

## **Features and Functions of Paratexts in Western Translation Studies Book Series in China**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the function of paratexts in two series published in China: 1) Western Translation Theories Studies: Foreign Translation Studies Series, and 2) FLTRP Translation Studies Series. I apply Gérard Genette's definition of paratexts to the Chinese publishing market in order to analyse three main categories of internal paratexts, including titles, blurbs and reading guides. I will argue that the Chinese language paratexts of the two series not only serve to promote books and provide profits for publishing houses, but also to provide textbooks and references for teachers, students and scholars at Chinese universities, with the aim of fostering the discipline of Translation Studies in China. In this paper, I explain how the authors of such paratexts offer some critical analysis of the books, by firstly exploring ways of transforming the 'borrowing' of Western theories and secondly assessing the advantages and disadvantages of 'applying' them in Chinese practice. This article aims to assess how the authors of some paratexts deal with the different and sometimes conflicting expectations between these two perspectives, and in doing so allow us to gain insights into and so better understand the ways in which the Chinese reception of Western Translation Theory is being shaped by 'paratexts', at times, functioning as 'texts'.

**KEYWORDS:** Chinese series of translation studies, marketing strategies, paratext, Western translation theories

### **1. Introduction**

The widespread policy of reform in and opening-up of mainland China after 1978 boosted international cultural communication requiring a large number of well-trained translators and interpreters. This in turn led an increasing number of students to choose Translation Studies for their university degree, prompting many Chinese universities to set up Translation and

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Interpretation as an independent discipline in the 1980s. Translation Studies as an academic discipline was initially set up as a Master's program (MTI) with Bachelor of Translation and Interpreting (BTI) programs coming later in 2005. In 1986, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China announced that a Master's degree in Translation would be set up as a secondary discipline in the category of 'Literature and Linguistic Studies' at both the Beijing Foreign Studies University and at the Shanghai Maritime University.<sup>1</sup> A number of other universities followed in setting up schools of translation. A further development in translation studies followed in 2007 when the Office of the State Council Academic Degrees Committee announced its intention to set up MTI (Master of Interpreting and Translation) centres in 15 universities and increased this firstly to 40 universities by 2009, and then 47 universities by 2018.

Against this backdrop, in order to broaden domestic theoretical work, many scholars called for a growth in Chinese translation studies through the 'importation' of Western theories and ideas.<sup>2</sup> Opposing this call, other scholars deemed the importation of foreign translation theories to already be 'excessive', arguing that in order to maintain Chinese characteristics, Chinese translation studies should focus on their own native tradition (Sun and Zhang 2002:4). In the PRC, scholars such as Jinghao Zhang expressed their concerns that Chinese translation studies had been 'overwhelmed' by Western theories (2006:59) and that an over-reliance on Western ideas had marginalized traditional Chinese translation studies, thus resulting "in the muting of Chinese voices to mere echoes of the voice of the West" (Cheung 2009:223). Such views suggest that considerable numbers of Western translation theory books and textbooks written in English have been imported into China over the past three decades. My bibliographical survey shows, however, that the number of imported works is actually rather limited.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Foreign literature and linguistics is the first discipline under the heading of 'Literature' with 12 secondary disciplines including linguistic studies, translation theory and practice, and social cultural studies.

<sup>2</sup> Such as Tan Zaixi, 谭载喜, '中西现代翻译学概述' ['An Introduction of Chinese and Western Translation Studies'] 《外国语》 [*Journal of Foreign Languages*], 1995 (3); Tu Guoyuan and Xiao Jingyin, 屠国元, 肖锦银, '西方现代翻译理论在中国的传播与接受' ['The Dissemination and Reception of Modern Western Translation Theories in China'] 《中国翻译》 [*Chinese Translators Journal*], 2000 (5), pp. 15-19.

<sup>3</sup> See the Appendix for the full book list.

The importing of Western translation studies followed one of three approaches in China. First, there was the importing of the actual original Western works on translation theories; however, access to such books was limited due to high import costs, only a few top universities and research institutions in China having sufficient funding to purchase such texts. With the limited numbers of copies destined for libraries, poor circulation restricted access which is why it is very common to see pirated photocopies of such works disseminated by teachers to students. A second approach was to publish translated Chinese versions of Western translation studies books. This is considered both necessary and important to obtain a wider readership, especially in targeting readers unable to read English. Very often, however, these translated works are poorly produced and appear only in articles, edited and heavily abridged, rather than being published in book format. Only 21 complete versions of such books have been translated into Chinese since 1986, 15 as individual volumes and six in 当代西方翻译研究译丛 [the Contemporary Western Translation Studies Series].<sup>4</sup> This small number arises partly because translation ‘products’ are not considered a viable output for research projects. The time-consuming and highly-demanding activity of rendering translation theory into another language is also an extremely complex task to perform satisfactorily. The third approach has consisted of buying the copyright and publishing the English-language work in China. To date, there are two series of ‘Western Translation Studies’ published in China following this format: the Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press's 国外翻译丛书 (Foreign Translation Studies Series), with 41 monographs published between 2002 to 2012, and the Beijing Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press's 外研社翻译研究文库 (FLTRP Translation Studies Series), containing 28 books published between 2006 and 2008. Both series publish the texts in their original English, replacing the original paratextual matter however with paratexts in Chinese. The new Chinese language paratexts include titles (alongside the original English title), blurbs providing authorial information, and summaries of the main contents. The FTS series also includes an anonymous General Publisher's Note; a Preface by one of the main editors, professor Yang Zijian (identical in all the books in the series), and an anonymous Introduction, specific to each volume and introducing the main content. The FLTRP series provides a lengthy reading guide written by popular scholars in Chinese translation studies.

