A Study of the Culture-Oriented Approach Adopted by Robert Morrison in *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language*

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Abstract

The subject of this thesis is Robert Morrison's *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language*, the first Chinese and English bilingual dictionary published in the world. Unlike the usual bilingual dictionary, which generally contains only translation equivalents and illustrative examples, *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language* gives a lot more. In an attempt to introduce Chinese culture to Westerners, Morrison adopted a culture-oriented approach in his dictionary — he incorporated information about Chinese culture into entries of the dictionary. The information incorporated was selected and translated by Morrison from original Chinese works.

Three factors accounting for Morrison's adoption of a culture-oriented approach in his dictionary are identified — the Protestant mission of Morrison, Morrison's view of cross-cultural communication between China and the West, and the patronage of the East India Company. These factors are found to have in turn governed the types of cultural information Morrison selected for translation and inclusion in his dictionary. In addition, it is found that the factors also had a direct bearing on the translation principle and translation strategies Morrison employed in his dictionary.

Finally, the implications of Morrison's culture-oriented approach for today's bilingual lexicography, with special reference to dictionaries dealing with Chinese and English, and the possibility of incorporating the culture-oriented approach into the production of interactive electronic bilingual dictionaries are explored.
## Contents

Declaration i

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements iii

Contents v

Chapter One: Introduction 1
  1.1 About *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language* 2
  1.2 About Robert Morrison 7
  1.3 Approach and Outline of Subsequent Chapters 12

Chapter Two: Morrison's Adoption of a Culture-Oriented Approach 16 in His Dictionary
  2.1 Main Information Contained in General Bilingual Dictionaries 16
  2.2 Types of Information Provided by Morrison's Dictionary 17
  2.3 Culture-Oriented Approach 21
  2.4 Tradition and Influence 22
  2.5 Conclusion 29

Chapter Three: Factors Accounting for Morrison's Adoption of a Culture-Oriented Approach 31
  3.1 The Protestant Mission of Morrison 31
  3.2 Morrison's View of Cross-Cultural Communication Between China and the West 36
  3.3 The Patronage of the East India Company 44
  3.4 Conclusion 48

Chapter Four: Morrison's Selection of Cultural Information for Translation and Incorporation into His Dictionary 50
4.1 The Protestant Mission of Morrison
4.2 The Patronage of the East India Company
4.3 Morrison’s View of Cross-Cultural Communication Between China and the West
4.4 Conclusion

Chapter Five:

Translation Strategies Adopted by Morrison in His Dictionary
5.1 Morrison’s Translation Principle and the Resultant Translation Strategies
5.1.1 Lexical Level
5.1.1.1 Conceptual Terms
5.1.1.2 Cultural Words
5.1.1.3 Metaphors
5.1.1.4 Other Figurative Expressions
5.1.2 Syntactic Level
5.1.3 Textual Level
5.1.4 Conclusion
5.2 Other Translation Strategies Adopted by Morrison
5.2.1 Addition
5.2.2 Editorial Remarks
5.2.3 Illustration
5.2.4 Conclusion
5.3 Linking up: Factors, Approach, Principle and Strategies

Chapter Six:

Conclusion
6.1 Intercultural Communication Today
6.2 Types of Cultural Information to Be Included in Present-Day Chinese-English or English-Chinese Bilingual Dictionaries
6.3 Translation Strategies
6.4 Concluding Remarks

Appendix I

Appendix II
Appendix III

Works Cited

Curriculum Vitae