

A Corpus-based Approach to the Patterns of Motivated and Ideologically-invested Shifts in Translation

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A number of Chinese migrant writers have achieved success in writing in English in the past three decades. Globally, *Wild Swans* (1991/2003) by Chinese-British writer Jung Chang is the summit of success ever achieved by a Chinese migrant writer: it has sold more than thirteen million copies worldwide and has been translated into 37 languages. In Australia, however, another writer has achieved an even greater success: *Mao's Last Dancer* (2003) by Chinese-Australian ballet dancer Li Cunxin is already a household name; its young readers' version has been used extensively in the English curriculum. However, due to an explicitly accusative tone of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China that is palpable to intuition, neither book has been allowed for publication in Mainland China. Nevertheless, they have been translated into traditional Chinese and published in Taiwan, which is known for its freedom of press (Freedom House, 2016). Both translations are of an unusual situation where Source Text (ST) authors have written about their life experiences in Communist China for English readers, and subsequently contributed partially to the decision-making for the Chinese translation. In other words, the ST authors may have issued a license to allow certain translation shifts. Hence, the fact itself that the Chinese target text (TT) of *Wild Swans* is rather liberal came as little surprise. What is significant is that previous studies (Li, 2016; Li, 2017a) have found a large number of lexicogrammatical shifts in the Chinese translation of *Wild Swans* that are a manifestation of a clear manipulation of political ideology, most noticeably, a dramatic change of the representation of Mao in the Chinese translation.

This paper, as a continuation of previous studies, adopts Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) as the overarching theoretical framework with a critical approach. A previous study on TRANSITIVITY and the instantial weight of clauses (Butt, 2008) in the ST and TT of *Wild Swans* have found that the Chinese TT is a more personalised account, and less interpretive of history when compared to the ST; in addition, the Chinese TT shows the back-staging of Mao and his diminished agency at the start of the Cultural Revolution, but the foregrounding of General Students and Red Guards, who committed the actual violence. The study on the interpersonal metafunction: MOOD, MODALITY and DEGREE OF INTENSITY confirms finding that the TT is more personalised; in addition, the Chinese translation is a more strident version of the ST: there are more and higher degrees of modality in Chinese, especially high obligation; similarly, there are more and higher degree of INTENSITY in the TT, especially adverbs of total degree, such as "completely", which have increased by 70% from the ST; moreover, shifts in MODALITY have revealed a more favourable evaluation of Zhou Enlai, but a harsher criticism of

Madame Mao. A similar study has been conducted on the MODALITY and INTENSITY in the translation of *Mao's Last Dancer*, and, while the overall trends of shifts are similar with the translation of *Wild Swans*, the extent of shifts are nowhere as dramatic as those in the translation of *Wild Swans*; likewise, no clear patterns of ideological shifts have been identified in the translation of *Mao's Last Dancer*.

This paper aims to further explore the latent patterns (Coulthard and Sinclair, 1975; Butt, 1983) of ideological shifts with a corpus-based approach utilising computational tools in Corpus Linguistics (CL) such as SysFan (Wu, 2000), SysConc (Wu, 2000) and LancBox (Brezina et al., 2015). This study is corpus-based in two senses. Firstly, the source texts and target targets of both *Wild Swans* and *Mao's Last Dancer* are turned into machine-readable corpora, each of which is a large body of text, e.g., the ST of *Wild Swans* contains more than 220,000 words, considerably larger than Matthiessen's (2006) recommended limit of 15,000 words for a specialised corpus. They are digitally ready to be examined for their lexicogrammatical patterns. Secondly, results from these texts will be compared with appropriate reference corpora, such as FLOB corpus of British English in early 1990s and LCMC corpus of Mandarin Chinese around 1991, with the aim to filter out translation universals (Baker, 1993, in Laviosa, 2002, p. 18) and typological issues from motivated selections by an author/ translator. Areas to be investigated include word frequency, quantitative representation of major represented participants, word associations, modality and degree of intensity.

The previous studies were geared towards a more in-depth analysis of the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions within SFL in selected chapters. This paper aims to complement previous studies by adopting a more quantitative-based analysis of larger bodies of texts, with special attention paid to any shift in the representation and evaluation of individuals, groups and institutions representing the communist party of China. Firstly, concordance programmes such as SysConc and LancBox will be used to compare word frequency in the ST and TT to identify what has been back-staged or foregrounded on a broad front. Secondly, word associations with these organisations and people are to be examined as they are considered potentially ideologically invested; in addition, word associations with expressions of high modality and total intensity are also considered ideologically volatile, as they reveal the textual environments upon which the highest degrees of interpersonal judgements are projected; LancBox will be useful in explicating word associations. The next step is to address the thorny issue of translation universals and language typology, by comparing results hereby with the reference corpora, respectively FLOB and LCMC corpora. Furthermore, typical cases of translation shifts that are in accordance with the overall quantitative trends will be analysed qualitatively, to complement the quantitative methods, as only together can they 'provide an explicative mosaic of the object under investigation' (Wodak, 1996, p. 23). Lastly, findings from the abovementioned analysis will be linked to results from the ideational and

interpersonal metafunctions to highlight the cruces where different subsystems converge (Halliday, 1991). Subsequently, the accumulated ideological consequences will be explicated, and an attempt will then be made to bridge the semantic shifts with the differences in Contexts at the two ends of the translation process.

The significance of this paper is three-fold. Firstly, it demonstrates the efficacy of an SFL-CL combined approach to the study of ideology in translation. Secondly, it tests Hunston's (2013) suggestion of explaining quantitative information obtained through corpus investigation with an SFL theory. Thirdly, it contributes to a contrastive study of English and Mandarin Chinese, especially in terms of modality and degree intensity; the approaches and feature lists that are built are highly applicable to similar studies.

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