A Corpus-Based Study of the Translation Styles in Chinese and Western English Versions of Yi Jing

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Abstract: This paper adopts a corpus-based approach to investigate the translation styles of eighteen translators from home and abroad in the English translation of YIJING on lexical, syntactic and discourse level respectively. Result shows that most versions basically are the same style: These versions, with reasonable vocabulary and normal sentence structures, are highly cohesive at the discourse level. In addition, domestic versions and foreign versions also show different translation styles: the former are easy to read with a high repetition rate of simple vocabulary and complex sentences, while the latter is difficult to read with a low repetition rate of rare vocabulary and concise sentences.

1. Introduction

The corpus-based translation study which has developed after the 1990s, has a great influence on the translation studies. It originated from the corpus-based linguistics, which means the return of translation studies from the field of culture to the field of linguistics. Corpus-based translation study is a new paradigm for the translation studies. Many scholars at home and abroad used it to propose many important subjects, and "Translator's style(Translation style)" is one of those subjects. Since Mona Baker[1] used corpus to carry out research on translator's style, the study in the translator's style has gained a wide-spread attention. Successively, Saldanha[2] used corpus to divide translator's style in two types: target-text type and source-text type. Based on above researches, domestic scholars have made some progress. However, there are only few studies of the English translation of *YIJING*. The present studies of the English translation of *YIJING* focus more on the translation of divinatory phraseology in *YIJING* or the translation of culture-loaded words in it. As a result, there isn't any study which focuses on the translation style of English translation of *YIJING*. Based on this point, in this study, 18 English translations of *YIJING* will be selected as the research object, and corpus will be used as the research method to carry out a comparative study on the translation styles of different versions. After the parameter setting and data analysis, the research results are obtained, aiming at providing a new perspective for the future study of the Translation of the English version of *YIJING*.

2. Research Method

2.1 Corpora Selection

In this study, eighteen English translations of *YIJING* are selected as the corpora for research, and a small parallel corpus is established. The basic information of the translations is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Basic Information Of Eighteen English Translations of Yijing

Translator	Press	Date of publication (year)

Rev. Canon McClatchie	Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company	1876
Mgr C. De Harlez, D.LL.	The Oriental University Institute	1896
Richard Wilhelm & Caly F. Baynes	Princeton University Press	1967
James Legge	The New American Library, Inc	1971
Thomas Cleary	Shambhala Publications, Inc	1986
Henry Wei	New Castle Book	1987
Rudolf Ritsema & Stephen Karcher	Barnes& Noble Books	1995
Zhiye Luo	Qingdao Press	1995
Richard Rutt	Curzon Press LTD	1996
Rongpei Wang & Xiuhua Ren	Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press	1996
Alfred Huang	Inner Traditions Rochester, Vermont	1998
Jack M. Balkin	Schcken Books, New York	2002
Chung Wu	Paragon House	2003
Gregory C. Richter	Truman State University	2004
Rudolf Ritsema & Shantena Augusto Sabbadini	Sterling Publishing Corporate	2007
Huisheng Fu	Hunan People's Publishing House	2008
Margaret J. Pearson	Tuttle Publishing	2011
Yi Wu	Great Learning Publishing Company.	2012

These translations have 3 features: all the source text is the original Chinese ancient version; Translators come from home and abroad, and most of them are well-known and representative such as the distinguished Chinese ancient text translators Rongpei Wang and Huisheng Fu at home; Legge from abroad and so on; These translations were the products of different age, hence they are diachronic. In short, in the process of establishing the corpus, the representative corpora are used.

2.2 Research Tool

2.2.1 Treetagger

Treetagger was developed by Helmut Schmid. Its main function is to tag the part of speech on English texts, which includes nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.

2.2.2 Wordsmith 6.0

Wordsmith 6.0 was developed by Mike Scott, an English linguist. Its main function is to classify and count the text data. The specific functions contain Wordlist, Concord, Viewer&Aligner, etc.

2.2.3 Stanford Lexicalized Parser V3.9.2

Compared with Treetagger, Stanford Lexicalized Parser v3.9.2 is more comprehensive with its main function to tag the syntax and analyse the sentence structure in the text.

