

**Huang, Z. (2000): *On Translation Variation* (in Chinese),  
Beijing, China Translation and Publishing Corporation.**

Xu Jianzhong

Volume 48, Number 4, December 2003

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/008729ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/008729ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (print)

1492-1421 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Jianzhong, X. (2003). Review of [Huang, Z. (2000): *On Translation Variation* (in Chinese), Beijing, China Translation and Publishing Corporation.] *Meta*, 48(4), 589–590. <https://doi.org/10.7202/008729ar>

translation. In the framework of the time-honored debate between style and content in literary translation, Hernández Guerrero discusses Schwob's principle, according to which "On ne saurait croire combine les expressions et les tournures ont d'analogie dans deux langues arrivées au même degré de formation" (p. 196), and surveys the opinions of diverse scholars on the aforementioned debate. For the author, Schwob's archaized translations still retain their value and are still in vogue, as shown by the fact that they continue to be reprinted nowadays.

Although repetitive at times, this is an interesting, easy to read, and well-documented introductory work. A comprehensive bibliography at the end of the book provides further reading for those interested in the subject.

HEBERTO FERNANDEZ

*Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada*

HUANG, Z. (2000): *On Translation Variation* (in Chinese), Beijing, China Translation and Publishing Corporation.

The mainstream of translation, down through history, is translation pure and simple, which is called full or formal translation. But another important part of translation, translation variation, remains unstudied. It is noted that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this main stream is becoming less dominant and giving way to translation variation because of copyright, and other factors.

We know at least something about translation variation, but translation circles, being interested in the "formal" ways of translation, have ignored its importance and regard it as "informal" or heterodox. Actually translation variation is not "new" at all. In translating foreign cultural thought, translation variation was and is used frequently, and will be used more in the future. However, most researchers do not pay close attention to it, and it needs further study.

*On Translation Variation* (hereafter referred to as TV) issues the challenge to develop a new field in translation research from a practical standpoint, i.e., stressing "how". TV's arguments are penetrating. It defines translation variation as an activity aimed at deriving the theme or partial contents of the original version by using the appropriate adaptations such as expansion, deletion, summarization, explanation, supplement, combination and reformulation in the light of the special needs of the readers. If the full translation methods are regarded as the microcosmic ways, the translation variation is a macroscopic translation one. Full translation conveys the contents of information, but is restricted by the form of the information. Translation variation supplies a set of adaptive ways, giving translators free rein to their subjective initiatives. TV argues that it is translation variation that embodies the value of translation because for target readers the greatest value of translation is to absorb foreign cultures. Absorbing is not simply equal to full translation. It is hard to totally absorb the original version (foreign cultures), and sometimes unnecessary. It is only by adaptations that translators can capture the theme of the original and change it into their own. So far, translation variation meets the need for adaptations.

TV is creative. In the light of translation practices in history and at present, it sums up eleven translation varieties. They are selective translation, translation and editing, translated narration, condensed translation, translated summarization, summarized translation commentary, translated commentary, explanatory translation, translation rearrangement, translation and writing, and reference translation. And TV is sure that there will be more translation varieties in the future.

TV is well organized. It is composed of twelve chapters. Chapter One is the introduction to translation variation, and the other eleven chapters (2-12) probe into eleven transla-

tion varieties respectively. Each chapter is composed of four parts: a) analysis of a translation variety, b) basic approaches to the translation variety, c) basic principles to the translation variety, and d) brief summary of the chapter. TV is well organized and introduces new ideas.

To sum up, the book under review is extremely useful and it is a very good try.

XU JIANZHONG  
*Shaanxi University of Science and Technology,  
 Xi'an, Shaanxi, China*

HUANG, Z. (2002): *Translation Variation Theory* (in Chinese), Beijing, China Translation & Publishing Corporation.

Huang Zhonglian's *Translation Variation Theory* (hereafter referred to as TVT) is a continuation of his previous *On Translation Variation* (2000). While *On Translation Variation* deals with the practical operation, i.e., stressing "how", TVT excavates the theoretical basis for translation variation, i.e., stressing "why". TVT is a creative achievement in translation studies. It fills the gap created by the absence of systematic theory in translation variation study. By studying the practice adopted by translators in the world and summarizing the author's own experience, TVT establishes its unique theory of translation variation that revolutionizes translation theory and practice.

Part 1 of TVT "Establishing Translation Variation Theory" establishes a pair of new translation categories, i.e., full translation and translation variation, and definitely puts forward translation variation theory. It proves the necessity and possibility of establishing translation variation theory because translation variation theory is a sum-up of translation practices in the world's history.

Part 2 "Translation Variation Theory" expounds the nature of translation variation, accurately defines translation variation as an activity aimed at deriving the relevant contents of the original version by using the appropriate adaptations such as expansion, deletion, editing, commentary, condensation, combination, and reformation in the light of specified readers' needs under specified conditions. From the seven appropriate adaptations mentioned above, TVT derives eleven translation varieties: selective translation, translation and editing, translated narration, condensed translation, translated summarization, translated commentary, summarized translation commentary, explanatory translation, translation rearrangement, translation and writing, reference translation. TVT discusses the logical relations between the core concept (translation variation) and eighteen basic concepts (seven adaptation and eleven varieties) that constitute the overall theoretical system of translation variation. The system includes the nature and setup of translation variation, its means, its methods, its units, its rules, its mechanism, its process, its scope and its value. In this part the exposition advances step by step, and the proving process is developing gradually according to the rules.

Part 3 "Subject and Object" deals with the other two important elements in translation variation. Here "subject" refers to the reader and the translator, and the "object" the original text. "Adapting in the light of the reader's need, adapting by the translator, and adapting the original" reflects the relations between reader, translator, the original, and translation variation.

To sum up, the work under review is an excellent one and it opens up a new field although some of the parts need further study such as "translation variation readers" in Part 3.

XU JIANZHONG  
*Shaanxi University of Science and Technology,  
 Xi'an, Shaanxi, China*