

**A CRITICAL STUDY OF LIN YUTANG AS A
TRANSLATION THEORIST, TRANSLATION
CRITIC AND TRANSLATOR**

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**A Critical Study of Lin Yutang as a Translation
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Abstract

While Lin Yutang (1895–1976) is widely recognized as a prominent figure in translation studies in modern China, his works on translation have so far been under-studied. There has been no systematic and in-depth study of his works on translation. This study is the first attempt to give a comprehensive and critical account of Lin as a translation theorist, translation critic and translator.

This study explores Lin's works on translation from the perspectives of Skopos Theory (ST) and Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). It will first give a comprehensive descriptive account of Lin's theoretical views on translation, his translation criticisms and his translated works. It will then proceed to examine each of these three aspects in the light of ST and DTS, setting out in relief the multifaceted problems involved both in the translating process and in the historical and socio-cultural contexts where Lin carried out his translation works. It will show how specific translation purposes have informed and underpinned Lin's translation criticism and practice, and to what extent the literary systems, ideologies and patronage in China and the United States have influenced his choice of source texts and translation strategies. The approach this study employs is a contrastive linguistic one, supported by a corpus-based method for displaying and analysing various linguistic elements in Lin's translation on the one hand and how Lin employed various translation strategies to achieve specific skopoi at different times of his translation career.

This study concludes by noting that Lin was first and foremost a translator, a mediator between two languages and two cultures, wrestling with the inherent tension between foreignization and domestication, between accurate translation and artistic representation, and between form and function. As a theorist, he succeeds in discarding the futile dichotomy between literal translation and free translation. As a critic, he succeeds in establishing a purpose-driven, constructive critique for translation. And as a translator, he succeeds in expanding the unmapped world between Chinese and English in both the linguistic and cultural dimensions.

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Abbreviations:

C = Chinese

CNKI = China National Knowledge Infrastructure

DTS = Descriptive Translation Studies

E = English

Lin = Lin Yutang

Lin's Dictionary = *Lin Yutang's Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage*

林語堂當代漢英詞典

Six Chapters = *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* 浮生六記

SC = Source Culture

SL = Source Language

ST = Source Text

TC = Target Culture

TL = Target Language

TT = Target Text