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## A Corpus-Based Comparative Study on George Orwell's 1984 Chinese Translation Strategies

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### Abstract

This paper aims to adopt a corpus-based approach to compare the translation strategies employed by Dong Leshan (1979/1998) and Lau Shiuming (1984/2011) in their translation of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The linguistic features are first retrieved from our translation corpora using the corpus tools, ICTCLAS 5.0 and AntConc 3.4.3, and then compared and analyzed quantitatively. Statistics show that the two translators differ significantly in their employment of four types of function word: *modal particles*, *conjunctions*, *prepositions*, and *numerals*. Equivalent textual examples from the two translations are extracted and analyzed qualitatively, to illustrate how the use of these function words embodies different translation strategies. The analysis specifically focuses on the comparison between hypotactic and paratactic features in the English-Chinese translations. The findings in this study indicate that Dong shows the tendency of aiming to achieve formal equivalence to the English source language in his Chinese translation. By contrast, Lau tends to provide a translation that conforms to the customary convention of the Chinese target language by adding modal particles and adversative conjunctions as well as adjusting the sentence order, to make the implied meaning in a sentence explicitly for the target reader.

**Key words:** *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; Translation strategy; Corpus linguistics; Hypotactic level

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### INTRODUCTION

*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, written by the British novelist George Orwell and published in 1949, is considered as one of the most influential trilogy of dystopia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It enjoys unprecedented success as a political satire with profound political implication and has exerted a fairly extensive influence upon the English language. Terms like *Big Brother*, *Doublethink*, and *Newspeak* have all been officially included in dictionaries. It has been translated into more than 60 languages and ranked in the top list of "The Most Influential Literary Work in the Twentieth Century".

One year after *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published, Taiwan printed the first Chinese translation by Wang (1950). In Mainland China, however, the novel was banned from the general public due to political and ideological constraints at that time. The first translation was not presented to the public until 1979, belated for nearly 30 years. It was translated by Dong Leshan and published in "internal/restricted" form in the journal of *Selected Translations of Foreign Works*. In late 1985, Dong's translation was released to the public, though still being a "Restricted Publication" with only 420 copies in circulation (Xu, 2011, p.167). It was not until late 1990s that Dong's translation was freely published. Since then, the number of Chinese translations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was growing gradually and 13 versions had appeared in Mainland China by 2012. As a result of its popularity, Chinese scholars began to explore the great masterpiece from perspectives of political implication, totalitarianism, feminism, etc. and have reached profound insights or findings.

In this research, we focus on two representative Chinese translations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published respectively by Dong (1979/1998) in Mainland China and Lau (1984/2011) in Taiwan (hereafter referred to as Dong and Lau for ease of reference). As the first published version in Mainland China, Dong's translation has been considered as a classic with great influence. Similarly, Lau Shiuming is a renowned creative writer, literary critic, and perhaps one of the best known translators in the West. He has co-edited *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translations* (2005). Dong's and Lau's translations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were crafted during the same period of time, and yet published respectively in Mainland China and Taiwan representing opposite political-ideological standpoints. Both translations have gained equal popularity among Chinese scholars and readers, and thus been considered as ideal materials for this comparative study.

The translation studies on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* prevalent in China are mainly from the perspectives of ideology and its implications on translators and their translation practices. The research methodologies are usually intuition-based qualitative approach (e.g. Yang, 2003; Xu, 2007; Tang, 2012; Hou, 2013). This paper intends to adopt a corpus-based approach to investigating the translation strategies employed by Dong and Lau. With the aid of the corpus tools, the linguistic features are first retrieved from the translation corpora that we constructed for the study, and compared the differences quantitatively. Equivalent textual examples from the two Chinese versions are then extracted and analyzed qualitatively, to illustrate how the retrieved linguistic features embody their different translation strategies.

