Looking for translator's fingerprints: a corpus-based study on Chinese translations of *Ulysses*

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Abstract

This study is to investigate the translator's fingerprints as manifested in his/her style in translation. It reports a case study of two Chinese translations of *Ulysses,* adopting a corpus-based approach. The parallel subcorpora of the self-built Bilingual Corpus of *Ulysses* (BCU) consist of Joyce's *Ulysses* and its two Chinese versions produced by Xiao (1994 Tran. *Ulysses*, Nanjing: Yilin Press) and Jin (1997 Tran. *Ulysses*, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House), respectively, and the comparable subcorpora include Xiao's original writings in Chinese. The comparison of the keyword lists shows that Xiao, the literary writer and translator, leaves some traces of lexical idiosyncrasy in his composition and translation. On the syntactic level the comparison reveals that due to the interference of the English language Xiao post-positions more adverbial clauses in translation than in composition, a feature that distinguishes the translated text from non-translated original writing. This indicates that the fingerprints of the translator are left on the translated text both as a result of his/her linguistic idiosyncrasy and of the interference and constraints of the languages s/he is dealing with in translation.

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1 Introduction

In highlighting the importance of style in literary translation, Boase-Beier maintains that style exerts its effects upon translation in at least three ways:

> Firstly, in the actual process of translation, the way the style of the source text is viewed will affect the translator's reading of the text. Secondly, because the re-creative process in the target text will also be influenced by the sorts of choices the translator makes, and style is the outcome of choice (as opposed to those aspects of language which are not open to option), the translator's own style will become part of the target text. And, thirdly, the sense of what style is will affect not only what the translator does but how the critic of translation interprets what the translator has done. (Boase-Beier 2006, p. 1)

Boase-Beier's remarks that 'the translator's own style will become part of the target text' start us to think on two planes: (i) a translator's choice constitutes a style of her own; and (ii) the style of the target text is the outcome of both the author and the translator. As a text producer, the author or the translator builds her style through choices of words and structures, like an architect cultivating her style of building with bricks and patterns to her taste and

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purpose. Boase-Beier's remark is insightful, for she distinctly articulates that the translator inevitably leaves her stylistic trait in the translation. In the target text there is the translator's visible presence in the words she favors, the structures she prefers and the rhetoric she likes. No matter how much the translator desires to reproduce the authorial style, she will inevitably leave traces of her own style in the translation. Baker (2000) compares these traces to translator's 'fingerprints'. She questions the demand on the translator to reproduce exactly the style of the original, because 'it is as impossible to produce a stretch of language in a totally impersonal way as it is to handle an object without leaving one's fingerprints on it' (Baker 2000, p. 244).

The fingerprints metaphor reveals Baker's point of departure to be descriptive in nature. What interests her is not what a translator *should* do, but what s/he *does* do, so she approaches the translator's style from translation products already existing in the socio-cultural reality, rather than from translation theories idealized in a vacuum. Since the translator gives the source text a second life in the target socio-cultural context, the re-created being in the target context possesses features of its own. In the re-creation process, the translator's labor is felt through the selection and organization of words, the long or short sentence structures, the plain or oratory way of speech, thus leaving his/her fingerprints on the newly created texts.

2 Searching for Translator's Fingerprints

The problem now facing translation scholars is not 'whether individual literary translators can plausibly be assumed to use distinctive styles of their own', but 'how we might go about identifying what is distinctive about an individual translator's style' (Baker 2000, p. 248). Although it is evident that this identification can only be done within the framework of descriptive translation studies, it will still take scholars a long time to figure out the proper methodology. Baker and other pioneering scholars have carried out empirical studies on different translation products. Admitting that the empirical method 'can only be applied to strictly observable data', Toury justifies it to be a recommendable method in descriptive translation studies (Toury 1995, p. 222, brackets and italics Toury's):

> In fact, to my mind, the greatest contribution of experimentation lies precisely in its potential for shedding new light on the interdependencies of all factors which [may] act as constraints on translation and on the effects of these interdependencies on the process, its products, and the functions which any of them may serve in the recipient culture, and in increasing their predictive capacity. This potential, as I see it, derives from two of the inherent traits of experimentation: relative *controllability of variables*—and high rate of *replicability*. At the same time, most of these new methods have hardly been confronted with other achievements of modern Translation Studies, with a view to increasing their relevancy to our understanding just what translation involves.

Baker (2000) initiates a comparative study to look for 'translator's fingerprints' by examining such factors as the type-token ratio, mean sentence length, and reporting structures by comparing translations of two different translators, Peter Clark and Peter Bush, and finds differences between the two translators in the three aspects. However, it may not be reasonable to conclude that they are manifestations of the translators' styles because the two translators were not working on the same source texts and therefore the differences of styles reflected in the translations may be attributed to the source texts rather than the translators' individual styles alone. Nevertheless, as a pioneering study, Baker's research is significant and the three questions she poses are worth considering:

- Is a translator's preference for specific linguistic options independent of the style of the original author?
- Is it independent of general preferences of the source language, and possibly the norms or poetics of a given sociolect?