3. Research Result and Statistics Analysis

3.1 Statistical Results and Data Analysis At the Lexical Level

The statistical results at the lexical level are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Statistical Results Of Data (Lexical Level)

Translator	Type	Token	TTR (%)	STTR(%)	Mean word length	1-5 letter words (%)	LD (%)
McClatchie	7912	1754	22.17	40.04	4.96	63.42	27.90
Harlez	9033	2115	23.41	44.07	4.44	71.81	24.65
Wilhelm	7587	1558	20.54	37.37	4.70	68.71	26.38

Legge	13280	1931	14.54	33.58	4.46	74.29	22.61
Cleary	6626	1404	21.19	36.80	4.72	68.68	25.95
Henry Wei	9314	1937	20.80	39.02	4.61	71.55	25.30
Ritsema & Karcher	5076	1067	21.02	37.04	6.37	43.32	34.25
Zhiye Luo	12487	2009	16.09	36.81	4.16	77.86	23.07
Rutt	5599	1429	25.52	41.26	5.12	60.74	28.87
Rongpei Wang & Xiuhua Ren	9727	1583	16.27	32.12	4.39	73.89	24.15
Alfred Huang	6263	1437	22.94	38.07	5.21	58.79	30.16
Balkin	7334	1597	21.78	37.77	4.74	67.74	26.64
Chung Wu	8813	1768	20.06	36.89	4.53	72.92	24.20
Richter	7428	1339	18.03	34.16	4.52	72.05	25.76
Ritsema & Sabbadini	5372	1109	20.64	35.82	6.12	46.39	32.03
Huisheng Fu	12344	1960	15.88	34.23	4.36	70.09	24.66
Pearson	7044	1658	23.54	41.11	4.63	69.41	26.90
Yi Wu	7333	1277	17.41	33.73	4.63	69.38	27.01

Parameter setting contains five indicators. (a)Type. Type refers to the total word numbers of the translations. (b)Token. Token refers to the total type numbers of the same vocabulary of the translations. (c)TTR and STTR. TTR refers to the ratio of type to token. In common situation, the higher the TTR, the fewer words are repeated, which could reflect the complexity of the vocabulary of the translation. In addition, due to the influence of text length, STTR is also needed for reference comparison. (d)Mean word length and 1-5 letters word proportion. The complexity of the vocabulary is relative with the word's length as well as the letters the word covers. Generally, if the word covers more letters and is longer, it is more complex. (e)LD. (Lexical density) LD refers to the proportion of content words in a text. Yuehong Huo[3] pointed out that the high lexical density indicates that the proportion of content words is significant, the translation is concise, the vocabulary is less used, and the meaning is clear.

According to the data in Table 2 and referring to the above five indicators, the study found that most of the translations have little difference in terms of vocabulary and have the following three characteristics:

The ranking of all data in the Wilhelm translation is near the middle range, ranking the 9th in the number of types, the 11th in the number of tokens, the 11th in the TTR, the 8th in the mean word length, the 11th in the proportion of 1-5 letter words, and the 9th in the LD. This shows that the Wilhelm translation is representative and can be a reference standard for the translation of *YIJING*.

Rudolf Ritsema's translation style is obviously unique. The two translations of him achieve a high similarity with both the number of types and tokens rank the 17th and 18th, and the number of mean word length and LD rank the 1st and 2nd. Based on this finding, it can be seen that the Ritsema translations have a complex vocabulary and use more difficult words than other translations.

Compared with foreign versions, there is a universality in the selection of words in Chinese versions. In terms of the TTR, Wang's translation, Luo's translation, and Fu's translation have lower ranking with 15th, 16th, and 17th respectively. The mean word length ranks 18th, 16th, and 17th; the LD ranks 16th, 17th, 13rd respectively. Thus, it can be seen that the domestic translation style are generally characterized by the use of more repeated and easy words and clearer structure.

