CBS staff won ESRC/RGC joint research grant for 2012/13

Dr. Dechao Li (principal investigator) and Prof. Huang Chu-ren (co-investigator) won research grants from the highly competitive fifth round exercise of Economic and Social Research Council of the UK (ESRC) and the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong (RGC) Joint Research Scheme for 2012/13 for their project "Comparable and Parallel Corpus Approaches to the Third Code: English and Chinese Perspectives", with a funding amount of HK$327,968.

ESRC is "UK's largest organization for funding research on economic and social issues" and "supports independent, high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and the third sector". (quoted from ESRC website)

The project summary can be found below:

Project Reference: ES/K010107/1
Project Title: Comparable and Parallel Corpus Approaches to the Third Code: English and Chinese Perspectives
HK Principal Investigator: Dr Dechao Li (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)
HK Co-Investigator: Prof. Huang Chu-Ren (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)
Project Duration: 18 months
RGC Fund Awarded: HK$327,968
UK Partner: Dr Richard Xiao, Lancaster University

Translating is a kind of mediated communication. As a result, the effect of the source language on the translation is strong enough to make the translational language perceptibly different from the target native language. The degree of deviation of the translational language can be assessed by studying the distinctive features of the translational language on the basis of contrastive analyses of translated texts and their comparable native texts in the target language (i.e. using the comparable corpus approach), while the extent of source language "shining through" in translations can be identified by comparing the source texts and their translations (i.e. using the parallel corpus approach).

The project is a corpus-based study of the common linguistic and textual features of translations, from the perspectives of English and Chinese, two "genetically" distinct major languages in the world, by taking a composite methodology that combines comparable and parallel corpus approaches to language studies. The research questions of the project include: What linguistic and textual features, if any, do translated English texts and translated Chinese texts have in common? What roles do genres/registers play in the distribution such common features in different usage contexts in English and Chinese? Are there any such features from translated English and translated Chinese, given the typological distinctiveness of the two languages, which can potentially be generalised as "translation universals"? To what extent, and why, are certain features of translated texts transferred from the source language?

The project addresses these questions by investigating a one-million-word balanced comparable corpus of translated English and a one-million-word balanced parallel corpus that covers the same genres and sampling periods as in the English and Chinese comparable corpora. Quantitative and qualitative approaches will be taken in analysing the comparable and parallel corpora at word, phrase, clause, sentence and discourse levels.

1 June 2013