

The Change of One Translator's Style and Cognition: A Speech-act Report Verb Study of Allan Barr's Two Translations of Yu Hua's Works

Yajie Li^{1,2}, Muhammad Alif Redzuan bin Abdullah¹, Halis Azhan Bin Mohd Hanafiah¹

¹ Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

² School of Foreign Languages, Henan Institute of Science and Technology, 453003, Xinxiang, Henan, China

Correspondence: Muhammad Alif Redzuan bin Abdullah, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia. E-mail: muhammadalif@upm.edu.my

This research is financed by the Youth Foundation of the Ministry of Education in China for the Humanities and Social Sciences Research: [Project No. 21YJCZH088]

Received: June 6, 2023 Accepted: August 7, 2023 Online Published: September 7, 2023

doi:10.5430/wjel.v13n8p158

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n8p158>

Abstract

This article aims to explore the changes in a translator's style with time and translation practice. Allan Barr was selected as the research subject, considering that his five translations of famous writer Yu Hua's works lasted for 16 years. Instead of focusing on one translator's consistent stylistic features throughout all his or her translations by comparing their translations with others, this study demonstrated the shift of a translator's style through the revised source-oriented model for the study of the style. A systematic analysis was conducted on the quantitative and qualitative data regarding the English translations for the most frequent speech-act report verbs collected from the parallel corpus. The self-established corpus comprises Barr's earlier translation of "*Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*" (Yu, 2014), which was completed in 2003. This was followed by his later translation for "*The April 3rd Incident: Stories*" (Yu, 2018), which was completed in 2018. Notably, Barr's understanding of style and translation ideology may change with time and translation practice, as indicated by the significant difference in the frequency of the speech-act report verbs with the same semantic meanings in ST and TT. This condition was also indicated through the distinguished motivations to change the semantic meaning of the speech-act verbs in the ST between Barr's earlier and subsequent translations. Subsequently, it was found that the method of corpus-based translator's style study can be applied to investigate how social and cognitive factors motivate a translator to change his or her translation ideology and strategies.

Keywords: Barr, Yu Hua, the translator's style, change, speech-act report verbs

1. Introduction

When a reader describes the language of a translated text as elegant, it is arguable whether the author of the ST or the translator of the TT is responsible for the stylistic effect of the translations. Notably, Howard Goldblatt, who is one of the most experienced and well-known English translators of Chinese literary works, expressed his surprise on this matter (Goldblatt et al., 2019). However, despite the attempt of most researchers to prescribe the norms and strategies of reproduce the style of ST in the translation, few investigations had been conducted on the translator's style and creativity in demonstrating the ST style in a different language. Prior to Venuti's (2017) proposal of the theory of translator's visibility, the translator had been perceived to be transparent, while the translation was considered a derivative of the ST. Following Venuti's visibility theory, the theories and methodologies of the translator's voice (Hermans, 1996), translation universals (Baker et al., 1993), and the translator's style (Baker, 2000) gradually promote the status of translators in translation studies.

The traditional stylistic investigation in translation studies, which evaluates the methods and the extent of reproducing the style of ST in the TT, is prescriptive. In contrast, corpus-based translator-style studies offer descriptive evidence to indicate the salient and repetitive linguistic and non-linguistic choices of a translator. These studies aim to specify the possible factors of the formation of their styles rather than prescribing the ideal translation strategies for potential translators. Moreover, Baker (2000) shifted the source-text-oriented trend of the stylistic research in translation studies by solely comparing two translators' translated texts to identify the different recurring linguistic features throughout their translations.

The source-oriented model compares between different translators' recurrent and prominent linguistic and non-linguistic choices corresponding to the same stylistic features in the same ST. Besides Baker's target-oriented method, this method is frequently used for corpus-based translator style studies (Kenny & Winters, 2020; Liu & Afzaal, 2021; Winters, 2013). Rather than focusing on one translator's consistent salient and repeated choices in all their translations, the studies with the source-oriented methodology regard the style of the translated text as the translator's style. The exploration of the consistent linguistic and non-linguistic features in one's translations is significant for stylometry, which aims to identify the attribution of the anonymous translator. However, the comparison of the features in one's different translations could indicate the changes in the translator's style over time, which also implies their changing

translation ideology.

Previous translator-style studies with the source-oriented method also aimed to distinguish one translator from others. However, research on the shift of one translator's style is scarce. Thus, the current study aims to apply a revised source-oriented model to explore the development of one translator's style with the textural data from the corpus and the extra-textual data. It also aims to explore the translator's changes that occur with time and translation practice by analyzing the translator's distinguished and repeated stylistic choices at different periods of their translating career. Accordingly, Allan Barr became the ideal research sample due to his long-term focus on one author's works. Being an American professor in the field of classical Chinese literature, Allan Barr translated five of Yu Hua's works into English within 16 years. Notably, the investigation of outstanding translators is a significant part of translation history studies. These translator-style studies offer a novel perspective for a comprehensive exploration of one translator through quantitative and qualitative data, including textual and extra-textual evidence. However, few researchers were able to conduct any systematic investigations into the development of one translator's style.

