspective of principle of equivalent-effect theory, the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings can be done as follows:

### 5.3.1 Literal Translation: to Retain the Original Image

Chinese two-part allegorical saying can be divided into three types: figurative two-part allegorical saying (比喻性歇后语), pun-featured two-part allegorical saying (双关性歇后语) and allusion-featured two-part allegorical saying (含有典故的歇后语).

For most figurative Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, the comparison or analogy in the first part is vivid and lifelike, and the allegorical meaning or explanation in the second part is a reasonable result of logical inference, not including sylleptic puns or homophones. Zhang Peiji believes, “Idioms should be translated literally” (张培基, 1979: 46). The translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is no exception. Therefore, the usual way to deal with the C-E translation of these figurative Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is literal translation (or word-for-word translation) to retain the original image, in which the translator is able not only to convey the message of the SL but also to retain the image of the original, so as to be faithful to the original and be vivid and lifelike, and achieve its equivalent effect in translation, thus making it acceptable to the TL readers. For example,

(9) 凤姐笑道：“外头已经四更多了，依我看，老祖宗也乏了，咱们也该‘聋子放炮仗’散了罢。”  
 (曹雪芹：《红楼梦》第五十四回)

“The fourth watch has sounded outside,” announced Hsi-feng. “I think our Old Ancestress is tired, and it's time for us to whiz off too like that deaf man's fire-cracker.” ( Tsao Hsueh-chin, *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Chapter 54; translated by Yang Hsien-Yi & Gladys Yang )

(10) 早上开船，这客人情思还昏昏的；到了此刻，看见被囊开了，才晓得被人偷了去。真是哑巴梦见妈，说不出的苦！  
 (吴敬梓《儒林外史》第五十一回)

When the junk cast off at dawn, the young man was still half-sleep. He had only just realized that his bag had been opened and he had been robbed. Now, like a dumb man dreaming of his mother, he could not express his despair! ( Wu Ching-tzu, *The Scholars*, Chapter 51; translated by Yang Hsien-Yi & Gladys Yang )

(11) 一个有力、能干，肩上扛上两百斤麻袋跑几里路都不喘粗气的人，现在却象掉在枯井里的牛犊一样，有力无处使。  
 (知侠：《铁道游击队》)

He had great strength and could carry a load of two hundred catties several *li* without panting. Now he felt as powerless as a calf trapped in a dry well.

(引自尹邦彦，《汉语熟语英译词典》，2006: 161)

(12) 项庄舞剑，意在沛公

Xiang Zhuang performed the sword dance as a cover for his attempt on Liu Bang's life—act with a hidden motive.  
 (引自《汉英词典》，1997: 1361)

From the above-mentioned examples, a conclusion can be drawn that Chinese two-part allegorical saying can be translated literally, by which the effect of equivalent translation is achieved. Just as Fang Mengzhi says, “Literal translation is frequently employed in translating those Chinese two-part allegorical sayings with vivid analogy acceptable in the TL culture so as to retain the content and form of the original” (方梦之, 2004: 186). The advantage of free translation can be easily seen in the Chinese-English translation of these Chinese two-part allegorical sayings in the above mentioned examples. Literal translation can not only convey the meaning and the image of the analogy of the original, but also the form and the content of the original. Take the translation of “聋子放炮仗，散了” (to whiz off like that deaf man's fire-cracker) in example (9) for example, the translator has translated the analogy “聋子放炮仗” faithfully and appropriately by using literal translation so that the English readers can easily understand the image of the analogy, making the translation keep as close to the original as possible and retaining the original image. Take “哑巴梦见妈，说不出的苦”(like a dumb man dreaming of his mother, he could not express his despair) in example (10) for another example. The literal and vivid translation of “哑巴梦见妈，说不出的苦” shows that Chinese two-part allegorical sayings of this kind can be translated literally so as to reach the effect of equivalence and of alikeness in form and spirit. “掉在枯井里的牛犊一样，有力无处使” in example (11) can also be translated literally into “as powerless as a calf trapped in a dry well”,

by which the image of the analogy in the first part and the analogical meaning in the second part have been both translated, meaning “one who has great talent is unable to display his ability”. The result of this translation leads to obtaining the equivalent effect in content as well as in form, with the image transferred vivid and the meaning obvious for the TL readers easy to understand.

