Zhang, Tao; Wen, Xu; Humblé, Philippe

AN RCG-BASED ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION OF POLYSEMOUS 'YAO' IN *A DREAM OF RED MANSIONS*

Cadernos de Tradução, vol. 42, no. 1, e84498, 2022
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-7968.2022.e84498

Available in: https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=731976384016

http://doi.org/10.5007/2175-7968.2022.e84498

AN RCG-BASED ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION OF POLYSEMOUS 'YAO' IN *A DREAM OF RED MANSIONS*

Tao Zhang[1, 3]
[1]Southwest University, Chongqing, China & Southwest Petroleum University, Chengdu, Sichuan, China
[3]Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Bruxelas, Belgica

Xu Wen[2]
[2]Southwest University, Chongqing, China

Philippe Humblé[3]
[3]Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Bruxelas, Bélgica

Abstract: This research investigates the applicability of a relatively new concept from cognitive linguistics, Radical Construction Grammar (RCG) (Croft), as an analytical model in the study of the translation process. Based on the fundamental concepts of RCG, this article puts forward a construction-oriented view of translation and the following six construction-based translation principles: the semantic function priority principle, the conceptual space-based principle, the gestalt principle, the interactivity principle, the taxonomic principle, and the prototype priority principle. These RCG-based translation conceptions and principles will be detailed and verified in translation examples with the Chinese polysemic word 'yao' in different constructions, selected from the translation of the Chinese classic A Dream of Red Mansions (Cao & Gao). The results of this study show that RCG can provide an innovative linguistic model for translation studies, particularly for the issue of polysemy.
Keywords: Translation; Radical Construction Grammar; Polysemy; *Yao*

UMA ANÁLISE BASEADA EM RCG DA TRADUÇÃO DO POLISSÊMICO 'YAO' EM *O SONHO DA CÂMARA VERMELHA*

Resumo: Esta pesquisa investiga a aplicabilidade de um conceito relativamente novo da linguística cognitiva, Gramática de Construção Radical (Radical Construction Grammar "RCG") (Croft), como um modelo analítico no estudo do processo de tradução. Baseado nos conceitos fundamentais da RCG, este artigo apresenta uma visão construtiva da tradução e os seguintes seis princípios de tradução baseados na construção: o princípio de prioridade da função semântica, o princípio de prioridade do espaço conceitual, o princípio da Gestalt, o princípio da interatividade, o princípio taxonômico e o princípio de prioridade do protótipo. Estas concepções e princípios de tradução baseados em RCG serão detalhados e verificados com exemplos de tradução com a palavra polissêmica chinesa "yao" em diferentes construções, selecionadas a partir da tradução do clássico chinês *A Dream of Red Mansions* (Cao & Gao) [*O Sonho da Câmara Vermelha*]. Os resultados deste estudo mostram que a RCG pode fornecer um modelo linguístico inovador para estudos da tradução, particularmente para a questão da polissemia.
Palavras-Chave: Tradução; Gramática de Construção Radical; Polissemia; *Yao*

Introduction

In translation studies, we can distinguish four crucial phases: the lexical-syntactical perspective, discourse analysis, pragmatics and cultural studies, each of which manifests a shift of focus. The cognitive turn in linguistics has ushered in the promising field of cognitive-based translation studies, a new paradigm in translation scholarship. In contrast to the traditional focus on translation, cognitive studies attaches great importance to the translation process, including the "mental representation/conceptualisarrion" (Szymańska) of the translator and the theoretical framework that guides the entire translation practice. This approach shuns away from linguistic levels (*e.g.* phonology, morphology, lexis,

grammar or even discourse) and looks at the operations of human cognition. Meanwhile, it attempts to forge an organic integration of unit, class, element of structure, linguistic and extra-linguistic determinants, as well as a pragmatically and culturally combined continuum (such as discourse, register, text type). It is beyond the scope of this article to explain all the potential benefits of cognitive linguistics for translation studies. Instead, this study is an attempt to investigate the applicability of a relatively new concept of cognitive linguistics, radical construction grammar (RCG) (Croft), as an analytical model in the translation process and its effects on the principles and product of translation by illustrating and comparing different translations of the Chinese verb *yao* in various constructions selected from *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Two reasons can be advanced for using this novel as a research corpus. First, it has a rich collection of *yao* constructions. Second, there is a high frequency of schematic constructions of "yao", which indicate the speaker's social status in the book.