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## 1. CORPUS-BASED APPROACH TO TRANSLATION STUDIES

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Since 1990s, the use of computerised corpora and corpus linguistics methodology has become increasingly popular in the applied areas of language studies. More and more researchers in translation studies have also begun to seriously consider corpus-based methodology as an effective and fruitful approach to the study of translation product/process in a fresh and systematic way. The research areas range from the study of machine translation (Harold, 1998), to the pedagogical implication of translation to foreign language teaching or to translators training (Cook, 2010). After decades of development, the ever-growing corpus-based translation studies have yielded abundant well-developed research methods and tools, as well as insightful findings that continually enrich our understanding of various aspects of translation phenomenon (e.g. Baker, 1995; Bossuau, 2001; Olohan, 2003; Winters, 2004; Saldanha, 2011; Xiao, 2012; Huang & Chu, 2014).

Traditionally, translation studies focused on how translators faithfully convey the meaning and style of the source text. The importance of translators' role, their subjectivity and creativity, have long been neglected. With the postmodern, cultural turn in translation studies, however, scholars started to reflect on the importance of translators' identity and subjectivity in the process of translation (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990). Baker (2000) pioneers in comparing translators' style using corpus methodology. She compares the style of two British literary translators by examining the type-token ratio, mean sentence length, and narrative structures in their translations. She conceptualizes translation "style" as a kind of human traces like "fingerprints", stating that "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" (Ibid, p.244). Her research has laid the foundation of using corpus methodology to retrieve the linguistic "traces" that translators marked in the translated product, and to probe into stylistic issues in literary translation.

Given that the focus of this study is to explore two translators' stylistic difference in their rendering of the source text *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, we thus follow the theoretical assumption proposed by Baker: A translator's style is "his or her consistent use of specific strategies...preferred or recurring patterns of linguistic behavior, rather than individual or one-off instances of intervention" (2000, p.245), and more specifically, it is "unobtrusive linguistic habits which are largely beyond the conscious control of the writer" (2000, p.246). This study is a target-text oriented research. With the aid of corpus methods and tools, we look for the "unobtrusive" linguistic patterns recurring in the translated texts, so as to further explore the translation strategies and the resulting differences in style manifested in the two Chinese versions of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* translated by Dong and Lau.

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## 2. CORPORA UNDER STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 Corpora Under Study

In this research, we intend to answer the following two research questions:

- a) What translation strategies Dong and Lau employed respectively in their translations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?
- b) What linguistic features pertaining to these two Chinese versions manifest such different strategies?

To answer these questions, we build the corpora of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* English original and its two Chinese translations by Dong and Lau, as shown in Table 1. The *Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese*

(LCMC), specifically the fiction categories (K, L, M, N, P), is included as a reference corpus for the purpose of

comparison between Chinese used as source language and Chinese in translated target text.

**Table 1**  
*Nineteen Eighty-Four* Comparative Corpora

	1984	Dong	Lau	LCMC-fiction
Tokens	1,000,173	100,029	97,624	195,437
Types	8670	8,731	9,602	20,065
STTR	43.83	46.29	49.44	44.02

We choose LCMC-fiction as our reference corpus for the following two reasons: firstly, it contains fictional text, the same genre as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; secondly, the sampling period of LCMC-fiction is contemporaneous with the two Chinese translations under study. The use of the reference corpus is to help ascertain if the identified linguistic features in each target text are in accord with the conventional use of the Chinese language.

## 2.2 Methodology

Each language has its way of building up a cohesive text. Nida (1982, p.16) once pointed out that one of the most important linguistic distinctions between English and Chinese is perhaps “the contrast between hypotaxis and parataxis”. English requires explicit grammatical markers to show cohesion, i.e. more frequent use of relative pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions and other function words to construct meaningful sentences. Chinese, by contrast, often draws on lexical means and word order to denote such logical relations. The former lays emphasis on overt formal cohesion, whereas the latter on covert semantic coherence. Take the sentence, “If winter comes, can spring be far behind?”, for example. The conjunction “if” cannot be omitted in the sentence, as it indicates the conditional relationship between the main clause and the subordinate clause. In Chinese, however, it can be translated as “冬天来了, 春天还会远吗? (*Back translation: Winter comes, can spring be far behind?*)”, with no conjunction “if” to show the semantic coherence.

