

外国人学汉语 语言技能类

英汉翻译对比教程

LEARNING CHINESE
THROUGH TRANSLATION
—A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

ENGLISH

汉语

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*A coursebook for English-speaking
learners of Chinese*

To Students

For whom

This book is intended for second-year students of Chinese who have completed elementary courses with a vocabulary range of around 2,000 words and have been exposed to the basic structures of the language, including basic types of simple and compound sentences. A learner at this level may question his or her ability to do English-to-Chinese translation, but in fact, an English speaker learning Chinese is often, if not always, trying to convert his or her ideas from English into Chinese. Translation is a natural learning strategy, though somewhat controversial teaching methodology.

Aim

Instead of introducing translation theories and trends or principles and techniques, this coursebook is a supplement that aims to help students develop a better understanding and command of the Chinese language by increasing their sensitivity to the different linguistic forms of Chinese and English. As implied in the title “Learning Chinese Through Translation—A Comparative Approach”, comparison will be a critical component.

Content

Through comparison, this book offers students an opportunity to overcome some difficult and unique Chinese language points that even intermediate students struggle with. By showing different ways of expressing the same meaning in Chinese and English, some fundamental differences between the two languages are exposed. Here's a roadmap to the coursework:

1. Chapter 1 deals with word choice, the most basic skill in translation.
2. Chapters 2-6 are devoted to adverbials that modify or describe verbs and make extended sentences in English. Prepositional phrases are selected as representative of adverbials because they are one of the chief forms of adverbials, covering a wide semantic domain—place, time, cause, purpose, result, means, instrument, manner, etc. Also, they are less complex than a clause, thus making learning easier at this stage.
3. Chapters 7-8 are about noun modification, which also characterizes English sentences

and can make them lengthier and more complex than Chinese sentences.

4. Chapters 9-10 discuss passive sentences that are often taken for granted as the equivalent of the Chinese 被-sentence.

5. Chapter 11 touches upon the fundamental difference between Chinese and English in inflection^[1]. This difference is an important factor in the conversion of word class in English-to-Chinese translation.

6. Chapter 12 deals with the translation of long English sentences and conveys the logic by which Chinese sentences are organized.

7. The following Chinese grammar points are highlighted: verb complements (a most complicated and difficult part of Chinese grammar for foreigners) indicating time span, direction of movement, result, degree, state; the order of adverbials; the position and order of noun modifiers; the 把-sentence; the 是……的 construction for emphasis; various means of expressing passive sense; function words such as 通过, 靠, 凭, 从, 因为, 由于, 出于. One will also learn to differentiate between similar words or expressions in Chinese.

Components of each chapter

Sample sentences

Introductory remarks

Each chapter begins with a brief introduction to outline the key concepts, terms and ideas.

Compare

Rather than follow a set of rigid rules, students will be asked to discover language differences for themselves using sample sentences selected from a variety of sources, including newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, and literary and non-literary books. Where applicable, an English sentence will be translated into more than one Chinese equivalent, because we want to show the flexibility of the Chinese language. Chinese translations are accompanied by *pinyin*.

[1] Inflection: a change in the form of a word according to its grammatical function in a sentence, e.g., work – worked – working; do – did – done.

Practice

Sentences in this part are selected to illustrate the language points of the chapter.

Passage

This part provides a passage for students to translate. The passages selected here are excerpts from English originals average less than 300 words, adapted to illustrate the language points. Chinese translations with *pinyin* are provided for words and phrases where necessary.

Notes

Some basic rules of Chinese grammar and English-to-Chinese translation are conveyed in this part, where students can find answers to the questions posed earlier. However, it should be pointed out that language rules are not absolute; rather, they are guidelines that may not be applied to every situation. Selected linguistic terms are explained in the glossary.

Exercises

This part comprises sentence and passage translations. They are intended for self-study. Sentences and passages in this part are more difficult than those in the practice section. Source material includes literary works from established writers. Sample answers are given. Students may also refer to this part before beginning the practice section.