- If the answer is yes in both cases, is it possible to explain those preferences in terms of the social, cultural or ideological positioning of the individual translator? (Baker 2000, p. 248)

A comparison between the target and source text is necessary to answer these questions. It is just for this purpose that Malmkjær creates the term *translational stylistics*, which 'takes into consideration the relationship between the translated text and its source text', asserting that 'it is not possible through stylistic analysis of a translation alone to provide a satisfactory answer to the question *why* the translation has been made to mean as it does'. (Malmkjær, 2004, p. 16). In the qualitative study on Henry William Dulcken's English translation of *The Little Match Girl*, Malmkjær studies the translator's mode of expression and choice of words as compared with those of the original author and finds that the translator creates for the English reader a different literary universe from that created by the original author.

However, a qualitative analysis may not be as exhaustive and representative as it can be when assisted with corpus technology, as shown in some studies (Laviosa, 2002; Mauranen, 2000; Olohan, 2004; Granger *et al*., 2007). One way to further the design of Malmkjær's study might be a comparison of diversified translations of the same text to see whether different translators demonstrate different styles in completing the same translation task. Along this line, Marco (2004) examines different Catalan versions of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* and Edgar Allen Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. He finds that translation often calls for a balance between the stylistic demands of the original and the norms of the receiving language and culture and that translators sometimes bring their own stylistic priorities to their translation practice by reference to the literary movement in the history of the target language and culture (*ibid*, p. 88).

Many would agree that translation involves a balance between the stylistic demands of the original and the norms of the receiving language and culture, but how do the translators strike such a balance? Can the translator's style in the target text be distinguished from the original author's style? These questions are hard to answer, for just as Bernardini acknowledges, the translator's style is likely to be superimposed on an author's style, making it very difficult to spot (Bernardini, 2005).

We think that the presence of the translator's style is not to be found simply from the comparison between the translation and the original, but from comparisons of different translations as well. A project on translator's style will benefit tremendously from a comparative analysis of different versions of the same source text by translators in the same linguistic and sociocultural context. This enables the identification of stylistic features to be attributed to the human variable alone, that is, the translator rather than anything else. It will make the best starting point for comparison if the versions are published very close in time span so that the identified stylistic feature is not possibly due to the diachronic variable of linguistic changes over time. With this in mind, we ventured the present corpus-assisted research project on the Chinese translations of *Ulysses* by James Joyce (1882–1941), who was regarded by T. S. Eliot as 'the greatest master of the English language since Milton' (Jin, 2001, p. 225).

3 Design of the Bilingual Corpus of *Ulysses*

There are two well-known Chinese translations of *Ulysses*, one by Xiao (1994) and the other by Jin (1997). Both translators brought out their finished translations of the first twelve chapters in 1994, and in the latter half of 1994 Xiao published the rest of his translation (which was later revised in 2005), while Jin completed his translation of *Ulysses* in 1996, and published it in the Chinese Mainland in 1997. Both translations of *Ulysses* won popularity among Chinese readers. One year after its publication, Xiao received the national prize for foreign literature awarded by the Press and Publication Bureau of the People's Republic of China, and Jin won the same prize in 1998. It is quite unprecedented in the bureau's history to award the top prizes to two different translations of the same foreign novel. The simultaneity and good quality of the two

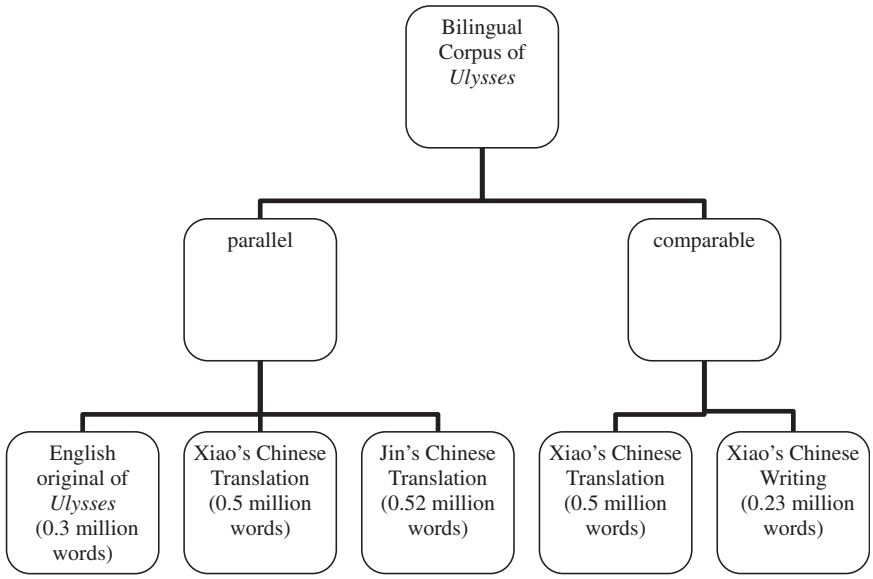

Fig. 1 BCU

translations of *Ulysses* qualify them as ideal texts for a contrastive study.

Of the two translators Xiao is selected as the focus of the present study because he is not only a well-versed translator, but a prolific writer as well. This makes it possible for us to compare his translation with his creative writings. The short stories he wrote such as *Silkworms* (1933), *The Captivated* (1934), *Chestnuts* (1935) and *Sunset* (1937) were also widely read and appreciated in China. In 1938, Xiao wrote *Dreamy Valley*, the only novel of his, which gained popularity among the youth for its romantic theme and lyric diction. All these writings are collected in Xiao (2005b).