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<sup>4</sup> See the Appendix for the full book list.

The relatively small number of Western translation theory books published to date in Chinese or in Chinese editions (21) calls into question the claim that the importation of Western theories has reached an ‘excessive’ level. Furthermore, the book series discussed above take care to explain their publishing purposes and to emphasise their efforts to balance Western theories with China's own disciplinary practice. Since each volume in these series retains the original language, the Chinese paratextual matter is the only device forming a mediation between book, author, publisher and reader. This article will focus on the features and functions of the paratexts of these two series, exploring the ways in which the Chinese reception of Western translation theory is being shaped, and hence providing new insights into the ongoing debate concerning the influence of Western studies on Chinese traditions in translation theories.

In his seminal book *Seuils* (1987) (*Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, 1997), the French theorist Gérard Genette coined the notion of paratext and defined it as “the verbal or other materials (prefaces, postfaces, titles, dedications, illustrations) and a number of other in-between phenomena that mediate between the text and the reader and serve to ‘present’ the work” (1997:1). Genette emphasized that the essential objective of the paratext is functional, the paratext being “at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it” (1997:2). Genette's theory was introduced to China by a number of Chinese scholars early in the 21st century, chiefly in journals of translation studies.<sup>5</sup> However, Genette's statements on functionality have not been discussed or applied in Chinese publishing contexts, thus begging the following questions: do the paratexts in the Chinese publishing market in general perform a function similar to the one defined by Genette? In particular how do the paratexts of these two series meet their commercial and educational purposes?

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Xiao Li, 副文本之于翻译研究的意义 (The Significance of Paratexts to Translation Studies), *Shanghai Journal of Translators* (2011) 4:17-21; Geng Qiang, 翻译中的副文本及其研究：理论，方法，议题与批评’ [Paratext in Translation and Translation Studies: Perspectives, Methods, Issues and Criticism], *Journal of Foreign Languages* (2016) 5:104-112.

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To address these questions, this article will analyse the three main types of paratexts included in the two series mentioned above, namely, titles, blurbs and reading guides. I shall discuss the pertinence of Genette's observations to each type of paratextual element, considering the degree to which it is valid in the Chinese market. Genette's insistence on a connection between the paratext and authorial intention has been challenged by scholar Kathryn Batchelor. In her recent book titled *Translation and Paratexts*, Batchelor argues that authorial intention may be of disagreement with the publisher's or the editor's, especially in the case of allographic peritextual materials (2018:16). The writers of preface and metatext (e.g. critical essay) are unbound by authorial intention as they are written after the author's death, as well as considering paratextual function and effect (such as for marketing purpose). In broad terms, I shall argue that the paratexts of the two series serve, on the one hand, to promote books and so provide profits for publishing houses and some paratextual elements are thus adjusted for the target culture in line with Chinese publishing norms with the overall goal of attracting readers. On the other hand, the publishers of these two series simultaneously aspire to provide textbooks and references for teachers, students and scholars in Chinese universities, aiming to foster the discipline of Translation Studies in China by not simply 'borrowing' Western theories but 'applying' them in the Chinese context. The paratexts of these two series, thus, also on occasion offer critical analysis of the books in a manner which comes into conflict with the marketing function. The tension between the commercial and educational functions of the Chinese paratexts illustrates the dilemma that a Chinese publisher faces when introducing and applying Western translation theories.

## **2. Titles**

Genette proposes three functions for a book's title: "(1) to identify the work, (2) to designate the work's subject matter, (3) to play up the work" (1997:76). These are not so different from Chinese paratextual conventions. Many Chinese scholars claim that the translated titles of Western books should be faithful to the original but also be adapted to the Chinese market, achieving "the advertising efforts of impressing readers from first viewing" (Yu 2008:68).<sup>6</sup> In her article 'On the Translation of Titles', He Hengxing proposes three approaches to translating titles, namely: "to maintain and highlight the key terms from the original titles",

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<sup>6</sup> Original Chinese is 译名还要达到使人过目不忘的宣传效果. The translation of this and all subsequent Chinese citations are mine.