How to use this book

This course employs a discovery-learning style^[1] which encourages students to obtain knowledge for themselves. Each chapter is designed for 100 to 150 minutes of class activity, but more time is required outside class. Students are advised to complete the seven parts of each chapter sequentially.

We hope, in addition to the aims outlined above, students will benefit from this course and enjoy the learning process.

[1] Discovery learning happens in problem-solving situations where students are not provided with exact answers but rather the materials to find the answer themselves. This technique of learning is supported by the work of learning theorists and psychologists Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, and Seymour Papert.

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专业术语

Chapter 1

Choosing the Correct Words According to Context

Sample Sentences



Make tea
沏茶



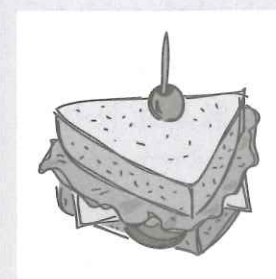
Make a fire
生火



Make a map
绘制地图

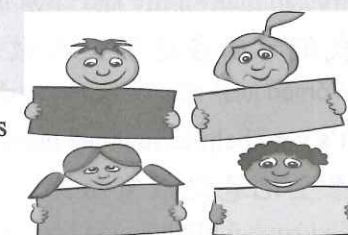


Make plans
制订计划



Father suggested a *light* meal before swimming.
爸爸建议游泳前简单吃点儿。

She finds teaching at primary school is
no *light* work.
她发现教小学并不轻松。



Translation is the process of mirroring not only words but ideas. Translators should always remember: words *mean* nothing by themselves; it is only when a speaker makes use of them that they gain *meaning*. Dictionaries often list multiple definitions for a given word, with each definition applying to a specific context. Only by knowing the context in which a word is employed can a dictionary help you find the Chinese equivalent.

That said, a dictionary can only go so far. A good translator should have mastered both the source and target languages, particularly understanding how words are used in different situations, as opposed to having simply memorized vocabulary lists.

1.1 Compare

Find the Chinese word in each translated sentence below for the English words *make*, *beautiful*, and *mind*.

MAKE

1. Shall I make some tea?
要我沏点儿茶吗?
Yào wǒ qī diǎnr chá ma?
2. She made her own tragedy.
她的悲剧是她自己造成的。
Tā de bēijù shì tā zìjǐ zàochéng de.
3. They made a map of the area.
他们绘制了一张这个地区的地图。
Tāmen huìzhìle yì zhāng zhège dìqū de dìtú.
4. He made sketches of the dancer.
他为舞者画了素描。
Tā wèi wǔzhě huàle sùmiáo.
5. We can make a fire and cook here.
我们可以在这里生火做饭。
Wǒmen kěyǐ zài zhèlǐ shēnghuǒ zuò fàn.
6. It's very helpful to make notes in class.
课上记笔记很有帮助。
Kè shàng jì bǐjì hěn yǒu bāngzhù.

7. He always makes plans before traveling.
他旅行前总是先制订计划。
Tā lǚxíng qián zǒngshì xiān zhìdìng jìhuà.
8. The incident made a very deep impression on me.
那件事给我留下了深刻印象。
Nà jiàn shì gěi wǒ liúxiàle shēnkè yìnxìàng.