Hu and Zeng (2009) thus proposed to observe the degree of explicitation of English syntactic structure in a Chinese target text by comparing so-called *hypotactic level* in Chinese translations. What they proposed is to measure the percentage of function words as occurred in the whole translated text, which may indicate a translator’s strategy preference. Less frequent use of function words (i.e. the low hypotactic level) in the translated Chinese text may indicate that the translator does not stick to formal equivalence, but instead aims to achieve dynamic (or functional) equivalence, in Nida’s (1964) terms, to cater the linguistic needs and conventions for the Chinese target-language audience.

Following the argument proposed by Hu and Zeng (2009), this study conducted both quantitative comparison and qualitative analyses of our corpus data. The quantitative comparison dealt with the frequency distribution of all function words in the original English text, the Chinese translations and the reference corpora. The qualitative analysis dealt with describing various effect of the use of function words in the two Chinese versions. Given that the use of function words is a matter of linguistic choice, it gives an indication of a translator’s strategy.

To present our research methodology, it is perhaps useful to first describe how we tokenize and annotate the Chinese corpora. It is recognized that Chinese has a logographic writing system with many properties different from the alphabetic systems like the English language. In English text, a sentence is a sequence of words delimited by spaces. In Chinese text, however, sentences are written as strings of *Chinese characters* (i.e. *hànzì* 汉字) without spaces between *words* (*cí* 词). Therefore, to use corpus software such as AntConc or WordSmith to run any word- or token-based linguistic processing in Chinese, the prerequisite is to segment Chinese characters into words, i.e. to first determine word boundaries for meaningful expressions (Xue, 2003). Thus, the two Chinese translations are tokenized and annotated using ICTCLAS5.0, the *Chinese Lexical Analysis System* developed by the *Institute of Computing Technology*, the Chinese Academy of Sciences. ICTCLAS5.0 integrates the features of word segmentation, named entity identification, unknown word recognition, as well as part-of-speech (POS) tagging.

We then use AntConc 3.4.3 developed by Laurence Anthony for further data processing. In order to ensure the precision of the search result, we adopt “keyword+tag” method. For instance, “在/p” is used when searching for the preposition “在 (*zài*)” as illustrated in Table 2.

We employ Log Likelihood (LL) statistics to test if a particular linguistic difference between Dong’s and Lau’s translations is significant or not. To ensure statistical significance, we look at linguistic items with a LL value over 15.13, as this is the standard cut-off for 99.99% confidence of significance.

**Table 2**  
**Concordance of the Keyword 在 (zai)**

Hit	KWIC	File
1	张/q 彩色/b 的/u 招贴画/n 钉/v 在/p 墙上/s , /w 在/p 室内/s 悬	1984 (董乐
2	招贴画/n 钉/v 在/p 墙上/s , /w 在/p 室内/s 悬挂/v 略为/d 嫌/v :	1984 (董乐
3	的/v 。 /w 温斯顿/n 的/u 住所/n 在/p 七/m 层/q 楼/n 上/f , /w 住	1984 (董乐
4	字/n 说明/v 是/v : /w 老大哥/n 在/p 看/v 着/u 你/r 。 /w 在/p 住	1984 (董乐
5	大哥/n 在/p 看/v 着/u 你/r 。 /w 在/p 他/r 住所/n 里面/f , /w 有,	1984 (董乐
6	w 有/v 个/q 圆润/a 的/u 嗓子/n 在/p 念/v 一系列/b 与/c 生铁/n ,	1984 (董乐
7	去/v 也/d 是/v 寒冷/a 的/u 。 /w 在/p 下面/f 街心/s 里/f , /w 阵	1984 (董乐

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Distribution of Function Words in the Two Translations