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“to keep the titles concise and striking”, and “to fully consider the cultural differences between China and the West” (2004:50). He's approach is evidently followed in many of the titles in the corpus. Predominantly, Chinese versions translate the titles in these two series in a literal manner, but some have been altered to cater to the Chinese publishing markets. To illustrate how the potentially competing recommendations of He play out in practice, we will briefly consider the translation of Christiane Nord's *Translation as Purposeful Activity – Functionalist Approaches Explained*. The Chinese version of the title changes ‘Translating as’ to the affirmative ‘Translating is’ 《目的性行为 – 析功能翻译理论》. In her introduction to the original book, Nord (1997:1) explains the thinking behind the English title as being that it is “stating the aspects of translating that will be focused on”, or in other words that the ‘as’ indicates that it is a particular perspective on translation that is being privileged. Translation can be considered as but is not limited to being considered a purposeful activity. By translating ‘as’ into ‘is’, the Chinese title risks appearing to present a definition of ‘translation’ rather than an angle for study, yet this change is probably easily accepted by Chinese readers, owing to differing grammatical structures between the Chinese and English languages. In English ‘as’ is a prepositional word and its equivalence in Chinese is ‘作为’, which must be followed by one of the noun(s) (作为……之一). Without the addition of one of these nouns, such a translation would generally be deemed insufficient in contexts of Chinese. The change from the partial into the definitive ‘即’ (be) is a translatory practice widely used by many Chinese translators. The translation of Nord's title can thus be argued to attract readers by using language familiar to Chinese readers and choosing expressional forms from Chinese readers' perspectives, in line with the general strategy for translating titles identified by He Hengxing (2003:10).

He (2004:52) also highlights the importance of maintaining key terms from the original titles, whilst acknowledging that conventionally established translations for such key terms may not exist. In such cases, she argues that the terms should be translated in a way which gives full consideration to the target readers' reading habits and cultural differences.<sup>7</sup> The key term ‘translation studies’ is of particular interest in relation to He Li's recommendations and with regard to the series under study. Eight titles in the FTS series and four in the FLTRP contain

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<sup>7</sup> 译语标题要符合译入语的语言习惯和译文读者的阅读习惯；译者要充分考虑两种语言文化之间的差异。

the term ‘translation studies.’ In the Chinese versions, the term is translated in two different ways. On nine occasions, the translation of ‘translation studies’ is ‘翻译研究’ which actually approximates to ‘translation research’.<sup>8</sup> As Mu Lei (2012:7) explains, in the Chinese context, this refers to research “on translation texts and translators, mainly in terms of translation strategies and translation criticism.” The second translation solution, which is used on three occasions, is ‘翻译学’, approximates to ‘translatology’. In this case, the meaning of the ‘-ology’ suffix is presented as a ‘学’, literally meaning ‘a discipline.’<sup>9</sup> It is important to note at this point that in the English-speaking world, ‘Translation Studies’ has been widely accepted as the name of the discipline. In the Chinese academy, however, a consensus on the name of the discipline has yet to be reached. From the 1980s onwards, scholars used a variety of terms without clarifying their distinctions. Mu Lei called for ‘Translation Studies’ to replace ‘Translatology’, explaining that “since in English, translatology and translation studies share the same expression, therefore, to avoid misunderstanding, we can directly redefine ‘translation studies’, making it the same as ‘translatology’” (2012:7).<sup>10</sup> Mu's call has been supported by other scholars, but variations in usage can still be observed. To a certain extent, these variations reflect differences in opinion as to whether translation has been established

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<sup>8</sup> FTS-12: Mary Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* 《翻译研究：综合法》；FTS-20: Mona Baker (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* 《翻译研究百科全书》；FTS-27: Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies* 《翻译研究》；FTS-28: Jenny Williams, *The Map: A Beginner's Guide to Doing Research in Translation Studies* 《路线图：翻译研究方法入门》；FTS-30: Cay Dollerup, *Basics of Translation Studies* 《翻译研究基础》；FTS-32: Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* 《翻译研究入门：理论与应用》(This book was translated by Li Defeng and published on 2007 with the title 《翻译学导论－理论与实践》(Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 2007)); FLTRP-15, James S. Holmes, *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies* 《译稿杀青！文学翻译与翻译研究文集》；FLTRP-20, Sylviane Granger, Jacques Lerot and Stephanie Perch-Tyson, eds, *Corpus-Based Approaches to Contrastive Linguistics and Translation Studies* 《语料库的语言对比和翻译研究》；FLTRP-22, Lynne Bowker, Michael Cronin, Dorothy Kenny, eds, *Unity in Diversity: Current Trends in Translation Studies* 《多元下的统一·当代翻译研究潮流》

<sup>9</sup> FTS-10 – Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* 《描述翻译学及其他》；FTS-29 – Mark Shuttleworth and Moira Cowie, *Dictionary of Translation Studies* 《翻译学词典》；FLTRP-6, Maeve Olohan, *Intercultural Faultlines: Research Models in Translation Studies I: Textual and Cognitive Aspects* 《超越文化断裂 翻译学研究模式(I):文本与认知的译学研究》