This study employed the revised source-oriented model of corpus-based translator's style study to analyse the change and factors leading to the change in Barr's translation style. The results of this study could demonstrate the feasibility of the revised source-oriented model and offer data and evidence for the English translation history of Chinese contemporary literature. Based on the data of the systematic literature review of translator-style studies, the speech-act report verb is the most frequently examined pragmatic stylistic marker (Li, Abdullah, & Wong, 2022). Winter (2007) and Zhao and Guo (2019) applied empirical studies to prove that speech-act report verbs are perceptive in differentiating one translator or a group of translators from the other. Accordingly, this article explores Barr's different translation preferences for translating the most frequently occurring speech-act report verbs in two STs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Allan Barr and Yu Hua

Yu Hua started his writing career in 1983. Gaining a reputation as a Chinese avant-garde writer in 1986 (Wang, 2012), his talent earned the attention of German sinologist, Wolfgang Kubin, who subsequently translated one of his short stories *Hebian De Cuowu* into German in 1989. During the 33 years, Yu Hua's works had been translated into over 31 languages. Furthermore, the outstanding quality of his original writing and the translation versions granted him several international literary prizes, such as Italy's Premio Grinzane Cavour Award and James Joyce Foundation Award. The English translation of Yu Hua's works began with Andrew Jones' translation of *Wangshi yu Xingfa (Past and the Punishment)* in 1996. In the next 27 years, Andrew Jones, Michael Berry, Allan Barr, Carlos Rojas, and Eileen Cheng-yin Chow published their English translation of Yu Hua's eight fictional works.

In 2001, Barr initiated the proposal to translate Yu Hua's *Huanghun li de Nanhai*. Satisfied with Barr's linguistic competence and literary knowledge, Yu Hua permitted him to translate this compilation of 13 short stories. Although the English translation of *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China* was not published until 2014, Barr completed his translation in 2003. After the establishment of a friendly and mutual trust relationship with Yu Hua, Barr accepted another four translation tasks by Yu Hua from 2007 to 2018, which lasted for 16 years. As a result of Barr's devotion to the translation of the same popular Chinese writer's works and his prolific translation products, he became the ideal research sample for learning the growth of a translator.

Table 1. Nine English Translations of Yu Hua's Works

Chinese title	English title	Translator	Publishing time	Publisher
<i>Wangshi yu Xingfa</i>	<i>Past and the Punishments</i>	Andrew Jones	1996	The University of Hawaii Press
<i>Xusanguan Maixueji</i>	<i>Chronicle of a Blood Merchant</i>	Andrew Jones	2003	Pantheon Books
<i>Huozhe</i>	<i>To Live</i>	Michael Berry	2003	Anchor Books
<i>Zaixiyuzhong</i>	<i>Cries in the Drizzle</i>	Allan H. Barr	2007	Anchor Books
<i>Huhan</i>				
<i>Xiongdi</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	Carlos Rojas & Eileen Cheng-yin Chow	2009	Pantheon Books
<i>Shige Cihui lide</i>				
<i>Zhongguo</i>	<i>China in Ten Words</i>	Allan H. Barr	2012	Pantheon Books
<i>Huanghun lide</i>	<i>Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China</i>	Allan H. Barr	2014	Pantheon Books
<i>Nanhai</i>				
<i>Diqitian</i>	<i>The Seventh Day</i>	Allan H. Barr	2015	Pantheon Books
<i>Siyue Sanri Shijian</i>	<i>The April 3rd Incident: Stories</i>	Allan H. Barr	2018	Pantheon Books

All English translators of Yu Hua's works comprise university professors in Chinese literature or culture rather than professional translators. Except for *Past and the Punishment*, their translation products are published by commercial book publishers, such as Pantheon Books and Anchor Books. Considering the scarcity of research into the stylistic features of the group of translators with similar occupational and living backgrounds, it is unknown whether the translations conducted by university professors and published by commercial book publishers are scholarly or commercialized. To a greater extent, Barr is also uncertain of the tendency of his translation style (Wang & Barr, 2021). Thus, studying the translation style of Barr, who translated most of Yu Hua's works, is a significant start to exploring the entirety of translators of contemporary Chinese literature. The results of the development of Barr's translation style are able

to present the journey of a non-professional translator from a green hand in the translation field to an experienced translator.

Barr's translations have drawn the interest of researchers. Specifically, Zhou (2015) examined the quality of Barr's translation of *China in Ten Words* by analyzing his translation strategies and problems for the catchphrases. Although Zhou's findings provided potential translators with useful suggestions for translating catchphrases, the case studies without quantitative data did not make significant revelation of the comprehensive picture of Barr's translation. Wang and Cui (2019) investigated Barr's translation habits based on the perspective of his selection of the original texts, views on translation, and the translation strategies of idioms in his translation of Yu Hua's *The Seventh Day*. Wang and Cui's study is innovative in exploring the sociological reasons behind the translator's choice of translation strategies. Following that, the combination of textural and extra-textual analysis could detect the translator's cognition in the production of the translation product. Barr's competence in reproducing the narrative style and poetic effects of the original text in *Cries in the Drizzle* is evaluated within the framework of the narrative stylistic theory (Song & Sun, 2020). As of currently, most research works have been prescriptive in nature to critically evaluate the translation quality of Barr's translations. Given the challenge to establish a fixed standard for literary appreciation, the descriptive study of Barr's style is more valuable for presenting the social and cognitive factors motivating a translator to repeatedly make a specific choice in the translation. On the other hand, previous studies solely focused on Barr's unique translation without considering the changes occurring in his translation career. Accordingly, this article seeks to describe Barr's translation style and its development. The published four interviews with Barr (Barr & Yang, 2019; Sun & Barr, 2019; Wang & Barr, 2021; Zhao & Barr, 2020) and his introduction to his translation journey (Barr, 2020) offered evidence to justify the motivation that shapes and reshapes his style.