BEAUTIFUL

1. You have done a beautiful job.
你干得很好 / 很漂亮 / 很出色。
Nǐ gàn de hěn hǎo / hěn piàoliang / hěn chūsè.
2. Mary grew into a beautiful woman.
玛丽出落得很漂亮。
Mǎlì chūluo de hěn piàoliang.
玛丽长成了一个俏丽的女子。
Mǎlì zhǎngchéngle yí gè qiàolì de nǚzǐ.
3. This beautiful work of art is priceless.
这件精美的艺术品是无价之宝。
Zhè jiàn jīngměi de yìshùpǐn shì wújiàzhībǎo.
4. What should we do in this beautiful weather?
这么好的天气，我们该做什么？
Zhème hǎo de tiānqì, wǒmen gāi zuò shénme?
5. This simple instrument can give beautiful sound.
这种简单的乐器可以发出美妙的声音。
Zhè zhǒng jiǎndān de yuèqì kěyǐ fāchū měimào de shēngyīn.
6. This is a beautiful coat, but it is too expensive for me.
这件外衣很漂亮，但对我来说太贵了。
Zhè jiàn wàiyī hěn piàoliang, dàn duì wǒ lái shuō tài guì le.
7. Here, you will find beautiful scenery, historic cities, and friendly and welcoming people.
这里有美丽的风景、古老的城市、热情友好的人民。
Zhèlǐ yǒu měilì de fēngjǐng, gǔlǎo de chéngshì, rèqíng yǒuhǎo de rénmin.

MIND

1. Mind the speed limit.
注意限速。
Zhùyì xiànsù.
2. You didn't speak your mind.
你没说心里话。
Nǐ méi shuō xīnlǐhuà.
你没有说出真实想法。
Nǐ méiyǒu shuōchū zhēnshí xiǎngfǎ.
3. He's among the best minds in town.
他是镇上最有头脑的人之一。
Tā shì zhèn shàng zuì yǒu tóunǎo de rén zhī yī.
4. Her mind was not entirely on her work.
她的心思可没有全在工作上。
Tā de xīnsi kě méiyǒu quán zài gōngzuò shàng.
5. Have you made up your mind what to do?
你拿定主意怎么办了吗?
Nǐ náding zhúyì zěnmē bàn le ma?
你下决心怎么办了吗?
Nǐ xià juéxīn zěnmē bàn le ma?
6. I don't mind a joke, but this is going too far.
开玩笑我不介意，不过，这个玩笑太过火了。
Kāi wánxiào wǒ bú jièyì, búguò, zhège wánxiào tài guòhuǒ le.
7. He must be out of his mind to act in that way.
他那么做，肯定脑子出问题了。
Tā nàme zuò, kěndìng nǎozi chū wèntí le.
他那么做，肯定精神不正常了。
Tā nàme zuò, kěndìng jīngshén bú zhèngcháng le.
8. A healthy mind is equally important as a healthy body.
健康的心理 / 心态和健康的身体同样重要。
Jiànkāng de xīnlǐ / xīntài hé jiànkāng de shēntǐ tóngyàng zhòngyào.

1.2 Practice

1.2.1

Choose one of the following—头脑, 脑子, 精神, 心理, 心态, 想法, 心思, 主意, 小心, 注意, 介意—for *mind* in each sentence below and translate the sentences into Chinese.

1. Do you mind if I smoke here?
2. Mind your step and your head.
3. A simple mind may not be a bad thing.
4. He's young in mind though he is over 80.
5. His mind is still on the research program.
6. Was he in his right mind when he struck his wife?
7. My wife and I are of the same mind most of the time.
8. Have you made up your mind where to go for your honeymoon (蜜月)?

1.2.2

Translate the following phrases into Chinese. Note that the word *have* in each phrase should be treated differently.

1. have a party
2. have a dream
3. have a success
4. have an injection
5. have an operation
6. have a car accident
7. have a game of chess
8. have a basketball game

1.2.3

Translate the following sentences into Chinese, paying particular attention to the italicized words.

1. We need someone *sociable* for the job.
2. The little girl is in such a *beautiful* sleep.
3. I bear no resemblance to my *bookish* brother.
4. That mistake has *killed* his chances of success.
5. We will *change* the country and *change* the world.
6. The Great Wall is a *must* for most visitors to Beijing.
7. Diabetes is one of the *consequences* of eating too much.
8. China has undergone great *changes* during the last three decades.
9. The two leaders *had lunch* together after the meeting and then *went for a walk*.

1.3 Passage

Translate the following passage into Chinese, paying particular attention to the underlined words or phrases.