<sup>10</sup> 既然在英文里翻译学和翻译研究是同一个表述，那么，我们不妨直接对‘翻译研究’重新定义，让其与‘翻译学’表达同等的涵义，以免引起误解。

and developed as an independent academic discipline. Some scholars, such as Zhang Jinghao, believe that translation studies as a discipline is still developing and that the goal of building it as a separate discipline is “a dream that has not and is unlikely to ever come true” (1999:44). Others, such as the chief editor of FTS series, Yang Zijian (2002:4), argue that translation studies has developed rapidly in China as an academic discipline over recent decades and so has been successfully established there. Yang also claims that one of the purposes of publishing the FTS series was, in fact, to “significantly boost the development of the discipline of translation studies in China” (2002:11). Considering this context, it is not surprising that we still see inconsistency in the translation of this key term in work titles; but this inconsistency may well undermine efforts to consolidate the discipline.

### **3. Blurbs**

Another major item of paratextual matter, the blurb – a brief description of a book often on the back cover – usually serves the same function in China as it does in Genette's model, namely that of promoting the sale of the book. Chen Xinyuan, a Chinese book designer, explains that “a good blurb can stimulate readers' potential needs, and arouse their interest in the book” (1997:17).<sup>11</sup> The FLTRP series blurbs provide a short paragraph describing each volume, which is mainly copied from their reading guide to the book. The FTS series offers two paragraphs summarising the main content and providing authorial information. Among 41 volumes in FLTRP series, 17 of them translate the blurb's content word for word from the original. The remaining 24 have been altered by omitting, adding or rewriting the paratextual contents.

The omissions observed in my corpus serve to keep the blurb short and compact while highlighting the book's main content. Hu Xiaofang (2016:34) claims that Chinese modern book design normally applies the aesthetic concept of ‘subtraction’ – using the fewest words to deliver the most information. This aesthetic norm in Chinese publication is exemplified by the Chinese blurbs for Gideon Toury's *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* and Christina Schäffner and Beverly Adab's *Developing Translation Competence*. In these two cases, the original English-language blurbs consist of an overall summary of the main ideas, together with an outline of the research objectives, methodologies, and chapter contents. The

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<sup>11</sup> 一篇好的 blurb 能挖掘读者潜在的需求，激发读者的购书兴趣。

Chinese versions show different ways of condensing the contents. In the case of Toury's work the Chinese blurb retains a summary of the main ideas, while in the case of Schäffner and Adab, it is the chapter outline which is retained. Both share a similar approach, that is, maintaining key ideas whilst omitting mention of specific methodologies. This marketing strategy may, however, contradict the educational purpose of the series, which emphasizes the importance of methodologies as well as that of ideas.<sup>12</sup>

The dual functions of marketing and education are difficult to fulfil simultaneously, and the Chinese blurbs tend to prioritize the former. In a sense, this is unsurprising, since blurbs are among the groups of paratexts which target all potential readers as opposed to only actual readers in Genette's model, and the marketing function might therefore be argued to be paramount. However, as textbooks published are targeted towards students and teachers in Chinese universities, the 'potential' readers of the blurbs are in fact a relatively closed group, and the publishing context is one in which educational purpose is superior to commercial profit. This is a point made explicit in the general preface to the FTS series. In Chen Wenbing's view, textbooks should thus be considered as 'a special product', whose publishing strategies should be guided by the readers, or in other words, by students' needs (2004:69).<sup>13</sup> While the omissions in the blurbs bring the books into line with the general norms for Chinese publishing, they run however somewhat counter to the educational function in the case of academic texts.

The conflict between the marketing and education functions of academic blurbs is clear in the case of Cay Dollerup's *Basics of Translation Studies*. The Chinese blurb (2007) states that "this book provides abundant examples, including the West and the East, to explore the main problems in translation studies".<sup>14</sup> With its emphasis on 'West and East', this statement seems designed to heighten the book's appeal to Chinese scholars and students against the backdrop of the debates over the importation of Western theory, outlined above. However, it

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<sup>12</sup> For example, Cao Minglun explains in 'The Reading Guide' to *Translation Studies* by Susan Bassnett, that "to learn the Western translation theories, we need not only to study their new perspectives and ideas, we also must learn their research approaches and methodologies." (Shanghai, SFLEP, 2010), pp. iv-xv (p. xv).

<sup>13</sup> 树立起以读者为中心的观念。高校教材的读者是各个学历层次的大学生，研究生，他们的需求应成为高校出版社出书的导向。

<sup>14</sup> The Chinese blurb: 全书例证丰富，中西兼顾，探讨了翻译领域的几大主要问题。

is a somewhat inaccurate representation of the contents of the book, which, in the words of the original blurb (2013), “discusses the reasons why Translation Studies has, so far, been based mostly on Western thinking, on elitist and religious works”, and provides “a brief history of translation, notably in the Western world”. In this case, the Chinese blurb tailors the marketing information to the academic audience, but simultaneously undermines the educational function by misrepresenting the book's contents.