2.2 Translator's Style

The traditional stylistic investigation into translation studies, which is prescriptive and source-text-oriented, focuses on the method of the level of translation's reproduction of the ST style. To illustrate, House (1997) forms a checklist on the degree of similarity between the translation and ST styles to measure the translation quality. Considering the purpose of traditional translational stylistic studies to prescribe the ideal methodology and strategies to replicate the ST style for potential translators, the translation is regarded as the derivative of the ST. At the same time, the translator is considered to be invisible and holds a lower status than the author. Moreover, Parks (2014) conducted an in-depth exploration of the translation styles of six renowned writers based on their literary works. Despite Parks' declaration that he has no intention to evaluate the translator's style, numerous comments were made on the loss of the ST style in the TT. Nevertheless, Parks' study demonstrated that the writer was still granted a higher status than the translator.

Baker (2000) applied a corpus-based approach to studying translation universals to investigate two translators' styles by comparing the stylometric parameters including STTR and average sentence length. Notably, the most frequently used reporting verbs in English in their translations were "say" and "tell". Translation universals, which are the common stylistic features of the translated texts, focus on their similarities against the non-translated texts. Meanwhile, the translator's style, which denotes one translator's repetitive linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour (Baker, 2000), is focused on the divergence between different translators' translated texts. Tymoczko (1998) proposed that divergence holds higher value for exploration compared to the similarity of the translated texts in corpus-based translation studies. Baker's target-oriented corpus-based methodology develops a descriptive and translated text-oriented trend of translational stylistic study. In addition, the status of the translators whose creativity and habits in the translation are explored in the translator-style studies is promoted.

Baker (2000) compared the translator's style and "thumbprint" of one translator. The metaphor reveals Baker's emphasis on the consistency of the stylistic features throughout one's translations. Notably, Baker's proposal of the translator's style is meaningful to the studies of the anonymous translator's attribution and offers a new perspective to investigate the translator and the nature of translation. However, the reliability of Baker's target-oriented methodology is doubted due to the inadequate systematic examination of the ST style, which may form certain results of the translated-text style. Furthermore, Saldanha (2011) developed Baker's target-oriented methodology by taking ST into account. This was followed by redefining the translator's style as the consistent linguistic or non-linguistic choices throughout all the translations developed by the same translator. The choices that distinguish their translated texts from other translations are motivated by ST (ibid.), albeit not entirely explained by it. Saldanha (2011) focused on two translators who have comparable professional and cultural backgrounds and translated approximate numbers and types of writers by analyzing emphatic italics, foreign words, and optional "that" after the reporting verbs "say" and "tell". Additionally, removing the translation's stylistic features that are completely attributed to the ST style and the revised target-oriented methodology is more reliable for extracting the translator's style from the results of the translation's stylistic features. Saldanha's revised target-oriented methodology is also utilized to identify one translator's consistent stylistic choices in all his or her translations. However, it was also highlighted that the translator in her study, who rarely used italics in his translations prior to the interview on his understanding of the translator's style and italics, applied italics in his translation after the interview. This condition indicated that one translator's style may change with their learning and awareness of translation and stylistic theories. Moreover, rather than emphasizing the consistent nature of one translator's style, Boase-Beier (2006) suggested that one translator's style reflects their cognitive state on the ST style. Therefore, one translator's style may change with the shift in their mental state (Boase-Beier, 2019).

Following the target-oriented methodology, researchers proposed a source-oriented model, which uses corpus to analyze various translators' stylistic features in their translations of the same ST. With the same ST as the controlled variable, the researchers are able to compare and identify the stylistic differences between distinguished translators regardless of the influence of ST style on TT style.

Winters (2007) investigated two translators' German translations of the English novel *The Beautiful and Damned*, which was published in the same year. In this study, the speech-act report verbs were analysed. Similarly, Mastropiero (2018) and Liu and Afzaal (2021) applied the source-oriented methodology to differentiate two translators' styles by exploring key clusters and lexical bundles, respectively. Instead of expressing concerns regarding one translator's consistent choices, researchers used the source-oriented method and regarded the translators' distinguished and unique linguistic and translation-strategy choices in one translated text as their style. Due to the method's validity and effectiveness, the source-oriented method is the most popular corpus-based method among the previous translator-style studies (Li et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the source-oriented methodology is not replicable as the researchers are only able to choose translators who have translated the same ST instead of those who fulfil the research purpose as the research subjects.

Huang (2015) proposed two types of multiple-complex model: the combination of the target-oriented and source-oriented methods and the systematic verification of the findings of the target-oriented model, which are not completely presented by the ST style. With the former type of the multiple-complex model, one translator's stylistic preference in one translated text is verified by its consistency in other translations. While the findings are of one specific translator's style rather than the style of one translated text, the research scope of the translator's style with this method is still limited by the need for retranslated samples. The latter type of multiple-complex model resembles Saldanha's revised target-oriented method, which considers the style of the ST. Compared to the source-oriented methodology, the research samples of the revised target-oriented methodology can be selected based on the research objective without the restriction of the re-translated versions of the same ST. The revised target-oriented model is focused on one translator's consistent recurring choices in all their translations. However, this model could not be used to analyze the development of one translator's style, which is significant for exploring the growth of a translator and the social and cognitive factors influencing their choices in translation.

