



## Translation and Time: Exploring the Temporal Dimension of Cross-cultural Transfer

Presentation Details
<p>Title of Paper: Translatability in the Nineteenth Century: Differences in the Dictionary</p>
<p>Abstract:</p> <p>The aim of this study is to determine if and how the (un)translatability of certain terms is time-related. The focus is on the <i>Dutch-Chinese Dictionary with Transcription of Chinese Characters in Zhangzhou dialect</i> 荷華文語類參 compiled by Gustaaf Schlegel (1840-1903) and published in four volumes in the period 1884-1890. For terms which Schlegel perceived no direct Chinese equivalents, he explains the cultural differences at work in the interpretation of the terms in China and the West, and in some cases he resorts to the Bible for sample sentences. This goes against his preferred method of giving examples from the original source texts at his disposal, such as the <i>Book of Odes</i> 詩經, <i>The Analects</i> 論語, <i>Wonders Old and New</i> 今古奇觀, and <i>Kangxi Dictionary</i> 康熙字典, while criticizing sentences or terms in the Bible translation for which there existed perfectly good equivalents in Chinese, according to Schlegel. I will compare these to Schlegel “untranslatable” entries in earlier and later dictionaries for a better understanding of the differences in the source and target culture in different eras. This study will shed light on the process of interpretation and translation of such terms in the nineteenth century, and on the question of whether it was symptomatic of the era to treat such terms as being “untranslatable”.</p>
<p>Author’s Biography:</p> <p><b>Audrey Heijns</b> is doing research into the translations and works on China by Henri Borel (1869-1933). She is a translator of Chinese prose and poetry, and the editor of the online database VerreTaal—Chinese Literature in Dutch Translation.</p>