In terms of the classification of content words and function words in the Chinese language, it remains controversial among Chinese linguists and scholars. The greatest debate is on the categorization of adverbs and pronouns. We use the system that is widely-adopted by Chinese researchers (Hu & Zeng, 2009; Liu & Chen, 2010; Xiao, 2012; Lü & Zhu, 2013), and categorize

nouns, verbs and adjectives as content words, whereas modal particles, conjunctions, pronouns, numerals, prepositions, adverbs as function words. After processing the word segmentation and annotation of the two Chinese translations and the LCMC-fiction corpora, we then use AntConc3.4.3 to process the frequency distribution of all function words in the corpus data. Statistics show that the two translators differ significantly in their employment of four types of function words (with LL value over 15.13): modal particles, conjunctions, prepositions, and numerals, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Distribution of Function Words in the Two Translations and LCMC-Fiction Corpora**

Function words	Dong Freq.(%)	Lau Freq.(%)	LL	LCMC-fiction Freq.(%)
Modal particles	976 (0.98)	1452 (1.49)	105.87	3235 (1.66)
Conjunctions	2838 (2.84)	3077 (3.15)	16.35	3859 (1.97)
Prepositions	4349 (4.35)	3755 (3.85)	30.32	6614 (3.38)
Numerals	4200 (4.20)	3690 (3.78)	21.75	7651 (3.91)

The frequencies of all function words in Dong's and Lau's are 51,517 and 48,061, respectively accounting for 51.50% and 49.23% of the total number of words in their translations, and both are significantly higher than the occurrence of function words in LCMC-Fiction (34.25%). The result is in line with many researchers' observations (e.g. Wang & Hu, 2008; Hu & Zeng, 2009; Xiao & Yue, 2009), which suggest that Chinese translated texts tend to manifest more prominent use of function words than the texts of native Chinese creative writing.

The statistic test shows that the overall *hypotactic* linguistic feature, i.e. the use of function words, in Dong's translation is significantly higher than in Lau's (LL= 50.61). As shown in Table 2, Lau's translation indicates more significant occurrence in *modal particles* and *conjunctions*, whereas Dong's translation in *prepositions* and *numerals*.

#### 3.2 Linguistic Manifestations of the Different Translation Strategies

In this section, equivalent textual examples of these function words are extracted from the two translations and analyzed qualitatively, to examine further if, and how, the employment of these four types of function words embodies different translation strategies adopted by Dong and Lau. Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 first analyze the significantly over-used function words in Lau's translation as compared to Dong's; Sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 then focus on the significantly over-used function words in Dong's translation as compared to Lau's.

##### 3.2.1 Modal Particles

Tone of expression plays a very important role in interpersonal communication. In this regard, English and Chinese share some similarities and differences. Both languages have the interjections, such as 哎 [ai], 啊

[a], 嘖 [ze], 噢 [o] in Chinese and *Ah, Aha, Oh, Dear, God, My Goodness* in English, which could be used individually to express a particular emotion or sentiment on the part of the speaker. In addition to interjections, Chinese has special modal particles, such as 哪 [na], 了 [le], 吗 [ma], 呢 [ne], 呀 [ya], a word class that does not exist in English. They are also called *sentence-final particles*, as these words are usually attached at the end of sentences to indicate mood or attitude of the speaker, for example, to show action completed, to give polite suggestion, to question, to tone down a command, to show affirmation or consent, to express surprise or doubt, etc.. The addition of a particle usually carries the interpersonal function of softening the tone of the expression and tends to be used in informal context. As modal particles are not common in English, adding particles in English-Chinese translation can help enhance the modal expressions and the interpersonal function intended in the original English text, as well as cater to the target-language conventions for Chinese readers (Liu and Chen, 2010, p.11).

As shown in Table 3, in terms of modal particles, the corpus of LCMC-fiction shows a significantly higher ratio (1.66%) than in Dong's and Lau's translations (0.98% and 1.49% respectively). This result is in line with Liu and Chen's (2010) and Xiao's (2012) research findings regarding the more frequent occurrence of modal particles in translated Chinese than in native Chinese creative writing. Further LL statistics show that the difference between Dong and LCMC-fiction is significant (LL=177.93), while Lau and LCMC-fiction's is insignificant (LL=2.55). We may argue from the result that, as compared to Dong's version, by adding more modal particles, Lau adopted a translation strategy that conforms to the Chinese target-language conventions. Example 1 is one of the representative examples that illustrate this difference. (NOTE: In the textual examples of the Chinese translations below, considering that function words have little or no meaningful content, we merely highlight with boldface their occurrence in the text without providing back translation.)