While most studies on translator styles were focused on the consistency of a translator's stylistic preference, it is essential to observe the changes in a translator's style in different periods of their translation career and the factors leading to these changes. However, only a few studies (Cockerill, 2014; Zhang & Liu, 2019) were conducted on the evolution of a specific translator's style throughout their career. Cockerill (2014) employed the qualitative approach to examine the shift of Futabatei Shimei's translation strategies on the verb tenses and narrative indicators in different periods of his translation career. Despite the significance of Cockerill's results, which demonstrated a translator's ability to develop two different translation styles in his translation career, the qualitative data collected by observing the text required more supportive evidence of the quantitative data. Furthermore, several statistical stylistic parameters were analyzed to investigate the translational stylistic change of Howard Goldblatt, who has translated over 60 Chinese novels from over 30 authors into English. Although the findings of both studies have proven that one translator's style shifts due to the changes in the social and cultural context around them, the motivations were not elaborated on in detail. Chen and Li (2022) examined Eileen Chang's different translation styles shown in the Chinese translation of her works, including another author's works and the motivations leading to the variation in her styles in different translations. While Chen and Li's study focused on the changes in one translator's style that corresponds to STs with different authorial identities, the current study aims to explore the change in one translator's style during different periods of his translation career.

This study aims to explore changes in Barr's translation style shown in his two translations rather than his consistent style in all his translations. Given that the translations of different STs were investigated, this study compared the corresponding frequencies of the translator's choices in each translation rather than the number as the source-oriented method. Despite the low precision of the new model compared to the traditional source-oriented method, the selection of the most similar STs is a possible trial for analysing any translators' styles based on the research objectives. Accordingly, this article applies the revised source-oriented model to investigate the development of Barr's translation style and the factors encouraging him to change his style.

2.3 Speech-Act Report Verbs

The reporting clauses may be the stylistic indicator due to their importance in shaping the conversation structure, building the characters, and presenting the narrator's attitude in literary works (Baker, 2000). The translator's linguistic habits of translating the reporting clauses in the direct speech are not only able to identify one translator's style, but the translator's choice of reporting verbs in the reporting clauses could also be taken as the stylistic indicator in the study on the translator's style. One translator's preference for the tenses and modifiers of the reporting verbs and the optional connective "that" after the reporting verb may indicate their views on the distance between the readers and the ST fictional world (Baker, 2000). Moreover, the methodology by Baker compares different forms of "say" and the frequency of optional "that", which appears after "say" in two translators' translations with the general corpus of the translated text and non-translated text to present the translator's closeness to the source language and the target language. Following that, Saldanha (2011) solely focused on different translators' application of the optional "that" after "say" and "tell" without considering the tenses and forms of the verbs. The initial studies suggested the reporting verbs as the sensitive stylistic maker to differentiate one translator's style from the other. Therefore, Baker (2000) and Saldanha (2011) only examined the two verbs that appear most frequently in English regardless of translators' usage of other frequently used verbs and the conditions of the reporting verbs in the ST.

Winters (2007) explored diverse reporting verbs, taking ST into account. This was followed by the suggestion that the translator's distinctive choice of verbs for the most prevalent speech-act report verbs in the same ST could differentiate between each translation. The range of speech-act report verbs, which includes all the verbs in the reporting clause of the direct speech, is more comprehensive compared to the reporting verbs used to introduce the utterance (Winters, 2007). Winters (2007) applied the source-oriented model to compare the number of different verbs, repeatedly used verbs, and verbs that only appear once for each verb that appears more than 10

times in the ST. In this case, Winters (2007) suggested that the lexical richness of the verbs in two translations could manifest the translator's most concerned issue in the translation. In translating the repetitive speech-act report verbs in the ST, if a translator uses a variety of verbs to interpret the context, they may have the tendency to offer more explanations and produce more explicit translations. Overall, these translators show more interference in the translation to illustrate the source-text fictional world to the readers. In contrast, the translators who retain the stylistic traits of repetition are more loyal to the ST and bring the readers into the source-text cultural context (Winters, 2007). Winter's methodology of taking speech-act report verbs as a stylistic indicator to explore the translator's style is applied to investigate the stylistic preferences of four translators of Chinese modern fiction *Biancheng* (Zhao & Guo, 2019). The four translators' tendency to select the verbs for the most often used speech-act report verbs in Chinese novels may be the reference data for the potential study.

Zhao and Guo (2019) examined the translators' styles by analyzing the degree of explicitness shown in their translations of "Biancheng" (Border Town). The lexical richness and tense of the speech-act report verbs in the TTs for "说" (say) were focused on in their study (Zhao & Guo, 2019). In contrast to the aforementioned studies that explored different translators' translation strategies for the speech-act report verbs with the same contexts, the two STs in the current study offered different contexts for the speech-act report verbs, which may impact the translator's choice of the verbs in the TTs. Provided that the two STs are created by Yu Hua, some of his consistent linguistic habits of using the speech-act report verbs are feasible for reducing the impact of the different contexts.

In the process of examining the speech-report verbs in the English translations, this article refers to Ardekani's (2002) classification of the verbs. Specifically, the speech-act report verbs are classified into four types based on their functions in the reporting clauses: the ones that imply the nature of the content, such as "explain"; the ones that show the nature of the speech, such as "ask"; the ones that reveal the speaker's speaking fashion, such as "whisper", and; those indirect speech-report verbs, such as "she nodded "yes". This is followed by an exploration of the change of Barr's stylistic idiosyncrasies in translating the most frequently used speech-act report verbs in two English translations of Yu Hua's works from the perspective of vocabulary richness and the maintenance of the semantic meaning of the original verbs.

