



Directionality Practices and the Issue of Directionality in China

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Directionality or direction of translation is one of the most interesting recent developments in translation studies in the West. The scene, however, is rather unique in China with a long history of the practice of inverse translation unparalleled by any other country across the globe. Focusing on the Chinese context, this article aims to outline directionality practices in China and Chinese thinking on directionality, reviews the current state of research on directionality, and provides a few pointers for further research. Section one surveys major translation projects (i.e. directionality practices) that were carried out or are being carried out and how Chinese translation scholars thought/think about directionality. The historical survey covers nineteen centuries from the 2nd century A.D. through the present time, albeit most of the data are devoted to the periods from the turn of the 20th century. It is found that although inverse translation is an age-old practice in China, it was not until the early 1980s when non-literary inverse translation boomed that the issue of directionality began to be considered and debated, and there has been increased attention to the subject in recent years. Section two reviews the current state of research on directionality and concludes that with only a small number of journal articles devoted to the topic the subject of directionality is hitherto largely under-researched in Chinese translation studies. The article ends with some suggestions for further research into directionality in the Chinese context, drawing on the latest research conducted in the West.