

2020「興大翻譯獎」翻譯比賽評審講評

【中譯英】

For translators from Taiwan, whose mother tongue tends to not be English, oftentimes the biggest challenge for translating a work of literature is to find the right English expressions and use them naturally and correctly. Generally speaking, the best translations in this competition were the ones that had the fewest expression errors. For example, where the Chinese source text says 談到這個主題, some translators translated it as “speaking of which” or “regarding this subject”. However, these phrases are not used like this in English; they would mean something closer to 順帶一提. Secondly, when translating into English, using correct grammar is very important, because it can affect how your reader understands (or whether your reader understands at all) the English text. In particular, verb tenses are important because they indicate who is performing an action, and when. For literary works of fiction, generally speaking the past tense is used, but the present tense can also be acceptable as a stylistic choice. Whichever tense is selected, however, it is important to keep it consistent; some translations jumped between the present and the past tense, causing considerable confusion.

台灣的譯者多半非以英語為母語，因此將中文文學作品譯為英文時，最大的挑戰即為自然且正確地用適切的英文詞語或說法來翻譯。大致來說，此次競賽多數參賽同學的英文寫作能力相當紮實，句法多半正確，需要繼續加強的就在於語用部分，有些譯句在文法上沒有錯誤，但不符合英文的說話或表達習慣，讀起來就會覺得「怪」。因此，此次評選出的得獎作品皆是語用錯誤相對較少的譯文。舉例來說，此次中譯英原文出現「談到這個主題」等字眼，部分譯者譯為「speaking of which」或「regarding this subject」，但這兩者在一般英文文章裡的使用時機較接近「順帶一提」之意，與原文的上下文語境不盡相同。再者，中譯英時須特別注意英文文法的正確性，以免影響譯文讀者對譯文的理解。其中，動詞的時式（verb tense）尤為重要，因為它們可以明確指出一個動作是何時進行的。文學作品多用過去式寫成，但現在式亦可接受，當作一種寫作風格。不過，不論使用何種時式，務必前後一致。部分譯者在現在與過去式之間任意切換，會令英文的讀者無所適從。例如原文提到「學校裡的課業多麼單純，一個課堂五十分鐘，一個學分二十個課堂，切割得清清楚楚」，應屬作者在回憶學生時代的豐功偉業，因此用過去式即可，但有參賽者譯為「How straightforward was all the schoolwork! These are simple and clear: 50 minutes in a section, 20 lessons for one credit.」，除了單複數前後不一致外（schoolwork 應為單數，但代名詞 these 為複數），時態亦用了過去式與現在式，並不恰當。

其次，一篇文字依用途、目標讀者不同，需要考慮適當的表達風格。寫作可偏向書面或口語、正式或非正式，用字遣詞也有褒貶之分。例如考題第一部分的父女「對話」，就不宜寫得像學術報告的措詞和句型一樣。舉例來說，原文中女兒對父親說「我都全盤想好了」，譯為「I've got it all planned out」就比「I've got a thorough plan」要來得更恰當，又或者父親對女兒說「可以說人見人誇」，有參賽者譯為「It's no exaggeration to say that you were highly esteemed」便太過正式，且「highly esteemed」應為「受人敬重」，不符合原文的口語風格。反之，此句有參賽者譯為「Pretty much everyone had good things to say about you」便在意思上與風格上都貼近原文，讓人驚喜。