1 Many Americans of ¹Chinese ancestry come to China in order to find “their” roots, to learn about “their” history and to ²experience “their” culture. This phenomenon is not ³unique to China or the Chinese people; many people of ⁴European heritage ⁵travel to Germany or Ireland or Russia to

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| ① root | gēn
根 |
| ② phenomenon | xiànxàng
现象 |
| ③ Germany | Déguó
德国 |
| ④ Ireland | Ài'ěr'lán
爱尔兰 |
| ⑤ Russia | Éluósī
俄罗斯 |

do the same. They study Swedish or Italian because their grandparents or ⁶great-grandparents came from these countries. The same goes for people of all ethnic backgrounds. We are just trying to ⁷figure out who we are and what that ⁸means. Oftentimes this search becomes a quest for tradition, for an understanding of the past in order to explain our present situation.

2 Although I have relatives who live in Beijing and ⁹throughout China, I do not believe I will find myself or better understand myself simply because I have lived in China. To me China is a foreign country and I am a foreigner here. There are ¹⁰advantages and disadvantages to “looking” Chinese in China—sometimes I am able to get a lower price than other foreigners when I am ¹¹bargaining, and I find that many Chinese are more ¹²comfortable talking to me because I look Chinese. On the other hand, I have met a few people who would not believe my English is as good as that of other non-Chinese-looking foreigners. However, it ¹³doesn't bother me when people ask me questions to find out what my English level is. What matters the most to me is the ability to ¹⁴communicate with others, regardless of nationality or cultural background; we can learn a lot from each other, and that is the main reason I came to Beijing.

(274 words)

Abridged from *I Am American*, by Jenny Chio

Beijing Youth Daily, June 13, 2002

1.4 Notes

Be wary of translating words in isolation.

When searching a dictionary for the Chinese equivalent for an English word, one must

⑥ Swedish

Ruìdiǎnyǔ
瑞典语,
Ruìdiǎnrén
瑞典人

⑦ Italian

Yìdàlìyǔ
意大利语,
Yìdàlìrén
意大利人

⑧ quest

tànjiū
探究

⑨ relative

qīnshǔ
亲属,
qīnqi
亲戚

take the following aspects into account:

Contextual meaning
Grammatical function
Collocation (words that are typically paired)
Connotation
Social meaning
Style or genre

See examples below.

Example 1: Contextual meaning

- *The old lady married her daughter last year.*

For *marry*, four translations are offered in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary* (7th Edition):

- ① (和某人) 结婚; 嫁; 娶
- ② 为……主持婚礼, 操办婚礼
- ③ 把……嫁给; 为……娶亲
- ④ (使不同的事物、观点等) 相结合, 结合在一起

Among these four, ① is the most common. However, it does not fit the situation. The subject of the verb 娶 should be male, since the character indicates “to take a woman for one’s wife,” whereas 嫁, meaning “to enter a man’s house to be his wife,” should take a female as its subject and a male as its object. 和某人结婚 also produces a ridiculous translation. As for ②, the subject is usually a priest. ④ is only applicable to non-human substances. Obviously, ③ is correct. The Chinese translation of the sentence should be:

老太太去年把女儿嫁人了。

Lǎotàitai qùnián bǎ nǚ'ér jià rén le.

Example 2: Grammatical function

- *I rang the doorbell to wake up my wife.*

Ring and *wake up* both can be either transitive or intransitive, and have different Chinese equivalents for each. In the *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary* (7th Edition), the following entries appear for *ring* as an intransitive verb:

- ① 发出钟声; 响起铃声
- ② 回响; 响彻
- ③ (特性) 充满
- ④ (耳朵) 嗡嗡作响

For *ring* as a transitive verb, the dictionary offers:

- ① 给……打电话
- ② 使发出钟声, 响起铃声

Ring in this case is transitive, and based on the context, ② 使发出钟声, 响起铃声 is the correct choice. The specific verb to indicate pressing (a doorbell) in Chinese is 按. Thus 敲响门铃 is the proper Chinese phrase for *rang the doorbell*.