Some thinks that “Allusions, such as ‘项庄舞剑’ from *Records of the Historian* (《史记》, written by Sima Qian 司马迁 of the Han Dynasty), cannot be translated. ..... Nobody can understand them if they are translated literally. So allusions can be and can only be translated freely”(钱歌川, 1981: 48). But many hold the opposite viewpoint. The translation of “项庄舞剑, 意在沛公” (Xiang Zhuang performed the sword dance as a cover for his attempt on Liu Bang’s life—act with a hidden motive) in example (12) is a good example showing that allusions can also be translated literally. In order to retain the image of the analogy in “项庄舞剑, 意在沛公”, the translator dealt with it literally by adding a hint, thus making the reader understand the image and the significance of “项庄舞剑, 意在沛公” easily.

There are still another two examples of literal translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings:

(13) 咱们俩的事, 一条绳上拴着两只蚂蚱——谁也跑不了。 (老舍:《骆驼祥子》)

We’re like two grasshoppers tied to one cord, neither can get away!

(Lao She, *Camel Xiangzi*; translated by Shi Xiaoqing)

(14) 我看你这个人的话, 真是大牯牛的口水, 太长! (郭沫若《屈原》第二幕)

Your words are like the slobber of a buffalo—too long!

(Guo Moruo, *Qu Yuan*, Action II; translated by Yang Hsien-Yi & Gladys Yang)

(15) 你要去批评他忘恩负义, 那是猫舔虎鼻梁——找死。

You should like to criticize him for his being ungrateful and leaving his benefactor in the lurch, which is like a kitten clawing a tiger’s nose—sure death.

( 李延林, 潘利锋等, 2003: 143 )

From examples (13), (14) and (15), the advantage of literal translation can be easily identified. That is, literal translation can make the image of the analogy vivid and the meaning of the whole obvious to the TL readers so that they can understand easily with the help of their imagination.

It is generally thought that literal translation is the best choice for the translator and that free translation is considered where literal translation cannot work. Peter Newmark holds that, “Literal translation is always the best provided it has the same communicative and semantic effect” (Peter Newmark, 2001: 21).

### 5.3.2 Abridged Translation (节译) : to Retain the Original Image

In some Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, the allegorical meaning is so obvious that the TL readers can easily infer it directly from the image of the vehicle or the context in the Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. While translating, the translator needs to translate the comparison or analogy in the first part only. For example,

(16) (张金龙) 突然来找小小子。小小子知道黄鼠狼给鸡拜年，没安好心；可又不能不接待他。  
(袁静:《新儿女英雄传》)

Zhang Jinlong called on him, alone. Xiao realized that it was a case of the weasel coming to pay his respects to the hen. He was very uneasy, but he had to entertain his unwanted visitor.

(Yuan Ching, *Daughters and Sons*; translated by S. Shapiro)

(17) 咳！这一来，竹篮打水一场空了！ (梁斌:《红旗谱》)  
Ah! We were drawing water in a bamboo basket. (translated by Hsu Mengh-siung)

(18) “不要失了你的时了！你自己只觉得中了一个相公，就‘癞蛤蟆想吃天鹅肉’来！”  
(吴敬梓:《儒林外史》)

“Don’t be a fool!” he roared. “Just passing one examination has turned your head completely—you’re like a toad trying to swallow a swan!” (Wu Ching-tzu, *The Scholars*, Chapter 14; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

In the examples (16) and (17) mentioned above, “黄鼠狼给鸡拜年，没安好心” and “竹篮打水一场空” are two Chinese two-part allegorical sayings easy to understand because the images in them are vivid and the meanings of the analogies so obvious and easily to infer. Therefore, the translator omitted the second part and translated the analogy in the first part only for the original images have been surely retained. Although the literal meaning and image of the analogy in “癞蛤蟆想吃天鹅肉” in example (18) are obvious and vivid, the TL readers will not understand the image if they do not see such a phenomenon as “癞蛤蟆想吃天鹅肉”. Therefore, the author disagrees with the version by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang and holds that it is better to translate it into “impossible like a toad trying to swallow a swan” than “like a toad trying to swallow a swan” only.