Like the English blurbs, the Chinese blurbs also provide information on the author(s) such as their professional background, their previous publications and awards, their current research interests, and their institutional affiliation. This information serves to promote the book by lauding the author(s) and highlighting their academic achievements. However, the Chinese blurbs in our corpus give unequal comments on authors, the amount of comments depending on the popularity and reputation of the authors, which reflects the dominance of marketing considerations in this part of the paratext. For example, the original of *Discourse and the Translator* introduces two authors in one sentence: “Basil Hatim and Ian Mason are both lecturers in the department of languages at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh” (2013, back-cover blurb). But the Chinese blurb gives detailed and positive praise to the former and only a brief biography to the latter:

巴兹尔·哈蒂姆：篇章语言学领域的著名理论家和学术带头人，对话与分析及翻译等领域的研究有很深造诣。自1980年以来，他一直担任爱丁堡赫里奥特-沃特大学（Heriot-Watt University）阿拉伯语研究中心主任，并曾在英国，欧洲大陆及中东地区巡回讲学，演讲内容主要是从翻译的角度剖析修饰学和现代篇章语言学。

[Basil Hatim: a famous theorist and an academic leader in the areas of discourse linguistic studies, also specialising in dialogues and analysis, translation and other areas. Since the 1980s, he has been the director of the centre of Arabic language studies. He also gave presentations and lectures in the UK, European countries, and Middle East Areas. The main topics of his talks were on Rhetoric and Modern Text and Semantics Studies].

伊恩·梅森：英国爱丁堡赫里奥特-沃特大学（Heriot-Watt University）讲师。

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[Ian Mason: a lecturer in Heriot-Watt University]

This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that Basil Hatim is far more well-known in China than Ian Mason, his *Communication across Cultures: Translation Theory and Contrastive Text Linguistics* having been published as the second book of the FTS series in 2001. The attention paid to Hatim in the blurb reflects the tendency in China for an author's academic experience and professional career to carry great weight in terms of the respect and attention given to their ideas. A similar procedure, premised on the same tendency, can be observed in the Chinese blurb of Peter Newmark's *About Translation* (2006). In contrast with the English original which states only that "Peter Newmark's views on translation are controversial; as compensation he offers an abundance of interesting translation examples" (1991, English blurb), the Chinese blurb has high praise for the author and the book's value. Newmark is described as "a linguist, translator, professor in translation studies, and a practical translation theorist" (2006); his book is described as having "comprehensive contents, which nearly covers all topics and questions in translation studies" and is lauded for "its rational thinking based on Newmark's practices, which makes it a new starting point in the development of translation studies" (2006). Newmark has been extraordinarily popular in China since the 1980s when his works were first introduced to Chinese readers.<sup>15</sup> Once again, the rewriting that occurs in the blurb in this case thus reflects the importance of the person of the author for the promotion of a book in China.

#### **4. Reading Guides**

Both series invite popular scholars, identified as professors and well-known scholars, to compile lengthy introductions and reading guides to assist the reader. The extensive Chinese reading guides of FLTRP series, as Feng Quangong explains, provide readers not only with an introduction to theories but also offering interpretations. After all, "this series is difficult to read as they are strong theoretical specialized books" (2017:20). In an echo of the strategy of emphasising well-known Western authors in blurbs, described above, Feng (2017:22) claims that when publishing a series, Chinese publishing houses usually pay more attention to

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<sup>15</sup> There is a historical reason for their popularity, as Sun Yifeng explains: their theories emphasize form rather than content, which "had a particular appeal to the Chinese" and "the possibility for translation to transform form, with the aim to facilitate reading, was construed as liberating it from the constraints of rigid faithfulness". See Sun Yifeng, 'The Shifting Identity of Translation Studies in China', *Intercultural Communication Studies XXI: 2* (2012), pp. 32-52 (p. 37).

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名人效应 [the impact of celebrities], inviting popular scholars to be editors, to sit on committees, and to write the reading guides, can increase the popularity and influence of the series.<sup>16</sup> In addition to attracting readers, Yang Zijian (2011:ii) explains that the lengthy interpretation of the theories can serve to increase the scope of academic discussion, thereby contributing to the educational goal of the series.<sup>17</sup> In turn, the papers and comments published online and in journals in response to the introductions or the books themselves often serve as further promotion of the series. In this respect, the educational and marketing functions are not so much in conflict as in a mutually beneficial relationship, each one's function feeding into the other.

