

Corpus-Based Translating Style Research of Three Translation Versions in Lun Yu

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Abstract. Lun Yu is one of famous classic works in China even in the world and it has been translated by different languages in order to be conveniently and clearly read by different people all over the world. On the basis of its English translation versions, three famous translators are broadly accepted by readers who are Gu Hongming, James Legge and Arthur Wayley. This paper applies Antconc3.4.1w and SPSS software to compare and study characteristics of these three translators' from perspectives of vocabulary, sentence and context by means of corpus study. Based on above data, Gu Hongming's translating words are larger and more abundant in variety so his translating version is more closely related to the source text but translating versions of James Legge and Arthur Wayley are more colloquial and simple to readers so the readers are more acceptable to these two translators.

Keywords: Lun Yu, corpus, translating style, comparative analysis.

1. Introduction

As one of classic works in Confucian school, Lun Yu reflects that Confucious' ideas largely influence on formation and development in Chinese traditional culture from morality, ethics, education, politics, etc. It is very important for foreign readers to fully understand Lun Yu translation script since this famous work fully displays Chinese philosophy and thoughts. Western translation of Lun Yu starts from Matteo Ricci's Latin *The Four Books* (*The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Analects of Confucius*, *Mencius*) and it has been more than 400 years. The earliest English version was translated and published by English missionary Joshua Marshman in India and most translators in succession started English translation and translation studies of Lun Yu at home and abroad. In 1861, an English Sinologist James Legge completed the first English cover-to-cover translation of Lun Yu for publication and this translating version is the most influenced among western English versions. James Legge's English versions of *The Four Books* and *The Five Classics* are considered as the classic standard translation version in China and they reached the peak of successive translators. (Wang Dongbo, 2008:120). In 1898, a Chinese translator Gu Hongming's English translation version of Lun Yu was published in Shanghai and he became the pioneer to translate Lun Yu as a Chinese translator. Furthermore, his translation is full of western language characteristics which was popularized among western countries.

2. Corpus and Translation Style Study

2.1 Research Background and Development

Mona Baker (2000) used corpus from translating English corpora (TEC) to compare and analyze English translators' translating styles of Peter Bush and Peter Clark so that corpus-based translating style research starts. After that study, more and more scholars at home and abroad continue related studies. Liu Zequan, et, al (2011) applied corpus to investigate and analyze translating style difference of four English translating versions of *The Dream of Red Mansion*. Cai Yonggui(2015:70) used corpus study to compare and analyze translating style of two translation versions in *The Book of Songs* from perspectives of vocabulary, sentence and discourse.

Thus, based on above achievements of corpus study, it is clear that translation style research in corpus study can solve subjectivity and one-sidedness in traditionally experimental and introspective study so more objective and comprehensive comparison studies are easily carried out by this creative translation style research based on corpus research.

2.2 Corpus Establishment and Research Method

This study will choose The Discourses and Saying of Confucius from Gu Hongming Wenji which is published in Hainan Press in 1966 as one of corpus materials with 34120 words. Another one is English version of Lun Yu in The Chinese Classics which is translated by Legge from Huadong Normal University Press in 2011 with 27914 words. The last one is Arthur Waley’s translation version of The Analects, which are 28803 words. The reason why this paper chooses these three translators is that Gu Hongming is the first person to spread classical sinology to western world. One of obvious characteristics in his translating versions is paraphrase, which can express thoughtfulness of source-language instead of direct conversion between source language and target language; the second translator whose name is James Legge, tends to add his religious concepts to his translation versions but his translations versions are generally accepted by most scholars. The last scholar whose name is Arthur Waley. He also translated Lun Yu but he is not as famous as previous two scholars, but his translation versions are also generally accepted.