### 5.3.3 Corresponding (套译) : to Shift the Original Image

Although some Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are vivid in the original, when translated, the original images of them have to be shifted to a comparison or analogy familiar to the TL readers due to the differences between English and Chinese as well as the two cultures. In corresponding, different comparisons or analogies are employed respectively in the TL and SL texts to create the same image, to convey the same meaning or spirit, with an aim to achieve the effect of reaching the same goal through different means. For example,

(19) “ 嫩奶奶犯不着来骂我，我又不是嫩奶奶家买的。‘梅香拜把子——都是奴才’ 罢咧！这是

何苦来呢！”

(曹雪芹:《红楼梦》)

“You've no call to swear at me, madam. You didn't buy me. We're all birds of a feather—all slaves here. Why go for me? ” (Tsao Hsueh-chin, *A Dream of Red Mansion*, Chapter 60; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

(20) 反正是一句话:“王八看绿豆,是对了眼了。” (曹禺:《日出》第二幕)

Always, it's a case of “When Greek meets Greek. ” (translated by A. C. Barnes )

(21) 你这些怜惜佃户的话,都是猫哭老鼠——假慈悲。

All your piteous words for the tenants are no more than to shed crocodile tears.

(李延林,潘利锋等,2003: 143)

In the two examples (19) and (20), the translation strategy of domestication is used “in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for TL readers”, that is to say, “leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him”( Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997: 43-44, 59). As far as translation method is concerned, free translation is employed to change the image by using the idioms “all birds of a feather” and “When Greek meets Greek” borrowed from English to correspond with the meanings of “梅香拜把子——都是奴才” and “王八看绿豆, 对了眼”。This is because “梅香拜把子——都是奴才” in example (19) is a Chinese two-part allegorical saying with a strong sense of Chinese nation, with “梅香” being a name of the ordinary maids in feudal China, in which feudal society is rigidly stratified, especially in the Jia family (冯庆华, 1998: 142). But this kind of culture is quite strange to the English readers so that they cannot understand if it is translated literally. So the translator borrowed the English idiom “all birds of a feather” to substitute for the features of “梅香拜把子” as “都是奴才”(are all slaves), meaning they are the same in their social status. This is also true to translate “王八看绿豆, 对了眼” in example (20) by using “When Greek meets Greek”。In these two examples, although the effect of wit and humor is lost and the style is quite different, the meaning of “all birds of a feather” and “When Greek meets Greek” has been basically conveyed. Again in example (21), the translator dealt with “猫哭老鼠——假慈悲” by loaning the English idiom “to shed crocodile tears”, which meaning “insincere sorrow”。This kind of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings with a strong color of Chinese nation cannot be translated literally because some cultural factors are untranslatable. Therefore, it can be said that absolute equivalence is impossible in translation. Something, such as some linguistic forms and cultural factors, can be understood but cannot be translated. What can be done to this is to keep the meaning of the translated version as close to the original as possible. The translator cannot sacrifice sense (or meaning) to form, and truth to beauty.

### 5.3.4 Free Translation: to Shift the Original Image

Owing to the differences between Chinese and English and different backgrounds of the

two national cultures, some of the original allegorical images in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings cannot be retained when translated into English. Therefore, when translated, the original allegorical images in Chinese two-part allegorical sayings still have to be shifted into some images familiar to the TL readers. This is to say, while translating this kind of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, “in order to convey the same meaning expressed in the Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, we have to shift the image by using a different analogy familiar to the TL readers so as to achieve the effect of obtaining equal satisfactory results by different approaches” (方梦之, 2004: 187). This is also corresponding in translation (套译). Though the images are different, the explanations or the allegorical meanings are similar or correspond so as to achieve an effect of semantic equivalence. For instance,

(22) 说的不如听的,就给他一个“实棒槌灌米汤,来个寸水不进”,我算是满没有听见,这才能过日子。 (曹禺《日出》)

When he says something nasty, let it run off you like water off a duck's back, just pretend he hasn't said a thing. That's the only way to keep sane. (translated by A. C. Barnes)

(23) 生活的海里起过小小的波浪,如今似乎又平静下去,一切跟平常一样,一切似乎都是外甥打灯笼,照舅(照旧)。 (周立波:《暴风骤雨》)

The even tenor of their life had been disturbed, but things seemed to be settling down again. The villagers felt themselves back in the old rut. (translated by Hsu Mengh-siung)

(24) 怪不得人说你们“诗云子曰”的人难讲话!这样看来,你好象“老鼠尾巴上害疖子,出脓也不多!” (吴敬梓:《儒林外史》第十四回)

No wonder they say you bookworms are hard to deal with: one might just as well try to squeeze water out of a stone. (Wu Ching-tzu, *The Scholars*, Chapter 14; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