3.2 Statistical Results and Data Analysis At the Sentence Level

The specific statistical results at the sentence level are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Statistical Results Of Data (Sentence Level)

Translator	Total number of sentences	Mean sentence length	Total number of clauses	Clause proportion
McClatchie	471	16.79	237	50.31
Harlez	670	13.48	368	54.92
Wilhelm	1191	6.37	162	13.60
Legge	993	13.37	484	48.74

Cleary	736	9.00	157	21.33
Henry Wei	1121	8.30	168	14.98
Ritsema & Karcher	1246	4.07	0	0
Zhiye Luo	689	18.12	483	70.10
Rutt	1237	4.53	61	4.93
Rongpei Wang & Xiuhua Ren	823	11.81	303	36.81
Alfred Huang	1294	4.84	27	2.08
Balkin	1232	5.95	151	12.25
Chung Wu	1029	8.56	205	19.92
Richter	1246	5.96	121	9.71
Ritsema & Sabbadini	1358	3.96	0	0
Huisheng Fu	1083	11.39	291	26.86
Pearson	1094	6.43	152	13.89
Yi Wu	1054	6.95	107	10.15

At the sentence level, this study believes that the complexity of a sentence is restricted by many factors, among which the sentence length and the syntactic complexity can reflect the sentence complexity in a more obvious way.

The second aspect should be focused on the total number of clauses and clause proportion. It is not difficult to find most of the difficult and long sentences have a typical feature of the use of clause, which can make the structure more complex. From the data in Table 3, it can be seen that in terms of syntactic structure, the translations have the following two characteristics:

There are obvious differences in the selection of clauses among different translators. The clause proportion in Luo's translation, which ranks the 1st, is 70,10%, while that in Ritsema's two translations is 0%. After comparison, it can be found that the sentence in Luo's translation is more complex and difficult to read, while the sentence in the two translations of Ritsema is simpler and less difficult.

Compared with foreign translators, Chinese translators are more inclined to the use of clauses. According to the data ranking: the proportion of clauses in Luo's, Wang's and Fu's translations ranks the 1st, 5th, and 6th respectively, while that in foreign translations such as Alfred Huang, Rutt and Richter ranks the 16th, 15th, and 14th respectively. To some extent, this indicates that the sentences in the domestic translations are more complex and difficult to read.

3.3 Statistical Results and Data Analysis At the Discourse Level

In the analysis of discourse level, Hongyun Zhou[4] believes that the mechanism of discourse planning is a very important issue, and cohesion is a must to achieve cohesion and coherence. Therefore, from the perspective of cohesion and coherence, this study examines the difference at the discourse level of translations by analyzing the number and proportion of conjunctions. Detailed statistical results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Statistical Results Of Data (Discourse Level)

Translator	Coordinating conjunction	The proportion of CC	Subordinating conjunction	The proportion of SC	The proportion of conjunction
McClatchie	994	6.05	344	2.09	8.14
Harlez	1031	5.46	370	1.96	7.42
Wilhelm	891	5.4	170	1.03	6.43
Legge	1878	6.79	562	2.03	8.82
Cleary	697	4.91	150	1.06	5.97
Henry Wei	1013	5.13	332	1.68	6.81
Ritsema & Karcher	220	1.93	0	0	1.93
Zhiye Luo	1444	5.89	273	1.11	7
Rutt	642	5.10	86	0.68	5.78
Rongpei Wang & Xiuhua Ren	1369	6.73	201	0.99	7.72
Alfred Huang	511	3.64	225	1.6	5.24

Balkin	742	4.75	172	1.1	5.85
Chung Wu	926	5.36	160	0.93	6.29
Richter	693	4.29	154	0.95	5.24
Ritsema & Sabbadini	445	3.63	18	0.15	3.78
Huisheng Fu	1487	6.00	466	1.88	7.88
Pearson	804	5.21	173	1.12	6.33
Yi Wu	703	4.42	186	1.17	5.59

Conjunctions are function words and cannot be used as other elements in a sentence. Its main function is to play a connecting role to make the sentence structure and meanings more complete. Conjunctions are mainly divided into coordinating conjunctions and subordinate conjunctions. The number and proportion of conjunctions are positively correlated with the fluency of the discourse. Generally speaking, the greater the proportion of conjunctions, the higher the fluency of the discourse. After studying the data in Table 4, it can be found that most of the conjunctions in translation have a small difference in proportion, all within the range of 5%-8%. It can be concluded that there is a common feature in the use of conjunctions of the hexagrams in most of the translations, that is, there is little difference in the fluency of the whole discourse.