### Example 1:

**ST:** "Where was St Martin's?" said Winston. "St Martin's? That's still standing. It's in Victory Square, alongside the picture gallery. A building with a kind of triangular porch and pillars in front, and a big flight of steps."

**Dong:** "圣马丁教堂在哪里?" 温斯顿问。"圣马丁教堂? 那还在。在胜利广场, 画廊旁边。是座门廊呈三角形, 前面有圆柱和很高的台阶的房子。"  
"Shèng mǎdīng jiàotáng zài nǎlǐ?" Wēnsīdùn wèn. "Shèng mǎdīng jiàotáng? Nà hái zài. Zài Shènglì guǎngchǎng, huàláng pángbiān. Shì zuò ménláng chéng sānjiǎoxíng, qiánmiàn yǒu yuánzhù hé hěn gāo dē táijiē dē fángzi."

**Lau:** "圣马丁教堂在哪里?" 温斯顿问道。"圣马丁? 呀, 今天还在呢, 就在胜利广场嘛, 与画廊并立, 就是三角门廊、前面有不少柱子和一道长长的石阶的那栋。"

"Shèngmǎdīng jiàotáng zài nǎlǐ?" Wēnsīdùn wèndào. "Shèngmǎdīng? **Ya**, jīntiān hái zài **ne**, jiù zài shènglì guǎngchǎng **ma**, yǔ huàláng bìnglì, jiù shì sānjiǎo ménláng, qiánmiàn yǒu bùshǎo zhùzǐ hé yīdào chángchángdē shíjiē dē nà dòng."

Example 1 presents a conversation between the main character Winston Smith and Mr. Charrington, the owner of a second-hand shop and an undercover agent who works for the Party. Winston is wondering where St Martin is, while Mr. Charrington is surprised by the fact that Winston is unaware of its existence. There is no occurrence of interjections in the source text. However, Lau adds three different modal particles, 呀 [ya], 呢 [ne] and 嘛 [ma] in his translation, whereas Dong uses none. In this example, the addition of 呀 [ya] subtly infuses a tone of surprise in the reply, 呢 [ne] confirms the existence of St Martin's, and 嘛 [ma] indicates the obviousness of its existence. In Lau's translation, the extra addition of these modal particles in Mr. Charrington's remarks vividly recreates the informal conversational context between the two characters. The softened tone also introduces certain interpersonal friendliness to Winston and makes him off guard and not being able to suspect that the amiable shop owner having been a member of the Thought Police all along.

### 3.2.2 Conjunctions

As we mentioned above, Chinese is a paratactic language which arranges clauses together without using overt connectives to show the relations between them, while English is a hypotactic language which relies on relative pronouns, conjunctions, and other cohesive devices to combine clauses. Therefore, for translators who prefer to be faithful to the form of the English source text, their rendition of the Chinese target text will inevitably result in increased use of coordinating and/or subordinating conjunctions. Our statistical test shows that the relative frequencies of conjunctions in Dong's version (2.84%) and in Lau's version (3.15%) are both significantly higher than that of LCMC-fiction (1.97%), which indicates more frequent occurrence of conjunctions in translated Chinese text than in native Chinese creative writing (see also Qin & Wang, 2009; Xiao, 2010, 2012).

At first sight, it may seem that the higher frequency of conjunctions in Lau's translation than in Dong's indicates Lau is pursuing formal equivalence in this regard. Further comparison of how conjunctions are used in the two Chinese translations, however, suggests otherwise. Our comparison shows that the most significant difference lies in their employment of adversative conjunctions such as *although, though, but, yet, still, however*, in the translations. The frequency of adversative conjunctions

in Dong's version is 1,180 (1.18%) and in Lau's version 1354 (1.39%), with the LL value 16.47 indicating statistical significance of difference.