In example (22), “实棒槌灌米汤,寸水不进” is translated freely into “let it run off you like water off a duck's back” by borrowing the English expression “like water off a duck's back” to replace “实棒槌灌米汤”, meaning “don't listen to him” or “don't let him make difference to you”. In example (24), “老鼠尾巴上害疖子,出脓也不多” is translated freely, borrowing the idiom “squeeze water out of a stone” from English to substitute the image “老鼠尾巴上害疖子”(a pimple on a rat's tail, meaning “a little to get out of it”), thus making the image in this translation (a little to get out of something just like trying to squeeze water out of a stone) possess a strong color of western culture. This is also true in translating “外甥打灯笼,照舅(照旧)” in example (23) into “back in the old rut”, which is also an idiom from English meaning “things remain unchanged”, “having a fixed and boring way of life as before” or “leading a routine life as usual” (《牛津高阶英汉双解词典 (第四版增补本)》, 2002: 1321). Though the images in the expression of different languages, namely Chinese and English, are quite different, the meanings of the analogies are similar or equivalent. This can also lead to the effect of semantic and functional equivalence (包惠南、包昂, 2004: 200).

### 5.3.5 Free Translation: to Abandon the Original Image

In Chinese, there are quite a few Chinese two-part allegorical sayings that have a strong sense of Chinese culture. In these two-part allegorical sayings, the comparisons or analogies contain some names of people or places in ancient China as well as some classical allusions, some of which come from typical Chinese social customs and habits or religious terms, etc. If they are translated literally, the versions will seem lengthy and tedious, which will be very difficult for the TL readers, who do not know much about the background of Chinese culture, to understand it. Therefore, to abandon the unique structure of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and to translate liberally, namely “to omit the analogy in the first part and only translate the second part” (方梦之, 2004: 187) will make the version become precise and to the point. This also can result in the equivalent effect in spirit. For instance,

(25) “我是想: 咱们是孔夫子搬家, 净是书(输), 心里真有点点干啥的。”

(周立波:《暴风骤雨》)

“Only I feel bad when we lose every fight.” (translated by Hsu Mengh-siung)

(26) “我在店里呢, 是灯草拐杖, 作不了主(柱)的。” (周而复《上海的早晨》)

My position in the company doesn't permit me to make a decision individually.

(translated by A. C. Barnes)

(27) 等他们赶来增援时, 已是“正月十五贴门神——晚了半月”。(冯至:《敌后武工队》)

But they were too late for a rescue. (包惠南、包昂, 2004: 201)

(28) 穷棒子闹翻身, 是八仙过海, 各显神通。 (周立波:《暴风骤雨》)

When we pass from the old society to the new, each of us shows his true worth.

(translated by Hsu Mengh-siung)

(29) 可是谭招弟心中却想: 骑着毛驴看唱本——走着瞧吧, 看究竟是啥原因。 (周而复《上海的早晨》)

But Tan Zhaodi was still thinking to herself: “Let's wait and see what the reason for it turns out to be in the end.” (translated by A. C. Barnes)

In the above-mentioned examples, all Chinese two-part allegorical sayings have been translated liberally. This is because, although these Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are figurative ones, it is difficult for TL readers to understand the analogies and their meanings. In literary translation, “Sometimes the translator has to abandon the unique structure and national coloring of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings for a free translation owing to the obstructions of linguistic forms and cultural differences”(郭建中, 1996).

In addition, there still exist some homophones or homophonic words in Chinese. But it is hard for one to find their counterparts in English. While translating homophonic pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, the translator has to abandon this unique structure and its original image and merely translate its allegorical meaning or the extended meaning to seek

the equivalent effect in its spirit. There are more examples for free translation of homophonic pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical saying as follows:

(31) “我哪里管得上这些事来！见识又浅，嘴又笨，心又直，‘人家给个棒槌，我就拿着认真（针）’了。”（曹雪芹：《红楼梦》）

“I’m incapable of running things. I’m too ignorant, blunt and tactless, always getting hold of the wrong end of the stick.” (Tsao Hsueh-chin, *A Dream of Red Mansion*, Chapter 25; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

(32) “再试纺，顶多忙一阵子，过了几天，还不是外甥打灯笼——找舅（照旧）。”

（周而复《上海的早晨》）

“And if we’re now going to have a check spinning it’ll only mean that we’ll be busier than ever for a spell and then after a few days things will be back to what they were before.” (translated by A. C. Barnes)

(33) “我这个人你也知道，说话向来是‘袖筒里入棒槌’——直出直入！”

（袁静：《新儿女英雄传》）

“You know me — I speak frankly and to the point.” (Yuan Ching, *Daughters and Sons*; translated by S. Shapiro)

(陈文伯, 2005: 265-269)

(34) 你在会上说的那番话让我觉得丈二和尚——摸不着头脑。

What you said at the meeting made me feel completely at a loss.