However, it should be pointed out that the choice of pitting Xiao's Chinese translation of *Ulysses* against his original literary writings in the proposed style analysis can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, as *Ulysses* is known as a stylistically unusual piece, it can fully exemplify how the issue of style, be it the authors' or the translator's, has been dealt with in the (re)production process. On the other hand, it can also be argued that as *Ulysses* has an extremely innovative style and it might necessarily be considered as a special literary piece, in which case the generalizability of the final conclusions might be indeterminate. However, as the present study is intended as a preliminary investigation, we deem it worthwhile to pursue it. Our next step would be to enlarge the corpus of Xiao's translations to include other Chinese translations he produced in order to balance out the possible biases in the current design and in turn (dis)confirm the conclusions of the current report.

For the purpose of the present project, a Bilingual Corpus of *Ulysses* (BCU) was built, as shown in Figure 1.

The BCU consists of a parallel corpus made up of three subcorpora (namely, the English original of *Ulysses*, Xiao's Chinese Translation and Jin's Chinese Translation) and a comparable corpus made up of Xiao's Chinese translation and his Chinese writings including a novel and twenty-three short stories. The finished corpus contains over two million words. In the bilingual parallel subcorpora the source text and the translations are aligned at the sentence level. The data retrieval software used in the study is WordSmith Tools 5.0 developed by Mike Scott.

4 Translator's Styles Manifested in Lexical Idiosyncrasy

Lexical idiosyncrasy refers to individualized, habitual use of words. Such linguistic preference constitutes personal style. An individual's bias for a word or lexicalized expression may trigger an automatic response in his mind during the process of translation. One of the ways to probe into the translation process is through studying translation product. The wordlist function of WordSmith Tools enables us to compare the frequency of a word in different text files. For instance, Kenny (2001) uses the wordlist function to analyze items that occur only once in her corpus to study lexical creativity in translation. Usually, the extremely high or low frequency of a word or phrase is worthy of our attention, because frequency usually reveals information about the idiosyncrasy of the text producer, and this is of special interest in our present study of translational style.

The frequency lists of two corpora can also be compared. Given two wordlists for a text and a reference corpus (RC), the WordSmith software can compare the two lists and find words which are significantly more (or less) frequent in the given text than in theRC, as is shown by the positive (or negative) statistics of keyness. In this study, the keywords of the translations by Xiao and Jin are compared because they are indicative of the translator's particular habits of language use. It is advisable to annotate the data in the 'set' column with the part of speech so that the data can be rearranged in order of the word class, which will facilitate convenient observation from the large quantity of data and yield useful results.

In order to find Xiao's idiosyncratic lexical use, the keyword list of his translation of *Ulysses* is compared with that of Jin's. Table 1 shows a fraction of the results of the comparison in terms of verbs (marked v). In the table, the given text is Xiao's translation, and the RC is Jin's translation. Therefore, a positive keyness in the table means that the word is more favored by Xiao in his translation, whereas a negative keyness means that it is more frequently used in Jin's translation.

Differences in the preferred verbs as illustrated in the table point to a tendency to colloquialism by Xiao. While he prefers to use '*xiaode* (know)', a dialectal colloquial expression prevalent in Shanghai and the neighboring areas, Jin chooses to use the standard Mandarin expression '*zhidao* (know)'. The spoken word '*qiaojian*' (see) is preferred by Xiao but not by Jin, who prefers a more formal word '*kan*'.

The tendency to colloquialism is also manifest in the frequency of emotional words. In spoken Chinese, the speaker's mood can find expression in tones and intonations, but in the written form of the language, the writer can resort to the employment of emotional particles, a word class not found in English. Emotional particles can express indicative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory mood of the speaker. The keyword comparison of the emotional particles in the two translations of *Ulysses* reveals that such words are used more frequently in Xiao's translation than in Jin's (Table 2).

The reason for this divergence lies in the effect Xiao aims to achieve in his translation, namely, to make the Chinese *Ulysses* 'as colloquial as possible' (Xiao, 2005a, p. 16). By using more emotional particles the translator puts a tone to an utterance, making it sound more emotive and familiar. In contrast, Jin falls far less to such means, making his translation more neutral and impersonal.

Apart from of the differences in formality, the stylistic variation of the two translations can also

Table 1 Keyword comparison of Xiao's and Jin's translations of *Ulysses*: verbs

N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness	Set
7	曉得 *xiaode* (know)	140	0.05	0		188.34	v
266	知道 *zhidao* (know)	169	0.06	326	0.12	−57.47	v
70	瞧見 *qiaojian* (see)	53	0.02	2		56.97	v
286	看 *kan* (see)	338	0.11	647	0.23	−112.08	v
55	踱 *duo* (stroll)	72	0.02	5		66.98	v

Table 2 Keyword comparison of Xiao's and Jin's translations of *Ulysses*: emotional particles