In the examples that we analysed, it is observed that Lau tends to add extra adversative conjunctions to make explicit the implied relation between clauses or sentences for ease of comprehension for the target reader. Take the following extracts, for example:

### Example 2:

**ST:** With one hand in her pocket and a piece of bread and jam in the other, Julia wandered about the room, **glancing** indifferently at the bookcase, **pointing out** the best way of repairing the gateleg table, **plumping** herself down in the ragged arm-chair to see if it was comfortable, and **examining** the absurd twelve-hour clock with a sort of tolerant amusement.

**Dong:** 裘莉亚一手插在口袋里, 一手拿着一片抹了果酱的面包, 在屋子里走来走去, 随便看一眼书架, 指出最好怎么修理折叠桌, 一屁股坐在破沙发里, 看看是不是舒服, 有点好玩地仔细观察一下座钟的十二小时钟面。

Qiúliya yīshǒu chā zài kǒudài lǐ, yīshǒu ná zhē yīpiàn mǒ lē guǒjiàng dē miànbāo, zài wūzi lǐ zǒu lái zǒu qù, suǐbiàn kàn yīyǎn shūjià, zhǐchū zuì hǎo zěnmē xiūlǐ zhédié zhuō, yí pìgǔ zuò zài pò shāfā lǐ, kànkàn shìbùshì shūfú, yǒudiǎn hǎowán dē zǐxì guānchá yīxià zuòzhōng dē shíèr xiǎoshí zhōng miàn.

**Lau:** 朱丽亚一手插在口袋里, 一手捧着擦了果酱的面包, 在房间四边浏览着。她对书架并不注意, 但对怎样修理桌子却有独特之见。过后, 她就倒在扶手椅上, 要看看是否坐得舒服。那个古老的钟她倒端详了好久, 觉得它虽然古怪, 却是满好玩的。

Zhūliya yīshǒu chā zài kǒudài lǐ, yīshǒu pěng zhē cǎ lē guǒjiàng dē miànbāo, zài fángjiān sìbiān liúlǎn zhē. Tā duì shūjià bìng bú zhùyì, dàn duì zěnyàng xiūlǐ zhuōzi què yǒu dútè zhī jiàn. Guò hòu, tā jiù dǎo zài fúshǒuyǐ shàng, yào kànkàn shìfǒu zuò dē shūfú. Nà gè gǔlǎo dē zhōng tā dào duānxiáng lē hǎojiǔ, juédē tā suīrán gǔguài, quèshì mǎn hǎowán dē.

Example 2 is a typical long complex English sentence, with one prepositional phrase and four non-finite clauses modifying the subject "Julia". No adversative conjunction is used. The sentence structure of Dong's translation is faithful to the source text in this regard. While Lau adds two sets of adversative conjunction in his translation, i.e.但[dàn]...却[què] and 虽然[suīrán]...却是[quèshì], making explicit the implied adversative meanings of words "indifferently", "absurd", and "tolerant" in the source text. Lau also divides the long complex English sentence into four Chinese short sentences, which conforms to the conventional style of the Chinese language.

### 3.2.3 Prepositions

Wang (1990) and other Chinese linguists point out that the Chinese language has undergone certain Europeanized tendency due to a large number of western literary works being translated and published in China since *the New Culture Movement* during *the May Fourth Era* (an anti-imperialist, cultural and political movement originated from student demonstrations in Beijing on May 4, 1919). Preposition is one of the linguistic features that reflect the trend. There is a newly arising form of preposition or prepositional phrase in Modern Chinese, such as 关于[guānyú], 对于[duìyú], 对[duì], and 在[zài] + locative expression + verbs of existence + notional subject. In English-Chinese translation, the translators focusing on formal equivalence in translation presumably will use more prepositions, as compared to those aiming to achieve functional equivalence in an attempt to minimize the source-text foreign elements in the target texts.