(陈军, 2001: 79)

### 5.3.6 Literal Translation with a Note

Because there exist some differences between China and the West, a clearer conveyance of the original message is required in C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, with a note for complementary explanations added. This kind of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, which have a strong sense of the Chinese nation, often involves history, culture, fairy tales, classical works, even feudal superstitions, etc. Literal translation with a note for complementary explanations can make up for the inadequacy in conveying the cultural message by literal translation and play a role of “adding the finishing touch”(画龙点睛) so as to achieve an unexpected effect. For instance,

(35) 他们一东一伙，都是看透《三国志》的人，要我说，那一耳括子，也是周瑜打黄盖，一个愿打，一个愿挨的。（周立波：《暴风骤雨》第十二章）

Hard to say. The two of them are hand in glove, and they’ve both read the Romance of the Three Kingdoms. I should say that box on the ear was skillfully given by a Chou Yu and taken by a Huang Kai. (translated by Hsu Mengh-siung)

In the C-E translation of “周瑜打黄盖，一个愿打，一个愿挨”，it is hard for the TL readers to understand the English version if the translator does not add it with a note explaining the origin of the classical allusion. So the translator needs to add a note to the

English version, giving a clear explanation of the origin of the classical allusion “周瑜打黄盖” in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* 《三国志》 as follows:

Note: A fourteenth century novel based on events which took place in the third century A.D. Chou Yu, the general of the Kingdom of Wu had Huang Kai, another Wu general, cruelly beaten, and then sent him to the enemy camp in order to deceive the enemy.

More examples:

(36) 三十晚上贴“福”字——倒着贴。

Pasting up the character “fu” on the New Year’s Eve——pasted upside down

“三十晚上贴“福”字——倒着贴” can be rendered literally as “pasting up the character ‘fu’ on the New Year’s Eve——pasted upside down”, but it should be followed by a note as follows:

Note: This refers to the Chinese custom of pasting the character “fu” ( blessing ) upside down to elicit the remark “ni de fu dao la”(你的福到啦), which means your good luck has arrived.

Otherwise, the English readers cannot understand what it really means.

(37) 司马昭之心，固已路人皆知。 (《毛泽东选集》第二卷：681)

This Sima Zhao trick is obvious to every man in the street.

Because the English or TL readers do not know who 司马昭 was, therefore, an explanatory note should be added to the English version like this:

Note: Sima Zhao was a prime minister of Wei (220--265) who nursed a secret ambition to usurp the throne. The Emperor of Wei once remarked: “Sima Zhao’s intention is obvious to every man in the street.”

(38) 宋襄公失败的教训——对敌人不能讲仁慈

This is a case of “the lesson learned by Duke Xiang of Song from his defeat——one shouldn’t be benevolent to the enemy”.

Note: Duke Xiang of Song was one of the feudal lords in the Spring and Autumn period. Once he allowed the enemy to cross a river rather than attack them in the river. As a result, the enemy defeated and fatally wounded him.

Without any knowledge of these historical stories, these allusion-featured Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are hard to understand. So it is quite necessary for one to make some explanations to the allusions so as to help the reader get a better understanding.

### 5.3.7 The Combination of Literal Translation and Free (or Liberal) Translation

Wang Zuoliang (王佐良), the late professor, says, “A good translation is always done by literal translation as well as by free translation.....”. This is true to the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings (奚永吉, 2001: 950). Both literal translation and free translation have their own limits. It is impossible for a translator to translate the whole original text by using only one translation method. Therefore, some translators take a flexible attitude

to avoid stiffness and unintelligibility: when one translates sentences which are similar in structure or in figure of speech in the two languages, literal translation should be adopted; otherwise, free translation is used; and when one translates sentences which are partly similar and partly dissimilar, the two methods should be flexibly and cleverly combined (奚永吉, 2001: 54). This is also true to the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings. For instance,

(39) 彩霞咬着牙，向他头上戳了一指头，道：“没良心的，狗咬吕洞宾——不识好歹。”

(曹雪芹《红楼梦》第二十五回)