N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness	Set
2	啦 *la*	850	0.29	165	0.06	478.65	e
9	哦 *o*	157	0.05	5		173.73	e
38	哩 *li*	172	0.06	38	0.01	87.07	e
43	喏 *nuo*	95	0.03	8		82.97	e
48	嘛 *ma*	116	0.04	19		73.48	e
63	啊 *a*	431	0.15	220	0.08	61.2	e
100	噢 *o*	76	0.03	14		44.43	e
173	哎呀 *aiya*	45	0.02	8		26.98	e
264	唷 *yo*	13		79	0.03	−55.39	e

be seen in their use of singular lexical items. For instance, the last item in Table 1 is worth our special attention. The frequency of the use of the word '踱' ('*duo*') by the two translators presents a sharp contrast: It has five occurrences in Jin's translation but seventy in Xiao's. Concordance lines generated by WordSmith Tools reveal that in ten instances Xiao renders prepositions such as 'to' and 'over' into this Chinese verb, and in sixty-two instances he uses it as the equivalent to twenty-four English verbs. Table 3 lists the verbs and the percentage of Xiao's rendering them into '*duo*'.

According to the bilingual Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (2002, p. 502), '*duo*' is defined as '慢步行走 pace; stroll'. Of all the words listed in Table 3, only *stroll* and *saunter* can be regarded as more or less the equivalent of '*duo*'. In cases where Xiao repeatedly renders words such as 'walk', 'come', 'go', 'pass' and 'move' into the same word '*duo*', he actually adds a subtle nuance of meaning, i.e. 'walking slowly and leisurely' to the translated text. What is more surprising is that he even renders 'dodge', 'totter', 'stagger', 'trudge', 'lurch', 'prowl', 'shuffle' and 'plod', words referring to many different manners of walking into the same Chinese character. As a compensation strategy, the translator falls back on adverbial modifiers to convey the different shades of meaning in these verbs. The frequently used modifiers are '蹒跚' ('*panshan*') and '踉跄' ('*liangqiang*'), meaning 'unsteadily'. For example.

[1] I turned around to let him have the weight of my tongue when who should I see dodging along Stony Batter only Joe Hynes. (*U* 12.3-5)

我轉過身去，剛要狠狠地罵他一頓，，只見沿著斯托尼•巴特爾街蹣跚踱來的，不是別人，正是喬•海因斯。

Wo zhuan guo shen qu, gang yao henhen de ma ta yidun, zhijian yan zhe situoni bateer jie panshan duo lai de, bushi bieren, zhengshi qiao haiyinsi.

Table 3 English verbs translated into '踱' ('*duo*') in Xiao's *translation*

Source word	Wordlist freq. (total)	'*duo*' Freq.	%
REAPPROACH	1	1	100
JOGGLE	2	1	50.0
TRUDGE	4	2	50.0
SAUNTER	7	3	42.9
STROLL	9	3	33.3
TOTTER	3	1	33.3
PLOD	5	1	20.0
PROWL	6	1	16.7
SHUFFLE	6	1	16.7
DODGE	8	1	12.5
LURCH	8	1	12.5
TURN	9	1	11.1
STAGGER	13	1	7.7
MOVE	54	4	7.4
WALK	206	15	7.3
CREAK	19	1	5.3
PROCEED	21	1	4.8
APPROACH	30	1	3.3
WANDER	32	1	3.1
PASS	198	5	2.5
ENTER	46	1	2.2
COME	566	8	1.4
GO	517	6	1.2
LEAVE	220	1	0.5

[2] The navvy staggering forward cleaves the crowd and lurches towards the tramsiding. (*U* 15.140-41)
壯工挑著忽明忽暗的號燈，
從人叢中腳步蹣跚地踱去。
Zhuanggong tiao zhe hu ming hu an de haodeng, cong rencong zhong jiaobu panshan de duo qu.

[3] Shouldering their bags they trudged, the red Egyptians. (*U* 3.370)
紅臉膛的埃及人扛著口袋，
踉踉蹌蹌踱著。
Hong liantang de aiji ren kang zhe koudai, liangliangqiangqiang duo zhe.

[4] A drunken navvy ups with both hands the railings of an area, lurching heavily. (*U* 15.35-36)
一個喝得醉醺醺的壯工雙手握住地窖-前的柵欄，東倒西歪，踉踉蹌蹌地踱著。
Yige he de zuixunxun de zhuanggong shuangshou wozhu dijiaozi qian de zhalan, dongdaoxiwai, liangliangqiangqiang de duo zhe.

This brief survey of the word '*duo*' in the parallel corpus of *Ulysses* does seem to suggest that this Chinese character is Xiao's favoured word. Our subsequent comparison of Xiao's Chinese writings with his Chinese translations also confirms this. We use this character as a node to search the comparable corpus and the software generates a list of forty-eight occurrences in Xiao's Chinese writings. We find that Xiao uses the word '*duo*' with a much broader sense than its conventional semantic meaning of 'stroll' as defined in the dictionary and used by many Chinese. In each of the examples below a literal translation is given to illustrate Xiao's preference for this character in his literary creation.

[5] 我疾速地來回踱著。
Wo jisu de laihui duo zhe.
I strolled* rapidly to and fro.

