"SL Shining Through" in Translational Language:

A Corpus-based Study of Chinese Translation of English Passives

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Abstract: Translational language as a "third code" has been found to be different from both source and target languages. Recent studies have proposed a number of translation universal (TU) hypotheses which include, for example, simplification, explicitation and normalization. This paper investigates the "source language shining through" put forward by Teich (2003). The hypothesis is that "In a translation into a given target language (TL), the translation may be oriented more towards the source language (SL), i.e. the SL shines through" (Teich 2003: 207), which has attracted little attention in translation studies. If this feature of translational language that has been reported on the basis of translated English or German can be generalized as one of translational universals, it is of vital importance to find supporting evidence from non-European languages. The evidence from genetically distinct language pairs such as English and Chinese is arguably more convincing. This study presents a detailed case study of English passive constructions and their Chinese translations based on comparable corpora and parallel corpora. This research explores a new aspect of TUs and offers another perspective for translation studies.

1. Introduction

Translational language has been shown to exhibit certain linguistic features indicating that it is a special type of text different from both source and target languages, or a "third code" (Frawley 1984). Just as Hansen & Teich (2001:44) suggests, "It is commonly assumed in translation studies that translations are specific kinds of texts that are not only different from their original source language (SL) texts, but also from comparable original texts in the same language as the target language (TL)". Recent studies of linguistic features at lexical, syntactic and discourse level, which are mainly on the basis of translated English, have motivated the formulation of TU hypotheses such as simplification, explicitation, normalization, sanitization, under-representation and levelling out / convergence.

Simplification refers to the "tendency to simplify the language used in translation" (Baker 1996: 181-182), and as a result translated language is simpler than target native language lexically, syntactically and/or stylistically (cf. also Blum-Kulka & Levenston 1983; Laviosa-Braithwaite 1997; Laviosa 1998).

Explicitation is manifested by the tendency in translations to "spell things out rather than leave them implicit" (Baker 1996: 180) through more frequent use of connectives and increased cohesion (cf. also Pym 2005; Chen 2006; He 2003; Dai & Xiao 2010).

Normalization suggests that translational language displays a "tendency to exaggerate features of the target language and to conform to its typical patterns" so that translated texts are more "normal" than non-translated texts (Baker 1996: 183).

Sanitization means that translated texts, with lost or reduced connotational meaning,

are "somewhat 'sanitized' versions of the original" (Kenny 1998: 515).

Under representation, which is also known as the "unique items hypothesis", is concerned with the unique items in translation (Mauranen 2007: 41-42). For example, Tirkkonen-Condit (2005) compares the frequencies and uses of the clitic particle *kin* in translated and original Finnish in five genres (i.e., fiction, children's fiction, popular fiction, academic prose and popular science), finding that the average frequency of *kin* in translated Finnish is lower than in native Finnish, suggesting an under-representation of the clitic particle in translated Finnish.

Leveling out refers to "the tendency of translated text to gravitate towards the centre of a continuum" (Baker1996:184), which Laviosa calls "convergence", i.e. the "relatively higher level of homogeneity of translated texts with regard to their own scores on given measures of universal features" (Laviosa 2002: 72).

Similar features have also been reported in the translational variants of a few languages other than English. As Toury (1995) points out,

in the long run, a habitualized translationese may even acquire some distinct markers, which would set it apart from any other mode of language use within the same culture, translational or non-translational […] translationese as a distinct variety of the target language […] there may of course emerge several varieties of this kind within a language, a major distinguishing factor probably being a regular association of each with a different source language" (Toury 1995: 208) , so Toury puts forward "a law of interference. (Toury 1995: 274)

In other words, the language used in translation is not as idiomatic and prototypical as it is in texts originally composed in the same language, for the translated language contains deviations from the general TL patterns, with SL being their source.

Similar features have also been reported in the translational variants of a few languages other than English. If the features of translational language that have been reported on the basis of translated English are to be generalized as translation universals, it is of vital importance to find supporting evidence from non-European languages, e.g., Chinese. (see Xiao & Dai 2010; Xiao 2010).

This article first reviews previous research for SL shining through (Section 2), and introduces the corpora used (Section 3). Then we present a case study of passives in comparable corpora of native and translational Chinese as well as English-Chinese parallel corpora (Section 4). Section 5 concludes the article.

2. A Review of SL Shining Through

The research of TU hypotheses reviewed in the previous section is clearly novel ideas of how to approach the questions of the specific properties of translations. However, there is one crucial component lacking: there are hardly any suggestions for explanation of the features observed in translations (Teich 2003: 22). There also exist some weaknesses in these proposals (cf. Hansen & Teich 2001). First, the measures suggested for testing the hypotheses are quite shallow linguistic properties exclusively, essentially operating at word and graphological levels, while higher levels of linguistic organization are not considered (Teich 2003: 22). Second, the properties of

translations are only analyzed on the basis of monolingual comparable texts (such as the TEC, see Baker 2004), disregarding one of the major features characterizing the process of translation, that is, translation is a process of text-induced text production, where this text is rendered in another language. Possible interferences between the source and target languages, which may also contribute to making translations a special kind of texts, can thus not be considered (Toury 1995). According to Toury's "a law of interference":

> In translation, phenomena pertaining to the make-up of the source text tend to be transferred to the target text […] The more the make-up of a text is taken as a factor in the formulation of its translation, the more the target text can be expected to show traces of interference (Toury 1995: 275-276).