Tsai-hsia bit her lips and with one finger rapped him on the forehead, “You ungrateful thing! Like the dog that bit Lu Tung-pin—you bit the hand that feeds you.” (Tsao Hsueh-chin, *A Dream of Red Mansion*, Chapter 25; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

(40) “我说二三百两银子，你就说二三十两！ 戴着斗笠亲嘴，差着一帽子！”

(吴敬梓:《儒林外史》第十四回)

When I say two or three hundred taels, you say twenty or thirty! It's like kissing in straw helmets—the lips are far apart!! (Wu Ching-tzu, *The Scholars*, Chapter 14; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

(41) 小红道：“也犯不着气他们。俗话说的好，‘千里搭长棚，没个不散的筵席’，谁守谁一辈子呢？……”

(曹雪芹《红楼梦》第二十六回)

“It's hardly worth being angry with them,” retorted Hxiao-hung. “The proverb says 'Even the longest feast must break up at last.' Who's going to stay here for life?...” (Tsao Hsueh-chin, *A Dream of Red Mansion*, Chapter 26; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

(42) 周进听了这话，自己想：“瘫子掉在井里，捞起来也是坐。” 有甚亏负我？随即应允了。

(吴敬梓《儒林外史》第二回)

“Even if a paralytic falls into a well, he can be no worse off than before,” thought Chou Chin. “It can't hurt me to go.” So he consented. (Wu Ching-tzu, *The Scholars*, Chapter 2; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

(43) 我就怕你是一个没骨头的伞——支撑不开。 (袁静《新儿女英雄传》)

I'm afraid you are a ribless umbrella. You won't be able to stand up in the storm.

(Yuan Ching, *Daughters and Sons*, Chapter 28; translated by S. Shapiro)

(44) 飞蛾扑火，惹焰烧身

Seek one's own doom like moths flying into the fire.

(李学禧,《汉英成语和常用语》,1979: 141)

Similar to translating those allusion-featured two-part allegorical sayings, a combination of literal translation and free translation is employed in the six examples mentioned above. In example (39), the first part of “狗咬吕洞宾——不识好歹” is translated literally and faithfully for the sake of the image “狗咬吕洞宾” and in the second part free translation and

an idiom of the same meaning borrowed from English are employed to convey the meaning of the analogy “不识好歹” tactfully so that the TL readers can see its meaning and whom 吕洞宾 was. Only in this way can the translator make what translated reach the extent of perfectness in meaning and similarity in spirit and form. In example (40), “差着一帽子” is translated into “the lips are far apart”, by which “帽子” is substituted for “lips” (嘴唇). This can be viewed as a clever translation for its similarity in spirit and form. In example (41), “千里” corresponds with “不散” and “长棚” with “筵席”, which are integrated into one and translated into “longest feast”. This is also a good way to translate it. “捞起来也是坐” in example (42) is translated into “he can be no worse than before”, which is easy to understand the situation with the help of the image of the analogy (a paralytic) in the first part. By means of combining literal translation and free translation, the analogy in the first part has been translated literally while an English expression is borrowed in translating the second part, which helps to point out the meaning of the analogy and makes the translation appropriate and the two translation methods complete each other perfectly. In example (43), “支撑不开” in “没骨头的伞——支撑不开” is translated into “you won’t be able to stand up in the storm”, in which “storm” corresponds with “umbrella”, thus making the translation appropriate and “alike not only in appearance but also in spirit”(孙迎春, 2001: 76-77). Apart from the image retained originally, both the image and the meaning of the analogy in example (44) are integrated as one in “seek one’s own doom”. The method of combination of literal translation and free translation makes the translated version achieve the effect of reaching such an extent of perfect in meaning as well as of similarity both in form and in spirit.

From the examples mentioned above, the advantage of the combination of literal translation and free translation can be easily seen: the image of the analogy, which has been translated literally, is appropriate and the same as that of the original; and the meaning of the analogy, which has been translated freely, is concise and conveys the meaning and spirit of the original. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that literal translation and free translation will not exclude but complete each other and both of them can be combined together in translation.

## 5.4 Something to Think About

In the previous sections of this chapter, the author discusses the theories of translation guiding the practice of the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings and the strategies as well as methods of translation employed in this field. It is expected that all these can help in the practice of the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

As it is known to all that, translation is not always a piece of cake. It is the most complicated activity in human world. Though much work has been done in the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, great efforts are still required for further research on theory and practice in this field, especially how to translate well so as to achieve equivalent effect in content and in form.