Apparently, linguists have recognised the potential of CxG in explaining translation phenomena, such as Szymańska (2011), Rojo & Valenzuela (2013), Yang and Wang (2014) and Wei (2020). Of these, Szymańska should be mentioned in particular for his book *A Construction Grammar-Based Approach to Translation*, which explicitly provides constructive insights for translation. It is also worth mentioning that within the framework of CxG, researchers look for different explanations and solutions. However, they share the same assumption that language is an interwoven fabric of constructions. The traditional grammatical units, including phonemes, morphemes, lexis, and syntax, are language-specific. They are nothing more than a monotonous set of separate "constructs" (Szymańska). However, constructions are interconnected, and language is symbolic. They form an abstract set of condensed "universal mental concepts" that are part of various languages (Croft). The universal parameter of constructions evaluates the competence of a language user.

Simply put, constructions are the basic units of language. For CxG, construction is a fixed pairing between form and meaning. It is conceptualised in a higher hierarchy of abstraction of specific linguistic items. Furthermore, it merges into an organic combination of semantic or pragmatic properties. All these properties make it possible for a construction-based outlook to tackle translation problems.

3. RCG and its fundamental concepts

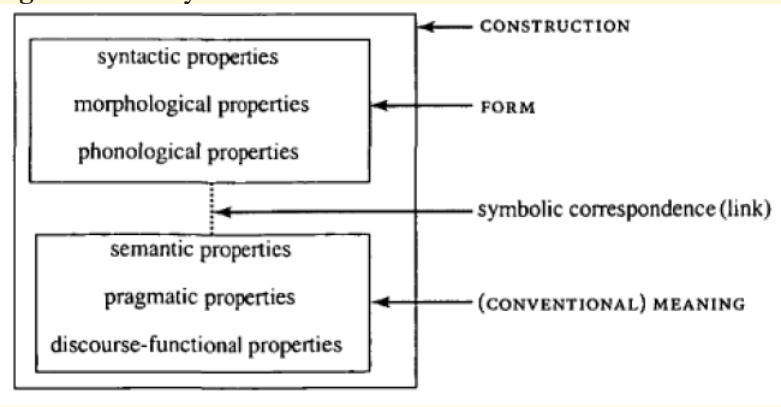
Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer (Munday, 100-101) formulated three steps in the translation process: (1) Reading and understanding; (2) Deverbalisation; (3) Re-expression. Using RCG as a descriptive model, this paper focuses on the second step of deverbalisation. It is "an essential intermediate stage" to explain the translator's cognitive processing by which a message is conveyed through constructing a "universal mental concept" rather than through disconnected units or structures. In the RCG theoretical framework, a text is an aggregate of form-meaning paired constructions which are not mutually exclusive in terms of a hierarchy of abstraction. Constructions are a point of departure for the translation as a whole. In terms of RCG, grammatical description is based exclusively on constructions. Croft (18) states that

> Grammatical constructions in construction grammar, like the lexicon in other syntactic theories, consist of pairings of form and meaning that are at least partially arbitrary. Even the most general syntactic constructions have corresponding general rules of semantic interpretation. Thus, constructions are fundamentally SYMBOLIC units.

As shown in Figure 1.1, Croft (2001) made a detailed analysis of the "FORM (F)" and "MEANING (M)" of a construction. The former refers to syntactic, morphological and phonological properties, while the latter stands for semantic, pragmatic and

discourse-functional properties. Discourse-functional properties include information structure (*e.g.* repetition of topics) and connective function.

Figure 1: The symbolic structure of a construction



Source: (Croft, 18)

Croft (2001) indicates that

> sections on parts of speech should be replaced by sections on constructions expressing propositional acts (referring expressions, predication constructions, modifying/ attributive constructions), sections on grammatical relations such as Direct Object should be replaced by sections on argument structure constructions (including voice constructions), sections on different types of modifiers (such as Adjectives, Numerals, etc.) should be replaced by sections on attributive constructions [...].