As we saw with the blurb to Dollerup's book, the backdrop to the publication of these volumes of Western translation theory in China makes it imperative for the paratexts to emphasize the benefit of the theories for China and to distance themselves from an uncritical assimilation of the Western ideas contained in the books. Many of the paratexts call explicitly for Chinese characteristics [中国特色], stressing the value of domestic translation studies and the need to take inspiration from Western scholars rather than simply copying or adopting them uncritically. In the reading guide to *Corpora in Translator Education*, for example, Mu Lei and Liu Kanglong argue that “we must break scholasticism and necessarily draw lessons from the West so that we can develop our own Chinese characteristics and policies” (2007:xii).<sup>18</sup> In the same vein, Meng Fanjun and Gu Zhengkun (2007) explain in the reading guide to James S. Holmes's *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*, that different cultural contexts should be taken into consideration in the widespread application of Holmes's theories in China. They argue:

Only in a particular Eastern and Western cultural context, it is possible to reasonably absorb and scientifically borrow the Western theories. When we learn Holmes' translation theory, readers should understand both trajectories of Chinese

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<sup>16</sup> Feng Quangong, ‘国内翻译研究丛书：出版现状与未来展望’ (Translation Publishing Series in China), *East Journal of Translation* (东方翻译), No. 3 (2017): 17-23 (English translation from Chinese is mine).

<sup>17</sup> 这套丛书的引进将会满足翻译专业研究生教学原版参考书和翻译理论研究的需要。

<sup>18</sup> 为了培养合格的翻译人才，我们不可以墨守成规，有必要借鉴国内外在这一领域的有效探索，形成自己的培养特色和方针。

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and Western translation theories and pay attention to their different traditions.

Only in doing so, both sides would illuminate and reinforce each other.

(Meng and Gu 2007:xi)

Such a statement could be argued to weaken the Chinese version's paratextual function of promoting the book, undermining the book's appeal by criticising it or suggesting that its ideas have limited or problematic application in Chinese contexts. At the same time, and paradoxically, by showcasing sensitivity to the ambivalent attitude towards Western translation theory that prevails in Chinese circles, such statements may enhance the appeal of the book by increasing its chances of acceptance amongst scholars who are sceptical of the value of Western theory or wary of being criticized if they draw too closely from it.

Whilst many of the paratextual framings explored so far argue the need for adapting Western translation theories to domestic contexts, few explore the concrete ways in which this might be done. An exception can be found in the reading guide to Peter Fawcett's *Translation and Language*. The author of the guide, Chen Guohua, starts off by stating that "it is unfortunate that Fawcett does not speak Chinese and he does not give Chinese examples in his book. It is a deficiency to Chinese readers. To make up for this inadequacy, I will give some examples of English-Chinese translation in this reading guide" (Chen 2007:vii). Chen goes on to do just that, adding Chinese examples to his critical interpretation of the ideas of Fawcett's chapters. For instance, when introducing the chapter on 'Text Structure', Chen explains that "text structure decides the strategies and purposes of translation, thus the original function may differ from that of translation. The most classic example is Yan Fu's translation of Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* which Yan translates as 《天演论》 [*On Evolution*] according to a more important principle of translation according to the purpose" (2007:xxii). However, while elucidating Fawcett's ideas through applying them to Chinese contexts potentially heightens the appeal of the book for Chinese readers, the way in which Chen does so, risks at the same time giving readers a negative impression of the quality of Fawcett's original discussions. For example, after the reference to Yan Fu's translation of the title *Evolution and Ethics*, Chen comments: "it is unfortunate that Fawcett does not write too much about it" (2007:xxii). Given that Fawcett is not responsible for Yan Fu's translation, this seems an odd comment to make. Later, when discussing Fawcett's chapter on cohesion

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and deictic use of words in the introduction, Chen argues that “Fawcett says that in many cases deictics pose no problems for translators because there should be no reason to do anything other than replace them with target equivalents. Actually, it is not that simple because in Chinese, this/that are not exactly the same as in English” (2007:xx). In the original English version of the book, it is true that Fawcett writes the sentence that Chen disputes, but he immediately nuances the statement by adding: “Deictics can, however, sometimes become a problem, especially in the text types where the main purpose is not just to convey information” (1997:94). Fawcett then goes on to clearly explain the strategies for translating deictics in different contexts. By lifting Fawcett's words out of context here, Chen gives a misleading impression of the quality of Fawcett's work. Chen's criticism of Fawcett grows increasingly blunt as the reading guide progresses: when introducing Fawcett's final chapter on Psycholinguistics, Chen simply writes: “this chapter is bad” (2007:xxvi). With respect to Fawcett's exploration of Ernst-August Gutt's theory, Chen states that Gutt's theories have nothing to do with psycholinguistics and translation but fails to elaborate, stating only: “I won't discuss it here” (ibid.). This choice not to discuss seems unduly harsh, not least because Fawcett actually provides an explicit justification for including discussion of Gutt under the rubric of psycholinguistics by acknowledging that Gutt's theory is “less obviously psycholinguistic” while explaining “we place it here because it is based on a theory of cognition and claims to offer an ambitious account of translation purely in terms of the psychology of communication” (Fawcett 1997:135). In contrast with the brevity with which Chen dismisses these features of Fawcett's book, minor details are often in contrast over-explained. For example, Fawcett uses a metaphorical expression to express the popularity of the concept ‘equivalence’, claiming humorously that it “has probably cost the lives of more trees than any other in translation studies” (1997:53). Chen explains Fawcett's aside in detail:

The conception of equivalence is a topic which has raised most discussion and controversies. The more arguments and discussions there are, the more paper we need to write them down. Therefore, the more paper it consumes, the more wood is needed in order to make paper. That is the reason why Fawcett says that this concept ‘has probably cost the lives of more trees than any other in translation studies

(Chen 2007:xv).