One thing to think about in the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is

that, before translating, a proper understanding of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings in the context of the whole statement is needed. Otherwise the translation will turn out to be inappropriate. Take the translation of “羊群里跑出骆驼来了，就只你大” in example (41) for example:

(45) “如今你还了得，‘羊群里跑出骆驼来了，就只你大’。你又会做文章了。”

(曹雪芹《红楼梦》第八十八回)

You are getting above yourself nowadays ---- a camel in a flock of sheep ---- being the eldest and the one who can write! (Tsao Hsueh-chin, *A Dream of Red Mansion*, Chapter 88; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

(桂廷芳, 2003: 573-574)

“羊群里跑出骆驼来了，就只你大” has been translated into “a camel in a flock of sheep ---- being the eldest”, in which “就只你大” has been understood as “being the eldest”. The author considers it inappropriate because it cannot be understood as “being the eldest” either in terms of the literal meaning of “羊群里跑出骆驼来了，就只你大” or in terms of the specific context of the whole sentence. The literal meaning of “就只你大” in the context of “羊群里跑出骆驼来了” is “being tall and strong in shape or in figure”. And the analogical meaning is being the most capable or the greatest in ability among a group of ordinary people. Therefore, “羊群里跑出骆驼来了，就只你大” in example (45) is supposed to be translated into “a camel in a flock of sheep ---- being the greatest”.

Another thing that is worth thinking about is that, what the best translation is when a Chinese two-part allegorical saying can be understood or translated in many ways. Take the translation of “老鼠尾巴上生结子” in examples (46) and (47) for example:

(46) 怪不得人说你们“诗云子曰”的人难讲话！这样看来，你好象“老鼠尾巴上害疖子，出脓也不多！” (吴敬梓:《儒林外史》第十四回)

No wonder they say you bookworms are hard to deal with: one might just as well try to squeeze water out of a stone. (Wu Ching-tzu, *The Scholars*, Chapter 14; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

(47) 谁知越使钱越被人拿住了刀靶，越发来讹。耗子尾上长疮，——有多少脓血儿。

(曹雪芹《红楼梦》第六十八回)

Yet the more I gave him, the more I was at his mercy and the more he blackmailed me. But how much can he squeeze out of me? No more than from a pimple on a rat's tail. (Tsao Hsueh-chin, *A Dream of Red Mansion*, Chapter 68; translated by Yang Hsien-yi & Gladys Yang)

“老鼠尾巴上害疖子，出脓也不多” In example (46) is translated freely, borrowing the idiom “squeeze water out of a stone” from English to substitute the image “老鼠尾巴上害疖子”(a pimple on a rat's tail, meaning “a little to get out of it”), thus making the image in this translation (a little to get out of something just like trying to squeeze water out of a stone) possess a strong color of western culture. This translation is not better than that in example (43), namely “squeeze out of me no more than from a pimple on a rat's tail”, which is considered to have been translated so as to extract the spirit of the original. “耗子尾上长疮，

——有多少脓血儿” in example (47) has been rendered tactfully and appropriately, not only with the meaning of “越发来讹” vividly extended as “to squeeze out of me”, but also with the image of the original translated literally and faithfully at the same time. Although in form, the translator has put the second part before the first, which seems not translated literally, it is where the translator’s brilliance lies. On one hand, it can retain the image of analogy, which is considered as the cream of a Chinese two-part allegorical saying, of the original; on the other hand, it can tactfully translate the Chinese two-part allegorical sayings of the original in vivid description with English expression, aiming to re-create vivid and lifelike image in TL (奚永吉, 2001: 947-948).

One more thing for pondering over is that, some Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, especially those homophonically pun-featured ones, are difficult to translate both homophonically and with double implications, which will certainly fail to retain the original flavor and lingering charm for something lost. For example,

(48) 一二三五六——没事 (四)

(金惠康, 2004: 456)

Some tried to translate example (48) into “One, two, three, five, six — (lit) without four (fig) nothing serious”, then added with a note ‘four’, ‘thing’: homophonic pun in Chinese. Although the English readers can understand it, this translation cannot reach such an extent of equivalent effect (金惠康, 2004: 456). It can be translated only by adaptation or accommodation (变通), namely free translation, with the homophonic pun lost. One more example is “二三四五六七八九——缺衣 (一) 少食 (十)”. It can merely be translated into “to have nothing to eat and nothing to wear”.