Furthermore, grammatical generalisation can also be obtained through "taxonomic relations" and "inheritance relations". It is worth noting that verbal predicate constructions with greater generality

comprise both transitive and intransitive verb constructions. In this case, a typical example is the comparison between "tickle" and "die". Since "tickle" is a transitive verb, it can be understood a construct or instances of the construction [Sbj tickle Obj] and further abstracted from a higher-stratified construction of [Sbj Trverb Obj]. The intransitive verb "die" derives from a semi-stratified construction of [Sbj Die] and a fully general construction of [Sbj IntrVerb]. In representing a translational picture, the primary goal of RCG is to break down ST into constructions, evaluate the way they are glued together in SL, and re-express them in TT by reassembling the constructions according to the TL rules. While the process of deverbalising must be carried out from top to bottom, the strategy during the re-expression phase is from bottom to top, using the constructions on the bottom line as a starting point. This paper agrees that the analytical step should start with the basic constructions, condensing schematic constructions at the top level. Then the constructional equivalence between SL and TL is achieved from top to bottom, namely from meso-constructions (Cxn) to micro-constructions (Cxn).

A construction-oriented view of translation

Yang e Wang (2014) proposed a construction-oriented view of translation, mentioning three advantages: flexibility in the linguistic hierarchy, unification of form and meaning, clarification of language differences. First, constructions avoid the ongoing disputes about what the units of language should be. Since they are mentally organised units in human cognition, they differ in hierarchical order from morphemes, phonemes, vocabulary, sentences, and discourse to cultural elements. Language use is processed by decoding these conceptualised constructions. Second, CxG sees constructions as "an inseparable pairing between form and meaning". It tries to combine form and meaning in a multidimensional manner. Third, languages differ: some share the

same linguistic system, others do not. This must also be taken into account when explaining the phenomenon of translation. The universality of constructions provides an exhaustive explanation of language differences.

Meanwhile, not all constructions are admissible as translation units (Yang and Wang, 93). For example, Fillmore *et al*. (1988) divided constructions into two categories: entity constructions and schematic constructions. The fixed and unchanging components are called "entity constructions": morphemes, lexis, phrases and idioms. The latter are partially or lexically filled or completely abstract. In this respect, it is the schematic constructions that should be treated as units of translation.

Translating principles based on RCG

Szymańska (2011) described the translation process using the metaphor of mosaics. When a translation is created in constructional equivalence with the ST, "the translator represents an original mosaic-the ST-using pieces of shapes and shades that are at his/her disposal-constructions specific to the TL, which integrate into constructs differing in some functional properties from those of the SL" (156). The two pieces may not match in colour or shape. However, the interaction between them can produce an effect identical to that of the original. The mosaic view not only offers a solution to common translation problems, but can also account for some exceptional cases, such as "omissions or manipulations in interpretation, style, pragmatic functions". The pieces are expected to fit together perfectly. Nevertheless, there are fewer "prototypical cases" where the translator has to "borrow" a piece of the old mosaic (SL) or find a counterpart piece in the TL to generate a relatively matching image that the TL receiver can understand. In

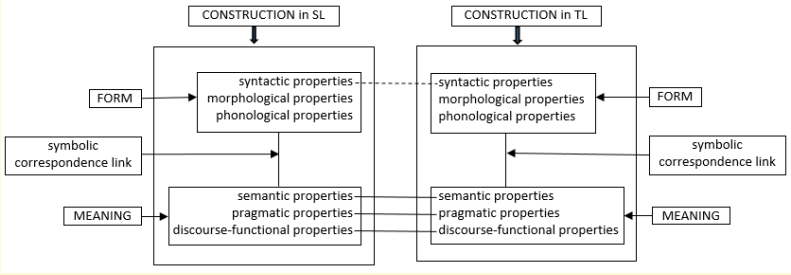
this paper, we will highlight the reproduction of new mosaics using the following principles:

Semantic function priority principle

Extreme semantic relativists claim that the syntactic structure determines the semantic structure and that a universal mental concept does not exist, whereas RCG assumes that syntactic relations do not exist. Croft (2001) argues that human languages differ in lexical categories and syntactic choices. Therefore, it is arbitrary to apply SL syntactic relations to the TL in the translation process. He believes that grammatical categories are based on semantic and pragmatic functions, which operate in the components of constructions. This semantic-function priority of RCG is one of its most relevant and positive aspects, especially in terms of translation. "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 & Taber, 1969:12). Zhang *et al.* (1980) also points out that translation is a linguistic activity in which specific ideas expressed in one language are wholly and accurately re-expressed in another language. Therefore, we suggest that the principle of semantic-functional priority should be observed in the translation process. In simple terms, the translator should give priority to achieving the equivalence of the "meaning" of a construction (subdivided into semantic equivalence, pragmatic equivalence and discourse-functional equivalence), which is followed by the equivalence of the "form" (usually this refers to the syntactic equivalence of a construction in the two languages, while morphological equivalence and phonological equivalence are rare). Figure 2 shows this. On the left, there is the symbol of an SL construction; on the right, that of the TL. Generally, during the translation process, the equivalence of the "meaning" of two constructions in SL and

TL is necessary and crucial (represented by the solid lines in Figure 2), while the equivalence of their "form" is secondary or even impossible (represented by dashed lines).

Figure 2: Equivalence of constructions in translation



Source: (Based on Croft 2001: 18)

Translation can be literal or free. In the process of construction-based translation, literal translation means to be faithful to the constructional meaning of the source text language and be consistent in the construction form (with the same syntactic features or part of speech category). Free translation refers to selecting a form of different construction for translation in the TL in cases where the forms and meanings of the constructions in the two languages are not exactly equivalent, prioritising ensuring that the meanings of the constructions are the same.

Conceptual space-based principle

Conceptual space refers to a structured representation of functional structures and their relationships to each other (Croft). As we mentioned above, different languages have different lexical categories and grammatical systems, which reveals one of the biggest obstacles in cross-linguistic research. Croft (170) argues that a specific language's categories and syntactic structures are

determined by the constructions from which they originate. Thus, constructions should be the primitive unit and fundamental to all languages. How language-specific constructions may be, they are comparable across languages. Constructions in a flexible hierarchy overlap and are connected in conceptual space where different areas represent different semantic, pragmatic and discourse functions, thus forming a semantic mapping model. Each "point" in conceptual space is an explanatory description of a semantic meaning expressed by a construction, namely the semantic framework activated by a construction. The conceptual mental space is thus a basic semantic framework established on the basis of several common features and offering an opportunity for cross-linguistic research.

Although the linguistic coding forms and rules are not identical between the source and target languages, the conceptual mental spaces show substantial similarity. Thus, the translator must discover the concrete connection between the specific coding forms in the SL the semantic functions they represent and then specify the relevant conceptual space on the basis of which the connection is detected between the specific coding forms and the semantic functions in the TL, before a cross-language transfer is achieved. Thus, the conceptual space becomes the basis for successful conversion between the source and target languages.

Gestalt principle

Previous syntactic theories support the reductionist view that the smallest unit of syntax is the word class, such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, whereas larger or more complex syntactic structures are defined by their syntactic relationship with the word class, especially verbs. In this light, many translators operate assuming that word classes are the units of translation, especially verbs. This ignores the semantic relationships between sentences. Based on Gestalt psychology, the theorists of constructional grammar have abandoned this decomposition theory and put forward an important

point that the total meaning of a construction is not a simple collection of its constructive components, but greater than their sum. Goldberg (1995:1) argued that an entirely lexically based or bottom-up approach fails to explain the full range of a language. Specific semantic structures with their associated formal expression must be recognised as constructions independent of the lexical items which instantiate them. In other words, constructions themselves carry meaning independently of the words in the sentence. In terms of RCG, constructions are the basic units of language. Some of them are themselves inseparable units of semantic and syntactic representations. RCG advocates the abolition of "syntactic relations". Instead, it emphasises the part-whole relationship between constructions and components, in which the holistic meaning is greater than the sum of the components. Jakobson (233) also pointed out that "translation is the replacement of information in one language with intact information in another language, not with isolated code-units".