[6] 那個穿黑坎肩的向遠處打了一個呼哨，一部备就的敞篷馬車就衝開人群踱到我們面前了。
Nage chuan hei kanjian de xiang yuanchu da le yige hushao, yibu beijiu de changpeng mache jiu chongkai renqun duo dao women mianqian le.
The man in the black vest whistled afar, and an open carriage already waiting there pierced through the crowd and strolled* towards us.

[7] 他沉重地頓了一下腳，踉踉地踱下土坡。
Ta chenzhong de dun le yixia jiao, qiangliang de duo xia tupo.
He stamped his foot heavily, and strolled* unsteadily down the slope.

[8] 沿著馬路旁的便道，我踉蹌地向前踱著。
Yan zhe malu pang de biandao, wo liangqiang de xiang qian duo zhe.
I strolled* unsteadily forward on the pavement along the main road.

As in his translation of *Ulysses*, Xiao also uses such phrases as '跄踉地踱' or '踉跄地踱' in his creative writing. As a matter of fact, substituting the verb '*duo*' with 'zhuan' (paced) in [5], 'lai' (approached) in [6], or simply 'zou' (walked) in [7] and [8] would suit the context much better. It is very unusual in the Chinese language to use the verb '*duo*' to refer to the movement of a carriage pulled by horses, but Xiao uses it in [6] in his writing. In the translation of *Ulysses*, Xiao again uses it to modify the movement of a dog and a horse.

[9] The retriever approaches sniffling, nose to the ground. (*U* 15.247)
一只能叼回獵物的狼狗，鼻子貼地嗅著，踱了過來。
Yizhi neng diao hui liewu de langgou, bizi tiedi xiu zhe, duo le guolai.

[10] Too slow for Boylan, blazes Boylan, impatience Boylan, joggled the mare. (*U* 11. 765–66)
母馬一顛一搖地向前踱著。對情緒亢奮的博伊蘭，急不可待的博伊蘭來說，真是太慢了。
Muma yidianyiyao de xiangqian duo zhe. Dui qingxu kangfen de boyilan, jibukedai de boyilan laishuo, zhenshi tai man le.

To testify the unusualness of the collocation of '*duo*' with an animal, we compare the results against an RC, the large-scale corpus developed by Center for Chinese Linguistics of Peking University (CCL of PKU). It contains 477 million Chinese characters, including 307 million modern characters and 170 million ancient characters and the texts cover a wide range of sources, original and translated, literary and non-literary texts. We find that in the CCL corpus, only seven occurrences of the 500 uses of '*duo*' are related to animals, including cattle (4), pigeons (2), and sparrows (1), as in the following examples[1].

54: 鴿子在中心廣場[踱]來飛去，自由自在地覓食。
Gezi zai zhongxin guangchang duo lai fei qu, ziyouzizai de mishi.
On the central square pigeons were strolling and flying, freely seeking food.

57: 傲慢的牛群毫不理會車鳴人催，[踱]步于路中央。
Aoman de niuqun haobulihui cheming rencui, duobu yu lu zhongyang.
Arrogant cattle strolled midway down the road, refusing to make way for the buzzing motors or the hastening crowds.

64: 麗日晴空，牧場青翠，奶牛悠閒[踱]步。
Liri qingkong, muchang qingcui, nainiu youxian duobu.
The sun was bright, the sky clear, and the cows making their leisurely stroll on the verdant pasture.

65: 水牛在田裏悠然[踱]著方步。
Shuiniu zai tian li youran duo zhe fangbu
The buffalo was pacing leisurely in the field.

436: 幾隻麻雀在草叢裏[踱]來[踱]去，青草茁壯成長。
Jizhi maque zai caocong li duo lai duo qu, qingcao zhuozhang chengzhang.
Several sparrows were pacing in the thick growing grass.

452: 它們才掉過頭，懶洋洋地向自己的圈棚[踱]去。
Tamen cai diao guo tou, lanyangyang de xiang ziji de juanpeng duo qu.
They would only then turn around and pace lazily toward their pens.

Although it is perhaps not inappropriate to use '*duo*' to describe the way of walking in the above contexts, since the animals are all walking in a leisurely way, it is very unnatural to use it to describe the running of a retriever in (9) and the joggle of a mare in [10].

Of the 307 million modern Chinese words in CCL, the total frequency of the word '踱' ('*duo*') is 1986 occurrences. We can compare the frequency data thus far collected from the four corpora by using the chi-square calculator, a procedure which measures whether a particular distribution of observed values is sufficiently different from an expected distribution to confirm that it is not a chance occurrence.

The chi-square test shows that the difference is significant and that Xiao has a tendency to overuse the word examined (Table 4). Although we have examined only one word in detail, we can suggest that all the words in the wordlists generated by the WordSmith Tools can evidence the particular

Table 4 Chi-square of '踱' ('*duo*') in the four corpora[a]

Word	Freq in corpus 1	Corpus size 1	Freq in corpus 2	Corpus size 2	Chi-square	Significance (*P*)	
踱	72	500,000	5	520,000	60.9838	0.000***	+
Word	**Freq in corpus 1**	**Size of corpus 1**	**Freq in corpus 3**	**Corpus size 3**	**Chi-square**	**Significance (*P*)**	
踱	72	500,000	48	230,000	4.0118	0.045*	−
Word	**Freq in corpus 1**	**Size of corpus 1**	**Freq in corpus 4**	**Corpus size 4**	**Chi-square**	**Significance (*P*)**	
踱	72	500,000	1986	307,317,000	1412.3981	0.000***	+