A key part of Chen's criticism concerns Fawcett's discussion of the connections between translation studies and linguistics. Writing in 1997 at the height of 'the cultural turn' in Translation Studies as an academic discipline, Fawcett (1997:x) prefaces his book with a foreword in which he summarizes current trends in the disciplines of linguistics and translation studies: "This book is about the love-hate relationship between linguistics and translation theory. Many linguistics specialists have no interest in translation theory, and translation theorists are increasingly declaring that linguistics has nothing to offer their discipline." Chen is however dismissive of Fawcett's opening statement, arguing that "considering the application of linguistic to translation studies, we only can claim whether linguistics is useful or not, and to what degree it is useful. There is not such a question of whether linguistics is harmful. If it is not harmful, from where is the emotion of 'hate' in Fawcett's so-called 'love-hate relationship'?" (Chen 2007:viii). It is clear that Chen has misunderstood Fawcett's point here, presumably owing to a lack of awareness of the more general trends that were playing out in the discipline of translation studies in the United Kingdom and other places in the West at the time that Fawcett was writing his work in English. Chen thus concludes that Fawcett's introduction is "very poorly written, and Fawcett fails to make his own argument as he does not explain the relationship between linguistics and translation" (2007:ix).

Overall, while Chen's introduction undoubtedly represents an attempt to initiate a dialogue with Western theories, the quality of the dialogue initiated is however unconstructive and is also likely to harm the book's promotion. Indeed, since most reading guides are widely used as advertising material in online books shops and academic journals, Chen's guide may even serve to drive readers away. Mu's suggestion that Chinese translation studies' engagement with Western translation studies is sometimes marked by a superficial understanding of Western theories seems apposite, that is on point in this instance. In the case of Chen's critical engagement with Fawcett, Mu reflects that "we didn't understand the social cultural contexts in which the theories are created. We must be aware of both their advantages and disadvantages when applying them to our culture." (2012:9). Mu Lei and Zou Bing (2015:21) also criticise the fact that in the process of introducing Western translation theories, some scholars attempt to apply them to Chinese contexts where they are inapplicable, meaning that

such attempts risk giving readers the impression that the theories themselves are deficient in some way.

## **5. Conclusion**

Against the backdrop of recent debates as to whether Western translation theories have been excessively represented on the Chinese market, Tan Zaixi calls for what he terms an ‘ethno-convergent’ perspective, appealing for ‘mutual understanding’ and arguing that it is not wrong to import worthy foreign work on translation into Chinese studies, “provided of course that researchers have the resources to do so” (2009:287). My discussion of the paratexts to Chinese editions of Western translation theory has underlined the importance of Tan's caveat: while sentiments in favour of such ethno-convergent perspectives are commonly expressed, there are instances that detailed and nuanced explorations of what such a perspective might look like are lacking. This is an indication that some researchers may not have the critical resources to engage successfully and constructively in this kind of dialogue. While the Chinese paratexts of academic works ‘imported’ into Chinese contexts undoubtedly illustrate an effort to accommodate the Western translation theories to the target culture, the application of such marketing strategies combined with catering for Chinese publishing norms and aesthetic traditions, means that in some cases this marketing function emerges as secondary to – or even at odds with – the educational purpose, which is to provide a critical interpretation of Western theories while contributing to Chinese translation studies. While publication selection arguably provides the principle means through which the spread of Western theories is mediated and controlled in China, the paratexts of such works play an important role in influencing the degree to which the theories are accepted in the new context and in shaping the nature of their reception. My study so far has shown that the paratexts can function as a double-edged sword – reinforcing certain theories whilst ignoring others, both leading and simultaneously misleading the reader. Whilst there are to my knowledge no formal studies on the way in which Chinese readers make use of the Chinese editions of Western translation theory texts, it is likely that a significant number of Chinese students rely primarily on their paratexts, particularly in the case of Chinese editions which reproduce the text itself in English rather than translating it into Chinese, with only the paratexts presented in Chinese. A cursory survey of student work in translation studies appears to confirm this hypothesis thereby suggesting that there is a strong tendency for students to cite from the *Fang Tang, Features and Functions of Paratexts in Western Translation Studies Book Series in China, 126-152.*

reading guides, rather than from the books themselves. In this sense, the paratexts to Chinese editions of Western translation theory texts may no longer be functioning as ‘thresholds’ to texts, to return to Genette's metaphor, but may also have come to be used as texts in their own right. The extent to which this is indeed the case is something which undoubtedly merits further investigation, particularly given its ramification for the internationalisation of translation studies.