Interactivity principle

RCG maintains that there is an interactive influence between constructions and their components. In other words, the construction plays a coercive role in their relationship with the components to conform to the overall meaning of the construction. The components, on the other hand, also influence the specific meaning and expression of the construction. In the translation process, the translator should attach importance to the reciprocity of the construction and its components. It should also be pointed out that the coercive effect of the construction always takes precedence. While the higher constructions impose "coercion" on their subordinate members, the latter also have a specific influence on the former. During deverbalisation, the first step is to decompose ST into constructions in the order of micro-, meso-, macro-constructions and constructs. In the

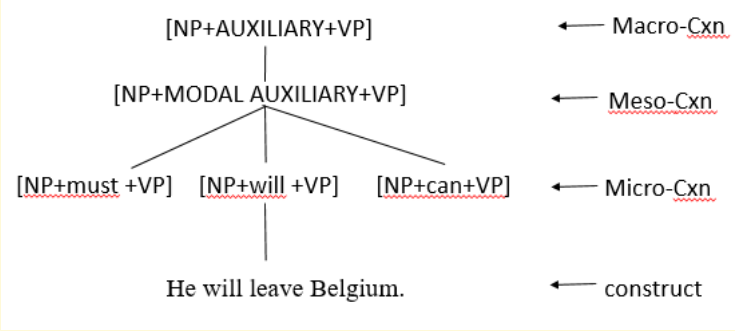
meantime, the translator manages to build a corresponding network of constructions in the TL. The constructions on the three dimensions cannot be separated from each other, but are highly interactive. When the micro-Cxn of a given language is equivalent to that of the TL, priority is given to constructive equivalence to ensure a correspondence between form and meaning. If the micro-Cxn in two languages bear little resemblance, the semantic principle holds sway. Higher-level constructions, namely meso-constructions, take precedence over micro-constructions in conveying the ST constructions.

Taxonomic Principle

Croft's model highlights the taxonomic nature of constructional knowledge, the hierarchical inheritance relationship between more general and more specific constructions, and the importance of language use in determining aspects of language structure (Traugott & Trousdale 7). RCG states that language is a taxonomic network of constructions, as shown in Figure 3. This hierarchically structured principle also applies to the process of translation. The constructions result from an top-bottom analysis of constructs and semantic storage in a specific context, which boils down to the necessary application of an up-bottom strategy in the formation and generalisation of syntactic knowledge. The top-bottom strategy enables the translator to deduce schematic constructions in the ST and further grasp the "conceptual space" in SL (Croft 2001, 2003). According to RCG (Croft: 2001, 2003), grammatical categories are language-specific, and so are constructions. In this respect, the difference in grammatical structures and constructions between the SL and

the TL hampers the reciprocal transformations in the translation process. Therefore, a conceptual mental space is needed to act as an interface between the SL and the TL.

Figure 3: A partial constructional taxonomy



Source: (Based on Trousdale 2008: 44)

Prototype Priority Principle

The prototypicality of constructions in the conceptual mental space varies from language to language. Some are core constructions, while others are peripheral. However, they all together form a complex network in conceptual mental space. This also applies to the process of translation. The translator should place a great value on the prototypical members. Simply put, the "core" constructions of the TL would be the first choice according to the principle of typicality from "core" to "periphery".

Case study analysis

This section provides an exhaustive case analysis of various *yao* constructions in *A Dream of Red Mansions* translated by Yang

Xianyi and Gladys Yang to conclude that an RCG-based theoretical framework is applicable in guiding the translation process.

(1) *Yao* in Verb Object Construction "VP+NP"

Example 1: 我也不要这劳什古子了！（第三回）
wǒ yě bù yào zhè láo shén gǔ zi le !
I don't want this nuisance either! (Chapter 3)

In this case, Yang adopted a free translation to achieve constructional equivalence in form and meaning between the SL and the TL. Since both English and Chinese belong to the SVO system, they share the same construction of Subject + Transitive Verb + Object, whose semantic meaning is that the subject imposes an action or behaviour on the object. The subject is usually animate, while a typical transitive verb precedes the noun object as a predicate. *Yao* has multiple meanings, which only realise themselves in interaction with constructions. On the one hand, under the constraint of the construction of "subject + yao + object", *yao* acquires the semantic meaning of 'desire', 'will'. Meanwhile, any other meanings of *yao* are not possible in this specific construction; on the other hand, *yao* exerts a particular effect on "subject + yao + object", whose constructional meaning is limited to "the subject wants to get or have the object", thus creating a cross-language conceptual mental space. In English, "want" is one of the prototypes of the transitive verb that expresses the meaning of "desire, volition". Thus "subject+want+object" forms the meso construction, which is equivalent in form and meaning to the Chinese construction "subject+yao+object". In other words, since the verb-object constructions in the SL and the TL match in form and meaning at all levels of the construction, a direct transfer of verb-object constructions between the two languages can be achieved.