[a]Corpus 1 = Xiao's translation, Corpus 2 = Jin's translation, Corpus 3 = Xiao's writing, Corpus 4 = modern Chinese corpus of CCL. The asterisks indicate significance level, and the '+' and '−' signs on the right side indicate 'overuse' or 'underuse'.

preference of the two translators[2]. The study testifies to the existence of translator's style, the 'fingerprints' metaphor that Baker (2000) posited. Moreover, the study also confirms the hypothesis that a text producer's habitual wording style in free writing works its subtle influence on his translation, which may help explain why different translators leave different fingerprints on their translations. It may be posited that in transferring authorial ideas to the target readers, the translator consciously or subconsciously reverts back to his own language habits, and shows a tendency to use preferred expressions over other alternatives.

5 Translator's Styles Manifested in Syntactical Sequence

Translator's style is not only manifested at the lexical level, but at the syntactic level as well. In the following English sentences, the dependent clause 'because I was late' can be placed either before or after the independent clause 'they went without me'.

[11a] Because I was late, they went without me.
[11b] They went without me because I was late.

In the Chinese language, however, the position of clauses is more rigid—the dependent clause is normally placed before the independent clause. If the order is reversed, it would be interpreted as intending to achieve a rhetorical effect (Wang, 2001: p. 233) because a post-positioned-dependent clause weakens its own importance in the whole sentence. Compare the following two examples:

[12a] 如果你不介意，我想提一個問題。
Ruguo ni bu jieyi, wo xiang ti yige wenti.
If you don't mind, I'd like to ask a question.
[12b] 我想提一個問題，如果你不介意。
Wo xiang ti yige wenti, ruguo ni bu jieyi.
I'd like to ask a question, if you don't mind.

[12a] assumes a normal, pre-positioned conditional clause whereas [12b] takes on a post-positioned conditional clause, which functions as a supplementary add-on, hence its slighted importance.

As we all know, when writing in our native tongue, we may be quite conscious of the placement of clauses so that we may use this arrangement to achieve certain stylistic effects. In translation, however, we may not be always conscious of the weakened effect when we transfer the post-positioned clause to the target text. Checked against the source texts in the parallel corpora of *Ulysses*, it is found that the translations show some degree of similarity to the source text in post-positioned adverbial clauses. A few examples will suffice to show that both Xiao's versions (13b, 14b) and Jin's (13c, 14c) share the similar structure to the English original texts.

[13a]—Dying, he said, if not dead by now. (*U* 2.354)
[13b]—快要滅亡了，他又說，如果不是已經滅亡了的話。
Kuai yao miewang le, ta you shuo, ruguo bushi yijing miewang le de hua.
[13c] —快完了，他說，如果不是已經完了的話。
Kuai wan le, ta shuo, ruguo bushi yijing wan le de hua.

[14a]—That's very interesting because that brother motive, don't you know, we find also in the old Irish myths. (*U* 9.956-57)
[14b] ——那非常有趣兒。因爲，要知道，在愛爾蘭傳說中，我們也能找到弟兄這一主題。
Na feichang youqur. Yinwei, yao zhidao, zai aierlan chuanshuo zhong, women ye neng zhaodao dixiong zhe yi zhuti.
[14c] ——很有意思，因爲我們在愛爾蘭古代神話中，你們不知道嗎，也看到這種兄弟題材的。
Hen you yisi, yinwei women zai aierlan gudai shenhua zhong, nimen bu zhidao ma, ye kandao zhezhong xiongdi ticai de.

We select five conjunctions as nodes for an exhaustive search in the two translations, namely, '如果*ruguo*' (conjunction of assumption), '只要

zhiyao' (conjunction of condition), '儘管 *jinguan*' (conjunction of concession), '雖然 *suiran*' (conjunction of concession), and '因爲 *yinwei*' (conjunction of cause). We find that Jin's translation shows a higher degree of conformity to the English source text than Xiao's, in that as high as 40% adverbial clauses are placed after the head nouns in the former as opposed to 27.2% in the latter. Of the five items examined, the conjunction of cause '*yinwei*' is the most frequently post-positioned. This is especially obvious in Jin's translation, in which 180 out of a total 284 instances where '*yinwei*' are used as conjunctions are post-positioned, accounting for 63.4%. Table 5 lists the frequency and percentage of post-positioned adverbial clauses in the translated texts.

When compared with his own writing, however, we find that Xiao uses 9.6% more post-positioned structure in his translation of *Ulysses*, as shown in Table 6.

Unlike lexical idiosyncrasy, the comparative study on positions of clauses reveals more similarity than divergence in the style of the translators. It seems that both Xiao and Jin are influenced by the structure of the source English text, leaving traces of foreignness in their translated texts, which marks the difference between a translation and a non-translation.