3. Methodology

The self-established parallel corpus in this article is composed of STs and TTs of *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China* and *The April 3rd Incident: Stories*. After a manual proofreading of the content of the electronic file based on their published hard copy and removal of the text noise, ABBYYAligner was applied to align each Chinese sentence with their corresponding English translations. In this case, a manual correction was required for the translation pairs that were not aligned. This was followed by the use of HearsomeTMXeditor to extract the translation pairs with the most frequently occurring speech-act report verbs in the STs, namely "说" (say), "问" (ask), and "叫/吼/喊" (shout). Subsequently, Microsoft Excel was utilized to categorize and calculate the English speech-act report verbs for each Chinese speech-act report verb.

Barr's habits of using the English speech-act report verbs were evaluated by examining their variety, frequency, and distance from the semantic meanings of the corresponding verbs in the STs. Barr's preference for translating speech-act report verbs in the STs in two translations was compared to investigate the changes in his stylistic features. Barr's interviews and statements about his translation career are combined with the corporal data to investigate the motivations for the changes in his stylistic preferences.

The speech-act report verbs corresponding to "说" (say), "问" (ask), and "叫/吼/喊" (shout) were drawn from the two translations. This was followed by the separation of speech-act report verbs in the translations for each of the most frequent speech-act report verbs in the ST into two categories based on whether they shared the same semantic meaning in the original text. Generally, the higher the frequency of the speech-act report verbs that preserve the semantic meaning in the ST, the more faithful the translator would be to the ST. The frequency of diverse speech-act report verbs and the unique verbs that only appeared once in the translation was measured to demonstrate the variety of the speech-act report verbs in the two translations. Subsequently, all the sentences that paired the meanings of the speech-act report verbs were different, while their context was extracted in the parallel corpus to observe the factors that encourage the translator to change the meaning of the speech-act report verbs of the ST in the translation. This was followed by the summarization of the factors and their classification into specific types. Barr's interviews and the background knowledge about him in the papers are combined with the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from the corpus. This combination aims to explore the social and cognitive elements motivating Barr to retain and change the semantic meaning of the ST in two translations, which were completed in different phases of his translation career.

4. Results and Discussion

Although the direct speeches in the ST of Barr's earlier translation (1,060) were approximately three times higher than their amount in the ST of his subsequent translation (385), the number of different speech-act report verbs in the former one (31) was smaller than their size in Barr's latest translation (39). The lexical richness of the speech-act report verbs in the two STs also indicated Barr's intuitive interpretation of the style of *Huanghun li de Nanhai*, which is *conciseness* (Barr, 2021). Given that the most frequent occurring speech-act report verbs in both STs are "说" (say), "问" (ask), and "叫/喊/吼" (shout), this study focused on Barr's linguistic preference for translating them. Holding a similar semantic meaning in Chinese, "叫/喊/吼" was taken as a unit in the analysis. Accordingly, Table 2 illustrates the speech-act verbs in the TTs correlated to "说" (say), "问" (ask), and "叫/喊/吼" (shout) and their recurring frequency in two TTs.

Based on Oxford English-Chinese Chinese-English Dictionary, the speech-act report verbs in the TTs were categorized into two groups. Specifically, one group comprised the verbs that expressed the same semantic meaning as the verbs in the STs. The other includes the verbs that explained the implied meaning in the source-text context or represent the translators' different interpretations of them. Moreover, the speech-act report verbs in the removed STs fell under the third group of the ones in the TTs.

As seen in Table 2, the frequency of the deletion of "说" and "问" and changes in the original semantic meaning in Barr's earlier translation was higher compared to his subsequent translation. Furthermore, 30% of "说" and 24% of "问" were crossed out in Barr's earlier translation, whereas the corresponding figures in his subsequent translation amounted to 15% and 10%. The smaller proportion of the omitted speech-act report verbs in Barr's subsequent translation indicated his stronger faithfulness to the author and the ST with the advent of time. Moreover, 66% and 82% of translations of "说" and "问" in the TT expressed the same semantic meaning in the ST of Barr's later translation. The equivalent figures in Barr's earlier translation were more miniature, proving that the translator exhibited higher interference and creativity in his earlier translation. Additionally, "叫/喊/吼" (shout) illustrates a more specific image compared to "说" (say) and "问" (ask) that present a more implicit, vague, and abstract image. Moreover, "叫/喊/吼" (no) was omitted in both TTs. To illustrate, the translator solely changed their semantic meaning once in 35 cases of his subsequent translation while transferring the semantic meaning of seven out of 64 "叫/喊/吼" in his earlier translation. Additionally, the clear image of "shout" in the ST was shifted into a more abstract and general image, which included the verbs "say," "ask," and "go," or a distinguished image with "moan" in Barr's earlier translation.

Table 2. The number of diverse speech-act report verbs in the TTs in line with the most frequent speech-act report verbs in the STs