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## Appendix

### Series 1: 'Foreign Translation Studies texts translation series'

This series was published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press from 2001 to present. (2002, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012). There are 41 volumes so far.

1. Susan Bassnett & André Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (2001) 《文化构建：文学翻译轮集》
2. Basil Hatim, *Communication Across Culture: Translation Theory and Contrastive Text Linguistics* (2001) 《跨文化交际：翻译理论与对比篇章语言学》
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5. Peter Newmark, *Approaches to Translation* (2001) 《翻译问题探讨》
6. Wolfram Wilss, *The Science of Translation: Problems and Methods* (2001) 《翻译学：问题与方法》
7. Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (2001) 《翻译教程》
8. Basil Hatim & Ian Mason, *Discourse and the Translator* (2001) 《语篇与译者》
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10. Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (2001) 《描述翻译学及其他》
11. George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (2001) 《通天塔之后：语言与翻译面面观》
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14. Kathleen Davis, *Deconstruction and Translation* (2004) 《解构主义与翻译》
15. Maria Tymoczko, *Translation in a Postcolonial Context: Early Irish Literature in English Translation* (2004) 《后殖民语境中的翻译：爱尔兰早期文学英译》
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18. Luise von Flotow, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'* (2004) 《翻译与性别：女性主义时代的翻译》
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20. Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (2004) 《当代翻译理论》（第二版）
21. Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (2004) 《翻译科学探索》
22. Eugene A. Nida & Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (2004) 《翻译理论与实践》
23. André Lefevere (ed.), *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook* (2004) 《翻译，历史与文化轮集》
24. Katharina Reiss, *Translation Criticism: The Potentials and Limitations* (2004) 《翻译批评：潜力与制约》
25. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (2004) 《译者的隐身：一部翻译史》
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27. Jenney Williams & Andrew Chesterman, *The Map: A Beginner's Guide to Doing Research in Translation Studies* (2004) 《路线图：翻译研究方法入门》
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29. Cay Dollerup, *Basics of Translation Studies* (2007) 《翻译研究基础》
30. Mona Baker (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (2010) 《翻译研究百科全书》
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34. Martha P. Y. Cheung, *An Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation Volume 1: From Earliest Times to Buddhist Project* (2010) 《中国翻译话语英译选集》
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36. Susan Bassnett & Esperanca Bielsa, *Translation in Global News* (2011) 《国际新闻翻译》
37. Michael Cronin, *Translation Goes to the Movies* (2011) 《电影中的翻译》
38. Anna Trosborg, *Text Typology and Translation* (2012) 《文本类型与翻译》
39. Harold Somers, *Computers and Translation: A Translator's Guide* (2012) 《计算机与翻译：译者指南》
40. Andrew Chesterman, *Memes of Translation: the Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory* (2012) 《翻译模因论：翻译理论中的思想传播》
41. Christina Schäffner & Beverly Adab, *Developing Translation Competence* (2012) 《翻译能力培养》

## **Series 2: ‘Foreign Translation Studies texts translation series’**

This series was published by 外语教学与研究出版社 (Beijing Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (2006, 2007, 2008). There are 3 volumes, including 28 books in total so far.

### **第一辑 (Vol.1, 2006):**

1. Geoffrey Samueleson-Brown, *A Practical Guide for Translators* (2006) 《译者实用指南》
2. Peter Newmark, *About Translation* (2006) 《论翻译》
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7. Christiane Nord, *Interpretation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation* (2006) 《翻译的文本分析模式:理论、方法及教学应用》
8. Maeve Olohan, *Intercultural Faultlines: Research Models in Translation Studies I: Textual and Cognitive Aspects* (2006) 《超越文化断裂 翻译学研究模式(I):文本与认知的译学研究》
9. André Lefevere, *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context* (2006) 《文学翻译:比较文学背景下的理论与实践》
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11. Frank Austerlühl, *Electronic Tools for Translators* (2006) 《译者的电子工具》

**第二辑 (Vol. 2, 2007):**

12. Sylviane Granger, Jacques Lerot and Stephanie Perch-Tyson, eds, *Corpus-Based Approaches to Contrastive Linguistics and Translation Studies* (2007) 《语料库的语言对比和翻译研究》
13. Federico Zanettin, Silvia Bernardini, Dominic Stewart, eds, *Corpora in Translator Education* (2007) 《语料库与译者培养》
14. James S. Holmes · *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies* (2007) 《译稿杀青！文学翻译与翻译研究文集》
15. Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (2007) 《翻译与帝国:后殖民理论解读》
16. Peter Fawcett, *Translation and Language* (2007) 《翻译与语言：语言学理论解读》
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