In all, through quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data, this study finds that most of the translations have similar translation styles: reasonable choice of words, moderate sentence complexity, and coherent discourse. At the same time, a few translations have unique translation styles. In addition, it is found that there are obvious differences between domestic translators and foreign translators: the former mostly use concise, easy words with a more rigorous sentence structure; the latter is characterized by using correct and specialized words and a simple sentence structure. Pointing to this condition, the following part will specifically explore the reasons for the difference in domestic translations and foreign translations from the perspective of the adoption of translation strategies and translation purposes.

4. Analysis of the Differences between Chinese and Foreign Translations of Yijing

4.1 Adoption of Different Translation Strategies

In terms of the adoption of translation strategies, most domestic translators advocate liberal translation. It is not difficult to find that the three foreign translators all adopted literal translation to translate "*DA JUN YOU MING*(Chinese characters)",which fails to reflect the connotation of issuing decree, but interpret "*MING*" as fate or destiny. Likewise, for the word "*XIAO REN*(Chinese characters)", foreign translators also translate it as "Small people" and "Lowly person", thus neglect the connotation of it. Compared with them, domestic translators use the word "mean (adj)" or "inferior (adj)" , vividly expressing the evil and villain quality of "*XIAO REN*". Based on this example, the study finds it is the strategy of liberal translation that leads to the lower TTR and clearer translation structure of domestic translations.

4.2 Different Translation Purposes

For domestic translators, their translations aim to spread Chinese culture to the Western world. For example, as the first *YIJING* translator after the establishment of People's Republic of China, Rongpei Wang aims to enable readers to grasp the spiritual essence and cultural connotation of the hexagram without using annotations. As for Zhiye Luo, a scholar with Confucian spirit who buried his head in the Chinese classic books and well versed in both Chinese and Western culture, he believes it is a necessity to have multiple English translations to help foreigners to correctly understand *YIJING* since they put so much emphasis on this book. The language used in *YIJING* is the language of ancient China. Even for Chinese readers, it is difficult to understand the meaning. Therefore, it is also intended to help foreigners better understand Chinese culture. For Hui-sheng Fu, his translation was the product a national publishing project named Great Library of Chinese Classic, which was officially launched in 1995. Its purpose is to condense five thousand year's

Chinese culture in the books and spread it to the whole world. Under this concept, Fu's translation pays more attention to accurate and vivid expression of the original. In short, the commonness of the three translators in the purpose of translation makes the Chinese translations pay more attention to the acceptability of the readers, that is, the foreigners, and determines that the domestic readers will use more concise, easy words to make the translations easily understood. At the same time, the sentence in the translation will be more complex due to the pursuit of clear interpretation of the original meaning.

For foreign translators, their translations aim to connect the content of *YIJING* with Western world from different perspectives. For example, foreigner translators like Ritsema, Pearson translated YIJING into English due to their personal interest in the hexagram and the world depicted in *YIJING*, and then, they introduced their new findings to the foreign readers. Ritsema believes that the core of *YIJING* is how can the old and complex divinatory system still exist in modern world. Yi Wu believes that *YIJING* is like a flowing painting, and she translated *YIJING* from the perspective of poetry. Legge also cited the Bible to domesticate *YIJING* and connected it to the Western world. Since then, there have been foreign translators to study *YIJING* from various fields. A a result of these situations, the foreign translations are closely related to the original text, and the words selected are more professional, ignoring the cultural background and spiritual connotation in them.

5. Conclusion

Based on this research, after the data processing and analysis of the corpus of eighteen English translations of *YIJING*, it can be concluded that the translation styles of multiple translations of Y*IJING* show similarities in the selection of translated word, sentence structure and discourse cohesion. At the same time, there are also some differences, mainly reflected in the different translation styles of domestic and foreign translators: the former is more acceptable, the translated words are simple and commonly used, and the sentence patterns are complex; The latter has a higher degree of coherence, professional translated words and concise sentence structure. It is found that domestic translators focus on the connotation of *YIJING* and the dissemination of Chinese culture, and usually adopt free translation. Foreign translators emphasize the connection between *YIJING* and Western culture in order to build a bridge to connect China and the West.

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