As shown in Table 3, the relative frequencies of prepositions in Dong's version (4.35%) and in Lau's version (3.85%) are significantly higher than that of LCMC-fiction (3.38%), which conforms to the research findings that prepositions tend to be used more frequently in translated Chinese texts than in native Chinese creative writing (Wang & Hu, 2008; Hu & Zeng, 2009; Qin & Wang, 2009; Xiao, 2012). The difference between Dong and Lau in the use of prepositions in their Chinese translations shows statistical significance (LL=30.32). Further comparison shows that, among the prepositions, there are significant differences in the use of 在[zài] and 关于[guānyú], with the LL value 120.3 and 19.36 respectively.

Due to the limited space of the article, we use the locative preposition 在[zài] ("in") to illustrate the difference between the two Chinese versions. In Chinese existential sentences, the subject is usually a "locative expression", and no preposition is needed in front of the locative expression. In English existential sentences, however, preposition is needed in front of the locative expression. Under the influence of the English language, there is a newly arising form of existential sentences in Modern Chinese: the preposition 在[zài] + locative expression + verbs of existence + notional subject (Wang, 1990). The frequencies of the 在[zài] existential sentence are 1,874 (1.87%) in Dong's version, 1,231 (1.26%) in Lau's, and 2,369 (1.21%) in the LCMC-fiction corpus. Our statistical test shows that the difference between Dong and LCMC-fiction is significant (LL=193.56), while the difference between Lau and LCMC-fiction is insignificant (LL=1.26), a result that points to Dong's habitual practice in seeking formal equivalence to the source text in this regard. Example 3 illustrates their differences in the use of the locative preposition 在[zài]:

### Example 3:

**ST:** Always **in** your stomach and **in** your skin there was a sort of protest, a feeling that you had been cheated of something that you had a right to.

**Dong:** 在你的肚子里, 在你的肌肤里, 总发出一种无声的抗议, 一种你被骗掉了有权利享受的东西的感觉。

Zài nǐ dē dùzǐ lǐ, zài nǐ dē jīfū lǐ, zǒng fāchū yīzhǒng wúshēng dē kàngyì, yīzhǒng nǐ bèi piàn diào lē yǒu quánlì xiǎngshòu dē dōngxī dē gǎnjué.

**Lau:** 你的肚子和皮肤每时每刻都向你抗议, 使你觉得像被剥夺了一些本来属于你的东西。

Nǐ dē dùzǐ hé pífu měishí měikè dōu xiàng nǐ kàngyì, shǐ nǐ juédē xiàng bèi bōduó lē yīxiē běnlái shǔyú nǐ dē dōngxī.

In Example 3, Dong adds two prepositions 在[zài] before the existential sentences, in which he follows the literal translation method and observes formal equivalence to the English source language. By contrast, Lau reformulates the two English existential sentences by removing the prepositions 在[zài] and turning the two nouns (*your stomach*, *your skin*) into subject position of the verb (*making protest*). In Lau's translation, he also verbalizes the noun "protest", a change that conforms to the Chinese language users' conventional preference of using verbs than nouns (Liu, 2010).

#### 3.2.4 Numerals

In English, articles are one of the most frequently used function words. They are usually combined with a noun to specify the grammatical definiteness of the noun, such as indefinite article *a/an*, definite article *the*, or zero article. However, definite and indefinite articles do not exist in Chinese in the same way as we know in English. Take, indefinite article *a/an*, for example. It indicates the numeral "one" and needs to be combined with a *measure word* (also called *classifier*). In a noun phrases qualified by a numeral, such as *one book* or *one person*, while translating these noun phrases into Chinese, 一本书 (*yī běn shū*) or 一个人 (*yī gè rén*), it is necessary to insert an appropriate measure word (e.g. 本 *běn*, 个 *gè*) between the numeral and the noun. Therefore, in English-Chinese translation, translators who tend to observe formal equivalence in translation will show high frequency of numerals and measures words in the Chinese target texts, as a consequence of making the English indefinite articles explicit in their Chinese translations (see Qin & Wang, 2009, p.134).