After decades of text-based research into translational products, Toury explains the reason why the interference exists in translated languages:

> The fact that none of these consequences hold should lead to the conclusion that tolerance of interference—and hence the realization of interference itself—have to do with the socio-cultural conditions in which translation is performed and consumed as much as they have to do with our cognitive machinery (ibid: 275).

So, Toury refines his "law of source language interference" as follows:

[…] tolerance of interference—and hence the endurance of its manifestations—tend to increase when translation is carried out from a 'major' or highly prestigious language/culture, especially if the target language/culture is 'minor', or 'weak' in any other sense, 'majority' and 'minority', 'strength' and 'weakness' being relative rather than fixed, let alone inherent features of languages and cultures (ibid: 278).

Toury's law gives a vivid description of the feature of translations and sheds new light on translation studies. However, Toury does not explicitly deal with his law of interference (Teich 2003). Teich suggests that one of the factors that makes translations different from comparable native texts in the target language is that the source language — to a greater or lesser extent — "shines through" in translation. She presents her finding as follows:

In a translation into a given target language (TL), the translation may be oriented more towards the source language (SL), i.e. the SL shines through (Teich 2003: 145).

Teich presents her research in providing answers to a number of issues concerning translations from English into German and from German into English, on the one hand, and the relation between English and German original texts that

are comparable in register, on the other hand. Her results like the following:

> …both English translations from German and German translations from
> English differ from English original texts and German original texts,
> respectively, both exhibiting a mixture of TL normalization and SL shining
> through. (Teich 2003: 207)

Other research discusses the linguistic intereference in translation from Czech (L1) into English (L2) (Hopkinson 2007):

> The product of L1 – L2 translation will thus usually contain examples of what is
> colloquially termed 'translationese', i.e. a non-standard version of the target
> language that is to a greater or lesser extent affected by the source language.

Hopkinson's analysis focuses on three key factors in interference: poor reference materials, translators' generalisations of false hypotheses, and systemic-structural differences between the Czech and English languages. The examples analysed cover interference in lexis, word-formation, grammar and syntax. All his analysis is within the framework of the interlanguage model, and does not pay attention to the interference from L2 into target language in translation.

English, German and Czech are closely related languages. This article seeks to approach SL shining through on the basis of evidence from two distinctly different languages, English and Chinese, in an attempt to answer the following two questions:

Is the phenomenon of SL shining through also observable in English-to-Chinese translation? And if so, to what extent does SL shining through occur?

These research questions will be addressed via a case study of passive constructions by taking a composite approach that integrates monolingual comparable corpus analysis and parallel corpus analysis as advocated in McEnery & Xiao (2002). The monolingual comparable corpus approach compares comparable corpora of translated Chinese with the native Chinese language in an attempt to uncover salient features of translations, while the parallel corpus approach compares source and target languages on the basis of English-to-Chinese parallel corpora to determine the level of SL shining through, i.e., the extent to which the features of translated texts are transferred from the source language.

3. The corpora

Four corpora are used in this study, two comparable corpora and two parallel corpora, which are presented as follows.

3.1 Monolingual comparable corpora

The two monolingual comparable corpora are the Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (LCMC) and the ZJU Corpus of Translational Chinese (ZCTC), which represent native and translated Chinese respectively. LCMC is designed as a Chinese match for the FLOB corpus of British English (Hundt et al 1998) and the Frown

corpus of American English (Hundt et al 1999) for use in cross-linguistic contrast of English and Chinese (McEnery and Xiao 2004), while ZCTC is created as a translational counterpart of LCMC with the explicit aim of studying features of translated Chinese.

These two Chinese corpora are each composed of one million words in five hundred 2,000-word text samples which are taken proportionally from fifteen text categories published in China in the 1990s as shown in Table 1. As can be seen, the two corpora are roughly comparable in terms of both overall size and proportions for different genres. English is the source language of about 99% of text samples included in the ZCTC corpus, which also includes a small number of texts translated from other languages to mirror the reality of the world of translations in China.