The Chinese words for *wake up* are 醒 (intransitive) and 弄醒 (transitive). 弄醒 fits the context. The Chinese translation of the sentence is:

我敲响门铃, 想弄醒我妻子。

Wǒ ànxiǎng ménlíng, xiǎng nòngxǐng wǒ qīzi.

Example 3: Collocation

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • <i>take a taxi</i> | 坐出租, 乘出租
zuò chūzū, chéng chūzū |
| • <i>take lessons</i> | 上课
shàng kè |
| • <i>take measures</i> | 采取措施
cǎiqǔ cuòshī |
| • <i>take an X-ray</i> | 照 X-光片
zhào X-guāngpiān |
| • <i>take sb's hand</i> | 握住某人的手
wòzhù mǒu rén de shǒu |
| • <i>take medicine</i> | 服药, 吃药
fúyào, chī yào |
| • <i>take sb's advice</i> | 接受某人的建议
jiēshòu mǒu rén de jiànyì |
| • <i>take responsibility</i> | 负责任
fù zérèn |
| • <i>take sb's temperature</i> | 给某人量体温 / 量某人的体温
gěi mǒu rén liáng tǐwēn / liáng mǒu rén de tǐwēn |

- *take one's doctor's degree* 获得博士学位
huòdé bóshì xuéwèi
- *take a position in the government* 在政府担任职务
zài zhèngfǔ dānrèn zhíwù

For each *take* above, there is a particular Chinese verb to collocate with the objective noun, and they are not necessarily all listed in a dictionary.

Example 4: Connotation

- *The adoption of the new policies has led to striking results.*
- *There would have been a more painful result but for our persistent efforts.*

Referring to an English-to-Chinese dictionary, one may find four Chinese words for *result*: 后果, 成效, 成果, 结果. 后果 carries a negative connotation, while 成效 and 成果 are positive, and 结果 is neutral. Therefore, 成果 or 成效 is the proper word to express *results* in the first sentence and 后果 is the right word for *result* in the second sentence:

采取了各项新政策, 取得了显著**成效**。

Cǎiqǔle gè xiàng xīn zhèngcè, qǔdéle xiǎnzhù chéngxiào.

要不是我们坚持不懈地努力, 本会出现更严重的**后果**。

Yàobúshì wǒmen jiānchí-búxiè de nǚlì, běn huì chūxiàn gèng yánzhòng de hòuguǒ.

Example 5: Connotation

- *He has become aggressive and estranged from his friends.*
- *A salesman must be aggressive if he wants to succeed.*

Chinese expressions for *aggressive* can be classified into two groups—derogatory and commendatory:

① derogatory: 好斗; 挑衅的; 侵略的; 富于攻击性; 咄咄逼人

② commendatory: 积极; 有进取心; 有闯劲儿; 大胆

Obviously, ① fits the first sentence and ② fits the second:

他变得**咄咄逼人**, 和朋友都疏远了。

Tā biàn de duōduō-bīrén, hé péngyou dōu shūyuǎn le.

推销员要想成功就必须有**闯劲儿**。

Tuīxiāoyuán yào xiǎng chénggōng jiù bìxū yǒu chuǎngjìnr.

Example 6: Social meaning

- *Individualism is a core social value in America.*
- *Young people desire novelty and individualism.*

个人主义 is the well-known Chinese equivalent of *individualism*, but it implies egoism and selfishness in Chinese culture, which advocates collectivism; on the other hand, the word *individualism* implies self-reliance, personal autonomy, emotional independence and other positive traits in American society. Thus, *individualism* in the first sentence, which has a positive meaning, cannot be translated as 个人主义. The commendatory expression 个人奋斗精神 suits this context:

个人奋斗精神是美国社会的核心价值观。

Gèrén fèndòu jīngshén shì Měiguó shèhuì de héxīn jiàzhíguān.