The corpus search tool in this study is Antconc3.4.1w. according to practical requirement, translation version will be tagged. This study will analyze differences and causes of translation style between Legge and Gu Hongming from three aspects of vocabulary, sentence and discourse through self-established corpus.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Vocabulary Study

3.1.1 Type/Token Ratio, TTR

Type refers to different words quantity in corpus while token refers to total words quantity in the whole corpus and Type/Token Ratio, TTR refers to the ratio between type and token, and it reflects vocabulary richness in the whole text. The pure type and token cannot reflect the quality in the text but the ratio can reflect its characteristics to some extent, that is, the word variety (Yang Huizhong, 2002). The higher the ratio, the more flexible the words in corpus. However, TTR cannot scientifically reflect words richness in different texts so another ratio which is STTR is used for calculating words variety. STTR, Standardized Type/Token Ratio, is used to measure words richness. It calculates TTR of text in groups according to the fixed length (usually 1000 words) and then calculates out the means. On this basis, in terms of text more than 1000 words, STTR is generally used to measure words variety in order to reduce errors which are caused by high frequency of empty words. Table 1 shows STTR of these two translating versions by Antconc corpus software.

Table 1. Tokens, Types, type/token ratio, TTR, Standardized type/token ratio, STTR in Table 1.
Three Translation Versions

Parameters	Gu Hongming’s Translation	Legge’s Translation	Waley’s Translation
Types/Tokens	3505/34120	3079/27914	3306/2880
TTR/STTR	9.68/34.88	11.03/35.89	12.17/38.08

STTR, standard type/token ratio takes one thousand words in the text to calculate the ratio between type and token, and its output value can truly reflect abundant degree of text vocabulary. Based on table 1, TTR in Waley’s translation version is the biggest so his vocabulary of translation version is more abundant in comparison with Legge and Gu Hongming. In addition, through STTR

data, Waley's STTR is the largest among these three translation versions and this indicates that vocabulary in Waley's translation version is more variable.

In terms of above studies, it is clear that Jame Legge's types are 23 but his TTR is 82.6% while Gu Hongming's types are 43 but his TTR is 76.7%. There is no doubt that James Legge attaches more attentions to flexibility and abundance of words but avoid words repetition. However, Gu Hongming usually adds extra contents in order that western readers can totally understand meanings from Lun Yu so this is the reason why his translation is larger than Jame Legge in length of passage.

3.1.2 Lexical Density

Lexical density is the percentage of notional words in total text words. Notional words usually contain nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs while empty words contain conjunctions, prepositions, articles and pronouns. The meaning of notional words is more stable and can convey more information but empty words usually connect grammar and paragraph. On this basis, lexical density can interpret text information content and its difficulty degree. The higher the lexical density of text, the higher the ratio between notional words and total words, the larger the information content which is loaded by the text, the higher the difficulty of the text. In addition, lexical density is an index to measure formal degree of language variety. The higher the lexical density, the more formal the language. At present, Ure (1971) and Halliday (1985) respectively put forward different methods to calculate lexical density and Ure calculating formula is generally accepted, that is, Lexical Density is notional words/total words * 100%.

This study will apply this formula to calculate notional words and lexical density of these three corpora with Antconc software. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Lexical Density

Types	Gu Hongming's Translation	Legge's Translation	Waley's Translation
Notional words	17132	15214	19389
Total words	34120	27914	28803
Lexical density	50.21%	54.5%	67.3%

This indicates that Waley uses lots of notional and difficult words to accurately express the meaning of source text but his translation version is redundant and long. Since Waley is only an English scholar understanding and mastering Chinese culture, his understanding of Lun Yu is not so carefully and effectively as Legge and Gu Hongming. On the other hand, it is also clear that lexical density between Gu Hongming and Legge is not significantly different. According to Laviosa's discovery in 1998, lexical density of English translation version (52.87%) is less than that of English as source language (54.95%). There is no doubt that Legge's lexical density is extremely the same to the lexical density of source language of English because English language is Legge's native language. Gu Hongming's lexical density is the lowest and this corresponds to language characteristics of translating text. Gu Hongming's lexical density is less than Legge and this reflects his reading difficulty is less than Legge and his style is not as formal as James Legge. In terms of Legge, he paid more attentions to the characteristics simplicity and clarity of LunYu, made efforts to use simple words to translate source language in order not to add unnecessary information and empty words. However, Gu Hongming searched for fluent and genuine translation so he adds more functional words to express.

