


Warming-up Exercises

1. The view from the mountain top was beautiful. Tall trees towered like pillars to the sky while below in the valleys, rivers flow like streams of jade. Flowers, giving off a fragrance like the incense of Gods, bloomed in a myriad colors, while the singing of birds was like the music in heaven.

- 从山顶上望去，风景分外秀丽。高高的树木像擎天柱一般直耸云霄；山谷间的溪水玉带般地流淌。花儿姹紫嫣红、馥郁芬芳，鸟儿的歌唱宛如天籁之音，婉转动人。

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- 2. Knowledge began to increase as soon as the thoughts of one individual could be communicated by means of speech. Then knowledge began to be accumulated according to a systematic plan. The trickle became a stream; the streams now become a torrent.
 - 语言一旦成为人们交流思想的工具，知识就开始增加，随后就是知识的系统化积累。点点滴滴的知识汇成涓涓溪流，涓涓溪流又汇成汪洋大海，取之不尽，用之不竭。

Lecture Thirteen



Translation and Idioms



13.1 About “idioms”

■ 习语是某一语言在使用过程中形成的独特的固定的表达方式。广义上包括成语、谚语、歇后语、典故等。英汉两种语言历史悠久，包含着大量的习语，它们或含蓄、幽默、或严肃、典雅，不仅言简意赅，而且形象生动，妙趣横和，给人一种美的享受。由于地理、历史、宗教信仰、生活习俗等方面的差异，英汉习语承载着不民的民族文化特色和文化信息，它们与文化传统紧密相连，不可分割。习语中的文化因素往往是翻译中的难点。



13.2 Translating idioms

1. Literal Translation: to maintain the original flavor, the linguistic form, the cultural imagery and the associations.

e.g. Be armed to the teeth, bad egg, Lose face, Packed like the sardines, rocket to fame, the chance of a lifetime, Tower of ivory, Sour grapes, new wine in old bottle, Sphinx's riddle, the Trojan Horse, etc..

- Gossips are frogs, they drink and talk.
- There is no pot so ugly that cannot find a lid.

2. Literal translation plus annotation: to avoid possible misunderstanding

e.g. A bull in a china shop

- 大公牛闯进了瓷器店——肆意捣乱
- The best fish swim/are near the bottom.
- 好鱼居水底——有价值的东西不能轻易得到。
○
- The apples on the other side of the wall are the sweetest.
- 隔墙的苹果最甜——这山看着那山高



- To be under a cloud

- 失宠，受嫌疑或遭白眼

- To be worth one's salt

- 称职，有能力

- To wear the trousers/breeches

- 女人当家，掌权

- To throw in the sponge/towel

- 认输，投降



3. Substitution/domestication: to clarify the implied meaning & to avoid stirring up different association.

- Better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.
- 宁为鸡首，不为牛后。
- Kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.
- 杀鸡取卵
- To cry wine and sell vinegar
- 挂羊头，卖狗肉
- All shall be well, Jack will have Jill.
- 有情人终成眷属。


- To rob Peter to pay Paul.

■ 拆东墙补西墙

■ 说曹操，曹操到

- Talk of the devil, and he's sure to come.
- 吴荪甫忍不住独自个哈哈笑了，可不是皇天不负苦心人。
- Wu Sun-fu was unable to repress a sudden burst of laughter. Heaven helps those who help themselves, and no mistake about it.

4. Free Translation

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- His whole life was passed in skating on thin ice, and got knighted for it.
 - 他的一生充满了风险，可因此封了爵。
 - Mary and her mother are like as two peas.
 - 马丽跟她妈妈长得一模一样。



- 毛遂自荐

To volunteer one's service

- 东施效颦

- Crude imitation with ludicrous effect

- 南柯一梦

- A fond dream/ an illusory joy

- 四面楚歌

- To be besieged on all sides

5. Literal plus free translation

To laugh off one's head

- 笑掉了牙
- To wash off one's hands
- 洗手不干
- Every family is said to have at least one skeleton in the cupboard.
- 俗话说，衣柜里面藏骷髅，见不得人的事儿家家有。
- There is no rose without a thorn.
- 玫瑰皆有刺，乐中必有苦。

6. Some points worth your attention

1) Avoid taking the idiom literally

- John likes to pat himself on the back.

约翰喜欢自吹自擂。

- He kissed the hare's foot.

他迟到了。

- It is a good horse that never stumbles.

好马也有失蹄时。

- To have two thumbs

笨手笨脚



2. Be prudent in using substitution (idioms with strong national and local flavors)

- **Beauty lies in lover's eyes.**

情人眼里出美人 / 西施。

- **To pull one's leg**

开玩笑

- **Never offer to teach a fish to swim.**

不要教鱼儿游泳。

3. Choose a translated version according to the context

- **One swallow doesn't make a summer.**

一燕不成夏。 / 一关度过并非万事大吉。

- **Still water runs deep.**

流静水深。 / 沉默者深谋。 / 大智若愚。

- **To be on tenterhooks**

如坐针毡；局促不安；心乱如麻；心烦意乱；七上八下；六神无主；手足无措

- **Reap what one has sown**

自作自受；自食其果；自掘坟墓；飞蛾扑火；咎由自取；玩火自焚；惹火烧身；作茧自缚



Classroom Exercises

- In empty-shell marriages the spouses feel no strong attachments to each other. Outside pressures keep the marriage together. Such outside pressures include business reasons, investment reasons and outward appearances. In addition, a couple may believe that ending the marriage would harm the children or that getting a divorce would be morally wrong.



参考译文：

空壳婚姻的配偶双方之间没有很强的依恋感。婚姻的维系依靠种种外界压力，包括事务原因、资产原因以及面子问题。此外，夫妻双方可能认为终止婚姻会殃及孩子，或者认为离婚就是道德败坏。



Homework

- 1. Textbook reading: Chapter Six, pp. 92-94;
- 2. Exercise Thirteen.