As shown in Table 3, the relative frequency of numerals in Dong's version (4.20%) is significantly higher than in Lau's version (3.78%), with the LL value 21.75. This finding once again indicates that Dong tends to observe literal translation method and formal equivalence between the source and target languages in this regard. Among all the numerals, the use of the numeral—*yī* shows the most

significant difference between the two versions (1.59% in Dong's, 1.25% in Lau's, LL=39.35). Example 4, among others, well illustrates the linguistic manifestation of different translation strategies employed by Dong and Lau.

### Example 4:

**ST:** It was **a** lean Jewish face, with **a** great fuzzy aureole of white hair and **a** small goatee beard—**a** clever face, and yet somehow inherently despicable, with **a** kind of senile silliness in the long thin nose, near the end of which **a** pair of spectacles was perched.

**Dong:** 这是一张瘦削的犹太人的脸, 一头蓬松的白发, 小小的一撮山羊胡须——一张聪明人的脸庞, 但是有些天生的可鄙, 长长的尖尖的鼻子有一种衰老性的痴呆, 鼻尖上架着一副眼镜。

Zhè shì yīzhāng xiǎoshòu dē yóutàirén dē liǎn, yītóu péngsōng dē báifà, xiǎoxiǎodē yīcuō shānyáng húxū—yīzhāng cōngmíng rén dē liǎnpáng, dànsì yǒu xiē tiānshēng dē kébì, chángchángdē jiǎn jiǎn dē bízī yǒu yīzhǒng shuāilǎo xìng dē chīdāi, bǐjiān shàng jià zhē yīfù yǎnjìng.

**Lau:** 戈斯坦是犹太人, 脸孔瘦削, 满头茸茸的白发, 留着山羊胡子。这相貌聪明伶俐, 可是你总觉得这人天性无耻卑鄙。他那副眼镜垂落在那长而单薄的鼻梁上, 这又给人一种年迈蠢钝的感觉了。

Gēsītǎn shì yóutàirén, liǎnkǒng xiǎoshòu, mǎntóu róngróng dē báifà, liú zhē shānyáng hūzī. Zhè xiàngmào cōngmínglínglì, kěshì nǐ zǒng juédē zhè rén tiānxìng wúchǐ bēibì. Tā nà fù yǎnjìng chuīluò zài nà cháng ér dānbó dē bíliáng shàng, zhè yòu gěi rén yī zhǒng niánmài chǔn dùn dē gǎnjué lē.

In Example 4, there are six noun phrases with an indefinite article "a" in the source text. In Dong's version, he translates the six English noun phrases into the structure of "一 (*yī*) + measure word" that is appropriate to the noun (e.g. 一张 *yīzhāng*, 一头 *yītóu*, 一撮 *yīcuō*). The sentence structure in Dong's version also highly conforms to that in the source text. By contrast, Lau uses just one "一 (*yī*) + measure word" and divides the long source sentence into three short Chinese sentences. The latter revamping conforms to the habitual practice of native Chinese speakers and thus demonstrates a strategy aiming for dynamic/functional equivalence in translation.

## CONCLUSION

This paper investigated the translation strategies adopted by Dong and Lau from a corpus-based comparative perspective. With the aid of corpus linguistic tools, we examined the formal *hypotactic* linguistic features reflected in the English-Chinese translations. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of function words that differ



significantly in the two versions not only points out the two translators' different degrees of explicitation of English syntactic structure in the Chinese target texts, but also manifests each translator's preference in translation strategy.

It is hoped that the corpus-based approach to the examination of function words, i.e., the *hypotactic* linguistic features, could be usefully applied to English-Chinese translation studies in general. Without doubt, this comparative study has its limitation given that the comparison is limited to only two Chinese versions by Dong and Lau. Further comparison of more literary translations by the same translators will follow, to examine if the observed translation strategies could be generalized in other works by the same translators under study and thus confirm their individual translation strategic preference and style.

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