What’s more, when translated, some Chinese two-part allegorical sayings with the form or structure of a word or Chinese character analyzed (析字), such as “自大上加一点——臭”, “两个山字一摞——请出”, “心字头上一把刀——忍了吧” and so forth, is also a hard nut to crack. The author agrees that this kind of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings can be translated freely, with the second part translated only. So, “自大上加一点——臭”, “两个山字一摞——请出”, “心字头上一把刀——忍了吧” can only be translated freely as “Smelly!”, “Get away!” and “You can stand it” respectively. Translating Chinese two-part allegorical sayings with the structure of Chinese character analyzed is as difficult as translating such Chinese antithesis couplet as “冻雨洒窗, 东两点西三点; 切瓜分片, 橫七刀竖八刀”(李 明, 2005: 57). This is because the game of analyzing the structure of a Chinese is absolutely impossible to translate.

With all above mentioned, a conclusion can be reached that Chinese two-part allegorical sayings can be translated literally, freely or both so as to reach the effect of equivalence. Attention should be paid to some problems as mentioned above and great effort should be made for further research on C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

Translation is a cross-lingual, cross-cultural and cross-social communicative activity. Translation does not mean merely rendering the message of the SL into the TL. The nature of translation is the communication between two different cultures. The problems of translation between Chinese and English include both linguistic and cultural ones. “In the process of translation, the translator has to overcome not only language barriers but also cultural differences. In the final analysis, translating language means translating culture” (陈定安, 1998: 282). This is because, in translation, the change of one language into another is only the surface work, while the transfer of culture information is translation’s nature.

Chinese two-part allegorical saying is a unique linguistic phenomenon in Chinese. The use of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is one of the typical characteristics of Chinese culture. The C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is also a cross-linguistic, cross-cultural communicative activity. Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are not untranslatable. Yet the translator has to overcome language barriers and cultural differences. This is really a hard nut to crack.

Generally speaking, the most important thing in the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings is to translate its allegorical meaning or extended meaning exactly and appropriately. But when the original image conflicts with the allegorical or extended meaning and both cannot be taken into consideration at the same time, the usual way we should take is to abandon the original image and translate liberally. This is a fundamental principle in guiding the practice of the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings.

Apart from the above-mentioned, when doing the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, the translator still has to abide by the following general guiding principles:

Firstly, as for the translation of figurative Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, literal translation should be employed to retain the unity of content and form if the analogies in both Chinese and English are identical.

Secondly, as for translating pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, liberal translation, namely free translation, should be adopted. This is because it is hard for the translator to find a pun whose content and form are completely consistent in both Chinese and English.

Thirdly, the translator needs to be a good master of translation strategies and skills in translating those Chinese two-part allegorical sayings with a Chinese character analyzed because the analyzing part of the character cannot be translated. They can only be translated freely.

While dealing with the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings, the translator should take a flexible approach according to the specific circumstances of their use. He must try his best to make the translated text remain the same as the original in the appeal of the language as much as possible, to use various methods or skills of translation flexibly in the C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings to achieve the equivalent effect and to

do his utmost to avoid mechanical translation, servile translation, uncontrolled translation or irresponsible omitted translation.

In conclusion, Chinese two-part allegorical sayings are not untranslatable. The C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings should not merely focus on the transfer of the language but also on analyzing the cultural implication and making a careful comparison between Chinese and English cultures. Before translating, one needs to have some knowledge about the origin of the Chinese two-part allegorical sayings first, and then to pay attention to their meanings, images, styles as well as the expressions of English. Only in this way can C-E translation of Chinese two-part allegorical sayings achieve its equivalence in effect and reach the extent of faithfulness, expressive and elegance. To translate Chinese two-part allegorical sayings well, great efforts are needed for further research, especially the translation of pun-featured Chinese two-part allegorical saying. The author proposes that this problem may be solved with a combination of transliteration with free translation or transliteration added with a note, which still needs the test of practice. This is another topic to be done in the future.

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## 附录

### 攻读硕士学位期间参加科研及论文发表情况

- 1、参加广西大学外语学院温科学博士、教授主持的 2003 年国家社会科学基金项目“当代西方修辞学流派与汉语修辞学发展研究”(03DYY041) 的西方修辞学史部分研究工作。
- 2、论文“浅析广告英语的语言特色及其写作策略”发表于《南宁师范高等专科学校学报》2005 年第二期, PP54--59。
- 3、论文“从等效译论看汉语歇后语的翻译”发表于《南宁师范高等专科学校学报》2005 年第四期, PP42--46。