(2) *Yao* in the Double Object Construction 'NP1+VP+NP2+NP3'

Example 2:
贾琏笑道：”西廊下五嫂子的儿子芸儿来求了我两三遭，［要］个事情管管。我依了，叫他等着。（第二十三回）
Jiǎ Liǎn xiào dào "xī láng xià wǔ sǎo zi de ér zi Yún Er lái qiú le wǒ liǎng sān zāo, yào gè shì qing guǎn guǎn. wǒ yī le, jiào tā děng zhe.
Jia Lian said with a smile, "That boy from my cousin's window who lives in West Lane, Jia Yun, has asked me two or three times if I could help him get a job, and I promised to do something for him if he would wait." (Chapter 23)

This example illustrates the fundamental principles mentioned earlier, particularly the semantic function priority principle and the Gestalt principle. Goldberg (1995: 32) expresses the conceptual meaning of the double-object construction as "the agent argument acts to cause the transfer of an object to a recipient." In English, the macro-construction of the double-object concept is "Subject + Ditransitive verb + O1 + O2". The double-object construction in Chinese is divided into "agentive acquisition" and "recipient acquisition" according to the specific meaning of the transitive verb contained in the construction (Lu Jianming 2002). Example 2 is a typical case of an "agentive acquisition" construction with a double object. *Yao*, suppressed by the double-object construction of "subject + ask object 1 for object 2", must take on the meaning of "ask for". However, there is no formal correspondence between the source text and the target text at the level of micro-construction and meso-construction: the source text is a Chinese "agentive acquisition" construction where the subject "Jia Yun" asks the indirect object "Jian Lian" for the direct object "a job", namely "Jia Yun asks Jia Lian for a job "; yet, in compliance with the semantic-function priority principle and the Gestalt principle, Yang does not seek a formal equivalence in the constructions, but gives precedence to the semantic meaning in the English expression. He chooses a construction in the TL that is semantically equivalent to its Chinese counterpart, namely the construction of "subject gets object1 object2" in which the acting subject "Jia Yun" becomes the

receiving object while the recipient object "Jia Lian" turns into the agentive subject. The adjustments have been made because they are coerced by the gestalt meaning of the context "…has asked me two or three times…". Hence, the translator gets rid of the shackles of word order and sentence structure and reorganises the semantic and logical relationships in order to comply with the semantic-function Priority Principle. This is also a reflection of the observation of the Gestalt principle. Whether it is "Jia Lian gets Jia Yun a job" or "Jia Yun asks Jia Lian for a job", the two constructions express the same conceptual meaning in terms of logical relations and semantic roles.

(3) *Yao* in the Causative Construction 'NP1+VP1+NP2+VP2

Example 3:

又寄一封密书与封肃，转托问甄家娘子要那娇杏作二房。(第二回)

yòu jì yī fēng mì shū yù fēng sù, zhuǎn tuō wèn zhēn jiā niáng zǐ yào nà jiāo xìng zuò èr fáng

There was also a confidential letter for Feng Su asking him to persuade Mrs. Zhen to let the prefect have Jiaoxing as his secondary wife. (Chapter 2)

Example 3 illustrates how *yao* in the Chinese causative construction "NP1+VP1+NP2+VP2" is rendered in the TL. As the subject of VP1, NP1 can sometimes be omitted from the sentence. VP1, a transitive verb with a causative meaning, is quite rare in Chinese. Here suppressed by the causative construction, *yao* accordingly assumes the meaning of causation and forms its semi-open meso-construction of "NP1+yao+NP2+VP2", meaning "NP1 lets NP2 finish the action of VP2". Similarly, a similar causative construction can be found in English, which Goldberg (1995) calls causative-motion construction, with the construction "subject (V+Object+Oblique)". V is a non-static verb in the construction, while Oblique refers to a directional phrase denoting a directional move. Example 3 is a case in point: "second wife" in the translation is the aim of "Jiaoxing" caused by "the prefect". There is a

metaphorical connection, where causative-motion is rendered as "Causative-change ". Moreover, "let" is the prototypical verb of causation, and so the meso-construction in the TL is identified as "S+let+object+VP". In the translation process, the translator equates the causative construction in the source text with the causative motion in the TL at macro, meso and micro levels.