The much higher frequency of the post-positioned adverbial clauses in complex sentences in the translated text than in the original Chinese text discloses the interference of the source language structure in the process of translation. The presence of the foreign features as the result of the source-language interference distinguishes the translated texts from non-translated ones. Due to the distinctive features manifested in translated texts, the translational language has been referred to as 'the third code' (Frawley, 1984), 'the third language' (Duff, 1981) and 'hybrid language' (Trosborg, 2000). These terms reflect translation scholars' understanding about translation as a negotiation between the heterogeneity of the source language and the acceptability constraints of the target language. The finding also confirms Toury's 'law of interference', which suggests that 'in translation,

Table 5 Frequency and percentage of post-positioned adverbial clauses in the translated texts

Items	Xiao's translation			Jin's translation		
	Post-position	Pre-position	%	Post-position	Pre-position	%
如果 *ruguo*	1	27	3.6	12	100	10.7
只要 *zhiyao*	1	58	1.7	4	56	6.7
儘管 *jinguan*	8	87	8.4	2	24	7.7
雖然 *suiran*	1	17	5.6	16	37	30.2
因爲 *yinwei*	102	114	47.2	180	104	63.4
Total	113	303	27.2	214	321	40

Table 6 Frequency and percentage of post-positioned adverbial clauses in Xiao's writing and his translation

Items	Xiao's original			Xiao's translation		
	Post-position	Pre-position	%	Post-position	Pre-position	%
如果 *ruguo*	1	71	1.4	1	27	3.6
只要 *zhiyao*	2	26	7.1	1	58	1.7
儘管 *jinguan*	0	11	0	8	87	8.4
雖然 *suiran*	9	60	13	1	17	5.6
因爲 *yinwei*	31	33	48.4	102	114	47.2
Total	43	201	17.6	113	303	27.2

phenomena pertaining to the make-up of the source text tend to be transferred to the target text'. The operation of this law, Toury surmises, depends on the particular manner in which the source text is processed, the professional experience of the translator, and the socio-cultural conditions in which a translation is created (Toury, 1995, pp. 275–78).

6 Conclusion

This study of the Chinese translations of *Ulysses* has attempted to use the empirical methodology to look for factors that contribute to the stylistic features of the translated text, and to testify the hypothesis that the translator leaves his own linguistic style in the translated text. Although 'difficult to spot' (Bernardini, 2005), the analysis captures to some extent the behaviors of the translators and confirms the hypothesis that a writer's habitual mode of linguistic expression manifested in free writing can also be found in his translation, evidence that shows the existence of the translator's fingerprints in their translations. On the syntactic level, the analysis finds that the translator's fingerprints leave traces of foreignness in the translated texts, which mark the difference between a translation and a non-translated, original writing, disclosing the interference of the source language structure on the translator. We therefore conclude that a translator's style in the translated text is a result of both the influence of his mother tongue and that of the source language. This helps explain the phenomenon that translations produced by different translators are different in lexical and syntactical styles but they are all expressed in a language somewhat different from the language of original writing.

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Notes

1 The number preceding each sentence refers to the number of concordance line in CCL corpus.

2 See Appendix A for the top and bottom sixty items of the keyword comparison of the two translations.

Appendix A

Keyword comparisons of Xiao's and Jin's translations of *Ulysses* (The top and bottom 60 items)