Huanghun li de Nanhai (1,015 speech-act reporting verbs)		Boy in the Twilight (751 speech-act reporting verbs)			
ST	TT			the same semantic meaning	different semantic meaning
说	767	Omit it	228	56%	30%
		Say, tell, speak	430		
		Ask, go on, add, repeat, nod, answer, call, continue, reply, persist, blurt out, explain, murmur, remark, shout, go, announce, break in, chime in, chip in, concede, conclude, cry, exclaim, fume, instruct, interrupt, issue the instruction, moan, pick this up, sigh, smile, spin a line, splutter, unleash comments and questions, declare, whisper, yell	109	14%	
问	148	Omit it	36	64%	24%
		Ask, inquire, question	94		
		Say, persist, bark, call, put it to, go back	18	12%	
叫/吼/喊	64	Shout, cry, yell, call, scream, bellow, roar	57	89%	11%
		Say, ask, moan, go	7		
Siyue Sanri Shijian (365 speech-act report verbs)		The April 3rd Incident (325 speech-act report verbs)			
ST	TT			the same semantic meaning	different semantic meaning
说	215	Omit it	34	66%	15%
		Say, tell, speak	141		
		Repeat, go on, ask, add, murmur, mutter, begin, crackle, explain, nod, persist, snap, sob, splutter, continue, yell	40	19%	
问	61	Omit it	6	82%	10%
		Ask	50		
		Cry, murmur, persist, repeat, challenge	5	8%	
叫/吼/喊	35	Shout, cry, call, yell, roar, bellow, bark, scream	34	97%	3%
		Continue	1		

The observation and analysis of all the cases in the translator transform the semantic meaning of the source-text speech-act report verb in the TTs. Accordingly, this article proposes three factors motivating the translator's selection by narrowing or broadening the range of the meanings of the speech-act report verbs:

- 1) The modifier of the speech-act report verb in the reporting clause may motivate the translator to select a more specific verb that could express the meanings of the modifier and the original meaning of the verb.
- 2) The content of the utterance could force the translator to change the verb.
- 3) The fictional image of the context can also motivate the translator to make the same choice.

If the translator chooses to shift the semantic meaning of the verb for the first factor, the translator would not show much interference as a translator in the translation. However, if the changes are attributed to these two factors, the translator would present his interpretation and

explanation of the implied meaning of the ST.

In Barr's subsequent translation, almost all the cases that change the semantic meaning of the source-text speech-act report verb are attributed to the first aforementioned factor. For example, "继续说" (continue to say) and "继续问" (continue to ask) are translated into "persist" (continue) or "低声说" (say in a low voice), "轻声说" (say in a soft voice) into "mutter" (say indistinctly), "小声问" (ask in a low voice) into "murmur" (speak quietly), and "对她的笑容表示了愤怒, 他低声说" (he expressed anger at her smile and said in a low voice) into "snap" (speak sharply or angrily). The translator creatively replaces the modifier and the verb in the ST with a verb in the TT. Barr attempted to present the specific image of the speaker with conciseness. Barr (2020) regarded "conciseness" as the most crucial style of Yu Hua's writing. His 16-year translation practice on Yu Hua's four books necessitated him to carry the principle of conciseness in mind in the translation process.

[1] is one of the few cases in Barr's later translation where the meaning of the speech-act report verb is changed for the latter two motivations. The translator transforms "say", which is a general and abstract verb, into "explain," which is more specific based on the implied meaning of the utterance. With the use of "explain," the nature of the content of the speech becomes more explicit compared to the use of "say". However, Barr seldom inserts an interpretation of the implied meaning inferred from the content of the speech or the context around the utterance in his subsequent translation. The rise of Yu Hua's fame in the Western literary world and the style of ambiguity of the ST may drive the translator to retain the original meaning of the speech-act report verb in the translation.

[1] ST: 物理老师说: "它们可以抵挡一下飞来的砖瓦。" (*Siyue Sanri Shijian*)

LT (Literal Translation): The physics teacher **said**: "They'll help block flying tiles."

TT: "They'll help block flying tiles," the physics teacher **explained**. (*The April 3rd Incident: Stories*)

Overall, all three factors equally motivated Barr to shift the meaning of the source-text speech-act report verb in his earlier translation. The translator applied one speech-act report verb to represent the complex and vivid description in the source-text reporting clause. For instance, "高声叫起来, 她说" (crying out, she said) was translated into "exclaim" (say loudly), "最后说" (say finally) was translated into "conclude" (say to end something), and "压低声音怒气冲冲地说" (low the voice and say angrily) was translated into "fume" (show anger). In addition, 11 "问" (ask) and 4 "叫/喊/吼" (shout) were translated into "say" in Barr's earlier translation, although this case did not apply to his subsequent translation. "Ask" indicated the nature of the utterance, while "shout" indicated his speaking manner. Possibly motivated by the context, the translator changed "ask" into "say" 11 times, which indicated the nature of the content. According to [2], depending on the context, the speakers proposed the question to make fun of "me", who is not intelligent, instead of gaining an answer based on the common situation. Therefore, "ask" was replaced by a more abstract and general verb, "say," to imply the speakers' indifference. In the ST of [3], "shouting" (saying loudly), which denotes the impatience of the speaker, was substituted with "saying" to leave more imaginative space for the readers regarding the image of the speaker.

[2] ST: 他们问我: "喂, 你们是不是夫妻?" (*Huanghun lide Nanhai*)

LT: They **asked** me, "Hey, are you husband and wife?"

TT: They would point and **say**, "Hey, are you husband and wife?" (*Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*)

[3] ST: 电话的另一端在叫她: "喂, 喂, 你听到了吗?" (*Huanghun lide Nanhai*)

LT: The voice at the other end was **shouting**, "Hello? Hello? Can you hear me?"