3.1.3 Average Word Length

Average word length refers to average length of all words in one text and it reflects complexity degree of text vocabulary. The longer the average word length, the more the long words in the whole text. There are about four words of average word length in an ordinary text. It is relatively

simpler in the text to be lower than four letters while it is complex in the text to be higher than four letters.

Actually, software Antconc 3.2.1w can quickly calculate words frequency and word length. In order to objectively compare word length in these three translation scripts, this study will respectively calculate word length in these three translating scripts so that data can be easily discovered in statistics.

Table 3. Word length distribution of three translations

Word length	Gu Hongming's Translation	Legge's Translation	Waley's Translation
1-letter words	1705	821	1194
2-letter words	7100	5656	5842
3-letter words	7598	6805	6564
4-letter words	5293	4997	5664
5-letter words	3260	2765	2948
6-letter words	2311	2451	2815
7-letter words	2038	1462	1438
8-letter words	1776	1144	974
9-letter words	537	896	730
10-letter words	225	478	343

From table 3, 2-letter words, 3-letter words and 4-letter words in Waley's translation script are the most in quantity in comparison with the other two translating scripts while his translating script from 7-letter words to 10-letter words is the fewest. Based on above conclusion, word length in Waley's translation is the fewest among these three translation scripts. It reflects that Waley made efforts to prefer short words to express meaning so that translating script can be in accordance with discourse features of original text.

In order to further prove the effectiveness of data, this study uses software Antconc 3.1.2w to calculate average word length of these three translating scripts.

Table 4. Average word length in three translating scripts

Parameters	Gu Hongming's Translation	Legge's Translation	Waley's Translation
Average word length	4.33	4.25	4.10

Based on table 4, the parameter of average word length of Waley is 4.10 which is the smallest among all translators while Gu Hongming's average word length is 4.33 whose translation reaches the highest. Compared to the other two translators, Waley uses more short words and his word using style tends to be simple and short colloquial words but the other translators prefer literal vocabulary. The reason is that Waley expects to use short but meaningful words to express original text meaning so that the translating version can be full of simplicity and clarity to the largest extent.

3.1.4 Key Words Translation Characteristics

The function of Keywords search in Antconc 3.2.1w is to generate keywords list of text by comparing to reference corpus wordlist. This study will apply British National Corpus, BNC for short. The reason is BNC is the accepted, standard and native English language database.

On this basis, Waley's translation and Legge's translation all keep core concept of original text and Gu Hongming's translation adopts more flexible way to translate core concept in original text.

From perspective of key words, Waley's translation and Legge's translation are more accurate, coherent and consistent in word usage style.

4. Summary

This paper mainly applies the research framework of corpus translation and quantitative style, uses corpus software Antconc 3.4.1w, compares and studies translating style of three translating version of Lun Yu from vocabulary, sentence and context. The study discovers there are similarities and obvious difference of translating style among these three translating versions. The similarity of these translating versions is that all these translating versions can completely deliver content of original work to readers, flexibly use various connectors and reflect the hidden semantic relationship of original work. The difference is that Gu Hongming's translation version is more abundant in words, longer in sentence length and more various in sentence structure. His translating style is more flexible and vivid so it corresponds to native speakers' language usage. In terms of Wayley, although his sentence is short, it is similar to original sentence style of Lun Yu, his translating style is more approximate to original work. Legge's translating style is similar to Wayley but his translating words are more colloquial so native speakers also tend to accept his translation version due to his simple reading and vocabulary usage.

Therefore, translators' translating style can reflect their respective translating characteristics which are based on their translating versions. Limited by translators' subjective factors with social and contemporary characteristics, it is not enough to reflect translators' styles to compare and analyze translating styles from the perspective of language. Contrast and analysis need to be studied from more dimensions to further reveal translators' style and characteristics.

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