	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness	*P*	Set
1	斯蒂芬	599	0.2	1		792.93	0	nr
2	啦	850	0.29	165	0.06	478.65	0	e
3	朝	288	0.1	21		264.02	0	p
4	迪达勒斯	168	0.06	0		226.02	0	nr
5	穆利根	164	0.06	0		220.64	0	nr
6	那	2,512	0.85	1,539	0.54	198.60	0	s
7	晓得	140	0.05	0		188.34	0	v
8	倘若	139	0.05	0		187.00	0	c
9	哦	157	0.05	5		173.73	0	e
10	乔	140	0.05	5		151.98	0	nr
11	利内翰	107	0.04	0		143.94	0	nr
12	跟	471	0.16	164	0.06	142.46	0	p
13	之	1,052	0.36	549	0.19	140.86	0	r
14	彼	249	0.08	48	0.02	140.80	0	r
15	就	1,915	0.65	1,202	0.42	136.93	0	d
16	勃克	109	0.04	1		136.67	0	nr
17	地	2,336	0.79	1,543	0.54	132.79	0	u
18	个	1,235	0.42	699	0.25	129.45	0	q
19	怎样	131	0.04	9		122.28	0	d
20	般	229	0.08	48	0.02	121.21	0	k
21	昔	97	0.03	1		120.76	0	p
22	要么	94	0.03	1		116.78	0	c
23	迪格纳穆	85	0.03	0		114.34	0	nr
24	大家	143	0.05	17		108.30	0	r
25	市民	117	0.04	9		105.40	0	nr
26	所	530	0.18	237	0.08	103.08	0	p
27	有着	76	0.03	0		102.23	0	v
28	乃	88	0.03	2		102.05	0	v
29	坎宁翰	74	0.03	0		99.54	0	nr
30	西茜	74	0.03	0		99.54	0	nr
31	被	505	0.17	227	0.08	97.13	0	p
32	利奥波德	79	0.03	1		96.95	0	nr
33	康米	71	0.02	0		95.51	0	nr
34	兜里	68	0.02	0		91.47	0	f
35	没	293	0.1	100	0.04	91.20	0	d
36	摩莉	67	0.02	0		90.13	0	nr
37	曾	292	0.1	101	0.04	89.15	0	d
38	哩	172	0.06	38	0.01	87.07	0	e
39	然而	322	0.11	121	0.04	86.50	0	c
40	朝着	76	0.03	2		86.49	0	p
41	当中	63	0.02	0		84.75	0	f
42	相互	62	0.02	0		83.40	0	r
43	喏	95	0.03	8		82.97	0	e
44	当	315	0.11	123	0.04	79.34	0	p
45	能够	81	0.03	5		77.95	0	vd
46	博伊兰	57	0.02	0		76.67	0	nr
47	笃笃	55	0.02	0		73.98	0	o
48	嘛	116	0.04	19		73.48	0	e
49	鲍尔	70	0.02	3		73.42	0	nr
50	一道	79	0.03	6		71.46	0	d
51	或	349	0.12	153	0.05	70.71	0	c
52	帕特	51	0.02	0		68.60	0	nr
53	西蒙	51	0.02	0		68.60	0	nr
54	遂	50	0.02	0		67.26	0	d
55	踱	72	0.02	5		66.98	0	v
56	也罢	56	0.02	1		66.69	0	e
57	科尼	47	0.02	0		63.22	0	nr
58	巡警	53	0.02	1		62.76	0	n
59	英镑	57	0.02	2		62.06	0	q
60	卡弗里	46	0.02	0		61.88	0	nr
...		...	...	...	...	...	...	...
231	似的	119	0.04	211	0.07	−29.98	0	k
232	坎肩	3		33	0.01	−30.52	0	n
233	酒店	17		64	0.02	−31.05	0	n
234	愿	29		85	0.03	−31.13	0	vd
235	倒霉	3		34	0.01	−31.78	0	v
236	处	101	0.03	191	0.07	−32.09	0	f
237	如	109	0.04	204	0.07	−33.41	0	c
238	说话	28		86	0.03	−33.41	0	v
239	女士	12		57	0.02	−33.80	0	n
240	肯定	10		53	0.02	−34.03	0	d
241	是	4,726	1.6	5,096	1.8	−34.20	0	v
242	手中	8		49	0.02	−34.52	0	f
243	同时	36	0.01	101	0.04	−34.89	0	t
244	见到	26		86	0.03	−36.44	0	v
245	忘	19		74	0.03	−37.09	0	v
246	小心	5		44	0.02	−37.28	0	an
247	无	133	0.05	245	0.09	−38.54	0	v
248	站住	16		70	0.02	−38.88	0	v
249	那时	17		74	0.03	−40.93	0	t
250	不	1,953	0.66	2,288	0.81	−42.60	0	d
251	罗	3		43	0.02	−43.28	0	n
252	牧师	12		66	0.02	−43.45	0	n
253	模样	6		52	0.02	−43.77	0	n
254	脑袋	45	0.02	128	0.05	−45.06	0	n
255	许多	10		63	0.02	−45.12	0	m
256	种	142	0.05	271	0.1	−46.56	0	v
257	为何	4		49	0.02	−47.01	0	d
258	全	47	0.02	135	0.05	−48.14	0	d

(continued)

	Key word	Freq.	%	RC.	Freq.	RC.	%	Keyness	*P*	Set
259	是否	22		93	0.03			−50.18	0	v
260	铜	7		60	0.02			−50.26	0	n
261	找	87	0.03	201	0.07			−51.28	0	v
262	祈祷	14		78	0.03			−51.78	0	v
263	鼻头	4		53	0.02			−52.12	0	n
264	啃	13		79	0.03			−55.39	0	e
265	眼光	4		56	0.02			−55.98	0	n
266	知道	169	0.06	326	0.12			−57.47	0	v
267	如果	28		112	0.04			−57.54	0	c
268	呀	198	0.07	365	0.13			−57.55	0	e
269	了	4,841	1.64	5,393	1.9			−58.25	0	U
270	现在	109	0.04	245	0.09			−59.47	0	T
271	一点	85	0.03	210	0.07			−60.04	0	M
272	不错	12		83	0.03			−62.63	0	V
273	可以	184	0.06	359	0.13			−65.01	0	Vd
274	但是	64	0.02	186	0.07			−67.38	0	C
275	一些	109	0.04	259	0.09			−69.41	0	M
276	其	127	0.04	286	0.1			−69.67	0	R
277	已经	141	0.05	318	0.11			−77.69	0	D
278	J	14		101	0.04			−77.93	0	Nx
279	何	24		128	0.05			−82.54	0	N
280	一	3,935	1.33	4,616	1.63			−87.67	0	M
281	内	71	0.02	224	0.08			−89.91	0	F
282	人	1,287	0.44	1,747	0.62			−90.97	0	N
283	一个	808	0.27	1,200	0.42			−94.55	0	M
284	口袋	11		110	0.04			−98.21	0	N
285	而	557	0.19	920	0.32			−106.17	0	C
286	看	338	0.11	647	0.23			−112.08	0	V
287	没有	330	0.11	663	0.23			−128.38	0	v
288	约	12		149	0.05			−143.61	0	Nr
289	或是	35	0.01	229	0.08			−167.66	0	C
290	有	1,326	0.45	2,155	0.76			−236.80	0	V

(continued)