Individualism in the second sentence, with no social or cultural association, is neutral in meaning and can be better expressed by 个性 in Chinese:

年轻人追求新奇和**个性**。

Niánqīngrén zhuīqiú xīnqí hé gèxìng.

Example 7: Style or genre

- *"My friend," he said, "how much do you earn a month?"*

There are two ways to render this sentence into Chinese:

“我的**朋友**,” 他问, “你一个月挣**多少钱**?”

“Wǒ de péngyou,” tā wèn, “nǐ yí gè yuè zhèng duōshao qián?”

“我说**老兄**,” 他问, “你一个月挣**几个子儿**?”

“Wǒ shuō lǎoxiōng,” tā wèn, “nǐ yí gè yuè zhèng jǐ gè zǐr?”

The two Chinese versions convey the same meaning but differ in stylistic feature. In the second version, which is very casual and familiar in tone, 老兄 is used for *friend* and 几个子儿 is used for *how much*.

1.5 Exercises

1.5.1

Translate the following sentences into Chinese using the right Chinese word for *light* in each sentence.

1. The living room walls are *light* yellow.
2. The kitchen is the *lightest* room in the house.
3. We *lit* the candle (蜡烛) and the candle *lit* the room.
4. Father suggested a *light* meal before swimming.
5. She finds teaching at primary school is no *light* work.
6. I heard *light* taps at the window when I was almost asleep.
7. The weather broadcast says there will be a *light* rain at night.

1.5.2

Translate the following sentences into Chinese using the right Chinese word for *pass* in each sentence.

1. In China, the *pass* mark is usually 60.
2. He has already *passed* his father in height.
3. He has no idea of how to *pass* his time when retired.
4. They have *passed through* many hardships together.
5. Is there any bus that goes from here that *passes* some of the sights (景点)?
6. This musical instrument (乐器) has been *passed down* from my great-grandfather.
7. No one was allowed to enter the government (政府) building without showing a *pass*.

1.5.3

Translate the following sentences into Chinese, paying particular attention to the italicized words.

1. I wanted to be a *man*, and a *man* I am.

2. He showed an *intense* interest in Chinese calligraphy (书法).
3. The train was late, so we *killed* time by playing cards (牌, 扑克).
4. This new weekly (周刊) is *informative, entertaining* and *readable*.
5. He *storied* about his academic career (学历) and his professional career.
6. They all describe him as a hard-working, *ambitious* young man with a splendid future.

1.5.4

Translate the following passage into Chinese.

1 Let's face it—English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France... Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

2 We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

3 If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian

① eggplant	qiézi 茄子
② hamburger	hànbǎobāo 汉堡包
③ pine	sōngshù 松树
④ pineapple	bōluó 菠萝
⑤ English muffin	sōngbǐng 松饼
⑥ French fries	zhá shǔtiáo 炸薯条
⑦ sweetmeat	guǒfǔ mìjiàn 果脯, 蜜饯
⑧ sweetbread	niú/yáng zásuì 牛/羊杂碎
⑨ paradox	máodùn 矛盾
⑩ quicksand	liúshā 流沙
⑪ boxing ring	quánjīchǎng 拳击场
⑫ guinea pig	tiānzhǔshǔ 天竺鼠
⑬ preacher	chuánjiàoshì 传教士
⑭ vegetarian	sùshízhě 素食者
⑮ humanitarian	réndào- 人道 zhǔyìzhě 主义者

eat? Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?

4 How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out, and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

5 English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

(254 words)

From *English Is a Crazy Language*,

by Richard Lederer

www.verbivore.com

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⑩ asylum

fēngrényuàn
疯人院

⑪ recite

lǎngsòng
朗诵

⑫ recital

lǎngsòngguì
朗诵会

⑬ truck

kǎchē
卡车

⑭ cargo

huòwù
货物

⑮ lunacy

huāngmiù
荒谬

⑯ invent

fā míng
发明

⑰ reflect

fǎnyìng
反映

⑱ creativity

chuàngzào lì
创造力,
chuàngzào xìng
创造性