TT: The voice at the other end was **saying**, "Hello? Hello? Can you hear me?" (*Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*)

Barr is inspired by the content of the utterance to shift the meaning of the source-text speech-act report verb in his earlier translation. According to [4], the content of the utterance is Wen Hong's comment on Li Qigang's trousers. The translator transferred the abstract and implicit verb "say" into a more specific and explicit verb, "remark" (comment upon) to establish Wen Hong's character image of arrogance and despise against her suitor, Li Qigang. As seen in [5], Kunshan asked a passerby to inform Shigang, who slapped Kunshan's wife, to show himself for a fight. Upon the utterance of this sentence, Kunshan was surrounded by a group of curious onlookers. The nature of Kunshan's utterance, which is an imperative sentence, is an order to the individual who knows where Shigang is. Notably, the verb "instruct" (command) is more explicit in presenting the nature of the report compared to "say." Additionally, "instruct" is able to more accurately express his expectation to show masculinity and gain respect from the onlookers compared to "say." In the cases of [4] and [5], the translator assists the readers in grasping the nature of the report and interpreting the character images of the speakers by clarifying their implied speaking methods with his interpretation.

[4] ST: 温红这时伸手摸了摸李其刚的裤子, 她说: "这么厚的裤子, 就是百分之九十也热。" (*Huanghun lide Nanhai*)

LT: Wen Hong reached out a hand to feel Li Qigang's trousers and **said**, "Pants this heavy will feel hot even if they're ninety per cent wool."

TT: Wen Hong reached out a hand and felt Li Qigang's trousers. "Pants this heavy will feel hot even if they're ninety per cent wool," she **remarked**. (*Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*)

[5] ST: 昆山说: "你去告诉他, 我昆山来找他了。" (*Huanghun lide Nanhai*)

LT: Kunshan **said**, "tell him Kunshan has come for him."

TT: "Tell him Kunshan has come for him," Kunshan **instructed**. (*Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*)

Compared to Barr's subsequent translation, he shows higher creativity in translating the reporting clause and interference in the translation with his understanding of the literary world of the ST in his first translation of Yu Hua's works. According to Barr (2019), he does not make substantial revisions of the ST in the translation due to his low confidence to decide on successful writing patterns. Therefore, Barr prefers to change the original semantic meaning of the speech-act report verb in his earlier translation due to the following four factors:

- 1) The stories in *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China* describe the daily life of Chinese people with a regular narrative style and simple language. Barr possesses higher confidence in showing his interference to present the literary world of the source text to the target readers.
- 2) Barr was exploring translation methods and skills as a green hand in the filed literary translation.
- 3) Barr was more impacted by the English language norm of using speech-act report verbs to make adjustments in his earlier translation.
- 4) Barr intends to increase the variation of his translating method to retain the concise style of the ST and prevent the TT from being flat and dull.

In general, Barr demonstrates a stronger tendency of changing the original meaning of the ST's speech-act report verb by removing or explaining it more clearly in his earlier translation. Furthermore, the factors driving Barr to shift the ST's speech-act report verb into a verb with a different or more specific meaning in the TT were mainly his interpretation of the context or the utterance in his earlier translation. Meanwhile, the modifier around "说" (say) in the reporting clause was the main factor that drove Barr to conduct it in his later translation. The frequency of deleting the reporting clause and changing the original semantic meanings of speech-act report verbs and different motivations for changing their meanings has proven that Barr is more faithful to the ST and the author with the advent of time and translation practice. In the two translations, Barr's different patterns of choices on speech-act report verbs are in line with his overall understanding of the styles of the two STs. Barr's interpretation of the ST style and his changing attitude toward his closeness to the readers and the ST determine his translation-strategy choices of the speech-act report verbs.

5. Conclusion

This article aims to utilize the revised source-oriented model of corpus-based translator-style analysis to investigate the changes in Barr's style in different periods. Subsequently, it was found that speech-act report verbs were perceptive in identifying one translator's different repeated linguistic and non-linguistic choices in different translations. When Barr translated the most frequently occurring speech-act report verbs in the STs, he showed higher creativity and susceptibility to present his interpretation of the implied meaning of the verbs and actively bring the ST fictional world to the target readers in his earlier translation. With Barr's tendency to offer explicit translation of the implied meaning in the ST in his earlier translation, explicitness was shown through the earlier translation, which was a common feature of all the translated texts. The results demonstrated Barr's understanding of the ST style as a professor in Chinese literature, with the first trial in the translation being filed as a non-professional translator driving him to make various attempts in his first translation works.

In comparison to the earlier translation, Barr's subsequent translation was more faithful to the ST and the author. In this translation, Barr attempted to demonstrate to the readers the style of the original text with minimum interpretation and explanation of the implied meaning in the ST. Overall, Barr's understanding of the ST styles, his changing assumption of the target readers, his confidence in the popularity of the books in the book market, and his understanding of the author's fame in the English literary world might influence his linguistic and translation-strategy choices.

Barr, who shows his rigorous attitude was formed in his academic career, seldom adds or deletes the sentences or paragraphs of the STs in his two translations. However, his principles of linguistic and translation-strategy choices change with time and ST style. Accordingly, this study explored the results gained from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data of the speech-act report verbs in the parallel corpus and extra-textual evidence related to the translator to identify the primary social and cognitive factors driving the translator to make distinguished, salient, and repeated choices in different translations. It was indicated from the results that the revised source-oriented model of the translator's style study is feasible to determine changes in one translator's style in the different periods of his or her translating career. Notably, the methodology of corpus-based translator's style study is significant for exploring the growth of a translator from a newcomer to a seasoned translator. Moreover, Barr's translator's style is expected to contribute a fresh element to a picture of Chinese contemporary literature's translation history. Even so, the comparison of Barr's two translations was insufficient for proving that time is a crucial variable for his style shift. This condition has necessitated a further investigation into this subject through the analysis of Barr's four translations of Yu Hua's fiction along the timeline to ensure that Barr's translation style changes with time. Additionally, the revised source-oriented methodology is expected to examine the growth and cognition of more translators to identify the nature of translation mechanisms and compose the translation history.