(4) *Yao* in the Modal Auxiliary Construction

Example 4:

宝玉见是一个仙姑，喜的忙来作揖，笑问道："神仙姐姐不知从那里来，如今要往那里去?我也不知这是何处，望乞携带携带。"（第五回）

Bǎo Yù jiàn shì yī gè xiān gū, xǐ de máng lái zuò yī, xiào wèn dào: "shén xiān jiě jie bù zhī cóng nà li lái□rú jīn yào wǎng nà li qù? wǒ yě bù zhī zhè shì hé chù, wàng qǐ xié dài xié dài "

"Sister Fairy," he begged with a smile, "do tell me where you are from and whither you are going. I have lost my way. May I beg you to be my guide?" (Chapter 5)

In the the translation of Example 4, *yao* in the modal auxiliary verb construction is configured as the epistemic modal construction "NP + yao + VP". Under the coercion of the modal construction, *yao* conveys the meaning of the future tense. The grammatical function of *yao* is a future tense marker, expressing a prediction of something that will happen soon. At the meso level, it takes the form of "NP+modal auxiliary verb+VP", subordinate to the macro construction of "NP + auxiliary verb +VP". At the micro-level, "NP+go to+VP" is a typical member of the future tense expression. So Yang has achieved the constructional equivalence between the source text and the translated text at the micro, meso and macro levels in the translation process. The principle of semantic-function priority is correctly observed.

(5) *Yao* in the Conditional Construction

Example 5:

倪二听了大怒，”［要］不是令舅，我便骂不出好话来。真真把人气死我倪二。（第二十四回）
Ní èr tīng le dà nù, “yào bù shì lìng jiù, wǒ biàn mà bù chū hǎo huà lái. zhēn zhēn bǎ rén qì sǐ wǒ ní èr.
Ni Er was hugely incensed: ‘Damn fella! Give the damn fella piece of my mind if he wasn’t a relation’ of yours.’ (Chapter 24)

In Example 5, *yao*, in Chinese conditional constructions, is expressed in the form of “y*ao*+Clause1, (*jiu*)+Clause2” at the micro-level, which is elevated to “Conditional Marker+Clause1, Clause2” at the meso level. Its constructional meaning is “if condition A is satisfied, then B is obtained”. The two events A and B, are related in chronological order and logical causation. At the macro level, the construction is inherited from the connective construction, and at the level of conceptual mental space, it expresses the logical connection between A and B. The relationship between Yao and the connective construction reflects the principle of interactivity between the components of the construction and the construction as a whole.

On the one hand, the polysemy of *yao* is, under coercion, resolved in the hypothetical meaning, and *yao* becomes a conditional marker linking the two clauses before and after it. On the other hand, the hypothetical meaning of *yao* further refines the connective construction into a conditional construction expressing a hypothesis. In English, the prototype of the conditional construction is the “IF-Construction”, and this translation opts for “Imperative Sentence, if+Clause” at the micro-level.

(6) *Yao* in the Comparative Construction

Example 6:
迎、探、惜三人之中，要算探春又出于姊妹之上。（第十七-第十八回）
Yíng, tàn, xī, sān rén zhī zhōng, yào suàn tàn chūn yòu chū yú zǐ mèi zhī shàng。
Of Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun, Tanchun was the cleverest. (Chapters 17-18)

Example 6 is a good illustration of how *yao* in Chinese comparative structures can be translated into English. In the comparative construction of "*yao-suan*+NP+AP-er/-est", *yao* and *suan* are lexicalised into a focus marker without any lexical meaning. It becomes an additional or inserted component of the sentence, placed before a syntactic component in order to highlight it and achieve an emphatic effect. Emphasised by the focus marker, the comparative sentence becomes a comparative construction, embedded with an emphatic meaning. On both the meso and macro level, comparative constructions convey a universal conceptual meaning in all languages: conceptual prominence, i.e. gaining more attention by placing the "focal information" in a primary or marked position.

In English, there are also comparative constructions whose prototypical member is "it be + (emphatic component) + that/ who…". Unfortunately, in this case, the translator has not succeeded in transferring the emphasis of the comparative construction of the source text. The translation of this sentence is supposed to be stronger than a conventional superlative expression. According to the RCG-based principles proposed in this article, this is perhaps not an example of competent translation. It would be better to render the sentence as "Of Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun, it was Tanchun who was the cleverest."

Conclusion

This paper aims to be a theoretical, descriptive and explanatory attempt to integrate RCG with translation studies. As Malmkjær (6) points out, CxG concepts harmonise with translation studies. Szymańska (235ff.) also explains the aim of constructional approach to translation studies as "to explore what kind of linguistic model may answer the needs of translation studies, providing it with an integrative framework capable of addressing a wide range of

issues relevant to the description of the translation process and its outcome". In RCG-based translation studies, the representational nature of the translation process is brought to the fore. The translator is exposed to the fact that formally identical structures in two languages may differ in subtle attributes, including register and frequency of usage. Thus, from a prescriptive and pedagogical perspective, constructional categories can also be used to describe translation errors. Yang ZI (2014) claims that construction-based translation is flexible and objective. Wei Zaijiang (2020) argues for the use of construction grammar as an appropriate theoretical framework for translation studies. This article is only a first attempt to look at translation from a point of view of Croft's radical construction grammar, and there are still many issues that need to be explored in detail. Wen & Xiao (206) point out that cognitive translation studies is gradually taking shape as a subdiscipline of translation studies and cognitive linguistics, and its research results will also make valuable theoretical contributions to translation studies and cognitive linguistics. It can be concluded that RCG can provide an inspiring linguistic model for translation studies, especially for the issue of polysemy in translation.

References

Cao, X.; Gao, E. *Dream of Red Mansions* [M]. Translated by: Yang, Xianyi & Yang, Gladys. Beijing: Foreign languages Press, 2010.

Croft, William. *Radical construction grammar: syntactic theory in typological perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Croft, William. *Typology and universals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Fillmore, Charles J., *et al*. "Regularity and Idiomaticity in Grammatical Constructions: The Case of Let Alone". *Language*, vol. 64, nº 3, September (1988): 501-538.

Goldberg, Adele E. *Constructions: a construction grammar approach to argument structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Goldberg, Adele E. *Constructions at work: the nature of generalization in language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Jakobson R. *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* [M]// Brower R. A. On Translation. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959/2000.

Lu, Jianming. "On the Nature of the Structures like "chī le tā sān gè pín guǒ" again". *Studies of the Chinese Language*. (4), (2002): 317-325.

Malmkjar, Kirsten. "Translation and linguistics". *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 13(1), (2005): 5–20.

Munday, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. 2. ed, London: Routledge, 2008.

Nida, Eugene A.; Taber, Charles R. *The theory and practice of translation*. Lenden: Brill, 2003.

Rojo, Ana & Valenzuela, Javier. "Constructing meaning in translation: The role of constructions in translation problems[A]". *Cognitive Linguistics and Translation-Advances in Some Theoretical Models and Applications*[C], Ana Rojo & Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano (Eds.). Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2013; pp. 1-30.

Szymańska, Izabela. *Mosaics: A Construction-Grammar-Based Approach to Translation*. Warszawa: Semper, 2011.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs; Trousdale, Graeme. *Constructionalization and constructional changes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Wei, Z. "Construction Grammar-based Principles of Translation". *Chinese*

translators Journal, (6), (2020): 119-129.

Wen, X.; Xiao, K. *Cognitive Translatology* [M]. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2019.

Yang, Z.; Wang, X. "Translation Operation Orientation Based on Construction[M]". *Foreign languages and foreign language teaching*, (4), (2014): 91-96.

Zhang, Peiji. Yu yungen, Li Zongjie, and Peng Moyu. *A Course in English-Chinese Translation*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1980.

Recebido em: 10/12/21
Aceito em: 10/03/22
Publicado em junho de 2022

Tao Zhang. E-mail: 465703825@qq.com. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4890-1671. Tao Zhang's and Xu Wen's research was supported by the National Social Science Foundation "Construction of Cognitive Linguistics Theory and Chinese Cognitive Research" (No. 15ZDB099) and a scientific research starting project of SWPU (No. 2018RW023).
Xu Wen. E-mail: xuwen@swu.edu.cn. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2820-6794.
Philippe Humblé. E-mail: philippe.humble@vub.be. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3426-3218. Philippe Humblé would like to thank the Brazilian Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) for the grant that made this research possible (Processo: 302104/2020-8).