References

- Ardekani, M. A. M. (2002). The translation of reporting verbs in English and Persian. *Babel*, 48(2), 125-134.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.48.2.03ard>
- Baker, M. (2000). Towards a methodology for investigating the style of a literary translator. *Target. International Journal of Translation*

- Studies*, 12(2), 241-266. <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.12.2.04bak>
- Baker, M., Francis, G., & Tognini-Bonelli, E. (1993). *Text and technology: in honour of John Sinclair*. John Benjamins Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1075/z.64>
- Barr, A., & Yang, P. (2019). Interview with American sinologist Allan Barr on the translation and communication of Chinese novels in British and US. *International Sinology*, 4, 18-24.
- Barr, A. H. (2020). Translating Yu Hua. In *A century of Chinese literature in translation (1919–2019)* (pp. 171-182). New York, NY: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429316821-16>
- Boase-Beier, J. (2006). *Stylistic approaches to translation*. Manchester, UK : St. Jerome Publishing.
- Boase-Beier, J. (2019). *Translation and style*. New York, NY : Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429327322>
- Chen, F., & Li, D. (2022). Patronage and ideology: A corpus-assisted investigation of Eileen Chang's style of translating herself and the other. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 38(2), 34-49. <https://doi.org/10.1093/llc/fqac015>
- Cockerill, H. (2014). *Style and narrative in translations: The contribution of Futabatei Shimei*. New York, NY: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759487>
- Goldblatt, H., Lin, S. L., & Jiang, Z. (2019). Translation is not completed by one person. *Southern Cultural Forum*, 2, 34-39.
- Hermans, T. (1996). The translator's voice in translated narrative. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 8(1), 23-48. <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.8.1.03her>
- House, J. (1997). *Translation quality assessment: a model revisited*. Tübingen, Germany: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Huang, L. (2015). *Style in translation: a corpus-based perspective*. New York, NY: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-45566-1>
- Kenny, D., & Winters, M. (2020). Machine translation, ethics and the literary translator's voice. *Translation Spaces*, 9(1), 123-149. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ts.00024.ken>
- Li, Y., bin Abdullah, M. A. R., & Wong, L. Y. (2022). A systemic literature review of translator's style in translation studies. International Conference on Language, Education, and Social Science (ICLESS 2022). https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-15-2_10
- Liu, K., & Afzaal, M. (2021). Translator's style through lexical bundles: a corpus-driven analysis of two English translations of *Honglouloumeng*. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 1-10. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.633422>
- Mastropiero, L. (2018). Key clusters as indicators of translator style. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 30(2), 240-259. <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.17040.mas>
- Parks, T. (2014). *Translating style: a literary approach to translation—a translation approach to literature*. London, England: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759791>
- Saldanha, G. (2011). Emphatic italics in English translations: Stylistic failure or motivated stylistic resources? *Meta: journal des traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, 56(2), 424-442. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1006185ar>
- Song, Y., & Sun, H. (2020). Study on the English translation *Cries in the Drizzle* from the narrative stylistics. *Foreign Languages Research*, 6, 79-89.
- Sun, C., & Barr, A. (2019). A conversation with sinologist Allan Barr on his translations of Yu Hua and Han Han. *Translation Review*, 104(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07374836.2019.1635365>
- Tymoczko, M. (1998). Computerized corpora and the future of translation studies. *Meta: journal des traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, 43(4), 652-660. <https://doi.org/10.7202/004515ar>
- Venuti, L. (2017). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*. London, England: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315098746>
- Wang, B., & Barr, A. H. (2021). Yu Hua's works in English translation: An interview with Allan H. Barr. *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, 8(1), 84-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23306343.2020.1859713>
- Wang, B., & Cui, J. (2019). An exploration of British sinologist Allan Barr's translatorial habitus: With special reference to his translation of Yu Hua's *The Seventh Day*. *Foreign Language and Literature Research*, 4, 47-56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23306343.2020.1859713>
- Wang, K. (2012). Chronicle of Yu Hua's literary creations. *Soochow Academic*, 4, 108-121.
- Winters, M. (2007). F. Scott Fitzgerald's Die Schönen und Verdammten: A corpus-based study of speech-act report verbs as a feature of translators' style. *Meta: journal des traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, 52(3), 412-425. <https://doi.org/10.7202/016728ar>
- Winters, M. (2013). German modal particles—from lice in the fur of our language to manifestations of translators' styles. *Perspectives*, 21(3), 427-445. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2012.711842>
- Yu, H. (2014). *Boy in the twilight: Stories of the hidden China* (A. Barr, Trans.). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

- Yu, H. (2018). *The April 3rd incident: Stories* (A. Barr, Trans.). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Zhang, D., & Liu, Z. (2019). A revisit of Goldblatt's Chinese literature translations and his style. *Technology Enhanced Foreign Language Education*, 4, 25-32.
- Zhao, H., & Barr, A. H. (2020). Fiction, history, and literary translation: the interview with Professor Allan Barr. *Literature & Art Studies*, 9, 102-110.
- Zhao, Q., & Guo, X. (2019). Translator's explicitation strategy: an investigation on the reporting verb shuo in four English versions of *Border Town*. *Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages*, 5, 109-119.
- Zhou, Y. (2015). Study on the construction of Chinese contemporary literature's discourse from the translation of catchphrases. *Journal of Xi'an International Studies University*, 23(2), 111-115.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).