Table 1. The genres covered in LCMC and ZCTC

Code	Genre	Number of samples	Proportion
A	Press reportage	44	8.8%
B	Press editorials	27	5.4%
C	Press reviews	17	3.4%
D	Religious writing	17	3.4%

E	Skills, trades and hobbies	38	7.6%
F	Popular lore	44	8.8%
G	Biographies and essays	77	15.4%
H	Miscellaneous (reports, official documents)	30	6%
J	Science (academic prose)	80	16%
K	General fiction	29	5.8%
L	Mystery and detective fiction	24	4.8%
M	Science fiction	6	1.2%
N	Adventure fiction	29	5.8%
P	Romantic fiction	29	5.8%
R	Humour	9	1.8%
Total		500	100%

3.2 Parallel corpora

The two parallel corpora used in this research are Babel and GCEPC, which are both aligned at the sentence level.

The Babel English-Chinese Parallel Corpus which covers mixed genres, consists of 327 English articles and their translations in Mandarin Chinese. Of these 115 texts were collected from the World of English between October 2000 and February 2001 while the remaining 212 texts were collected from the *Time* magazine from

September 2000 to January 2001. The corpus contains a total of 253,633 English words in the source texts and 287,462 Chinese tokens in the translations (see Xiao 2005).

GCEPC (General Chinese-English Parallel Corpus), which was created by Beijing Foreign Studies University, is the largest existing parallel corpus of English and Chinese. This is a Chinese-English bidirectional parallel corpus containing about 20 million English words and Chinese characters. It has four sub-corpora, namely Chinese-to-English Literature, Chinese-to-English Non-literature, English-to-Chinese Literature, and English-to-Chinese Non-literature (Wang 2004, Wang & Qin 2010). As we are interested in how Chinese translations are affected by English source texts, only the two English-to-Chinese sub-corpora will be used, amounting to 12 million words/characters, 60% of which are for English-Chinese Literature, and 40% for English-Chinese Non-literature (cf. Wang 2004: 40).

4. Passives constructions

Before we present the results of corpus analysis, it is appropriate to give a brief introduction to passives in English and Chinese. The passive construction in English is grammatically marked by a copular verb followed by a past participle. The structure *be* + past participle can be considered as the norm for English passives. However, *be* in the structure can also be replaced by other copular verbs such as *get*, *become*, *feel*, *look*, *remain* and *seem* because the passive meaning is essentially expressed by past

participles (Xiao et al. 2006: 111). In relation to English, Chinese employs a wider range of devices to express passive meaning. The most important passive marker in Chinese is *bei* (被). In addition to *bei,* passives in Chinese can be alternatively marked by *rang* (让), *jiao* (叫), *gei* (给)and the archaic *wei...suo* (为…所) structure.

4.1 Passive construction in LCMC and ZCTC

In this research, we will focus on the "default" passive construction marked by *bei* (被), which is also the most frequent type of passive construction in Chinese. Figure 1 shows the normalized frequencies of passives in the fifteen genres as well as their mean frequencies in the ZCTC and LCMC corpora. As indicated by the mean frequencies, passives are more frequent in translational Chinese, and the log-likelihood (LL) test indicates that the differences is statistically significant (LL= 69.59 for 1 d.f., p<0.001, see Table 2).
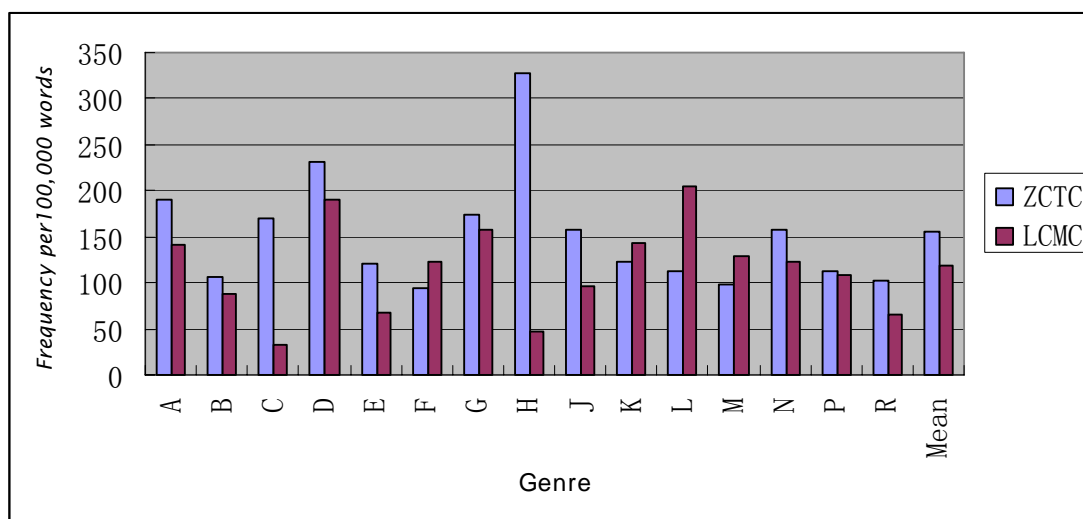

Figure 1. Distribution of passives in LCMC/ZCTC

Table 2. Log-likelihood tests for passives in ZCTC and LCMC

Genre	LCMC	ZCTC	LL score	Significance level
A	14.88	20.77	**8.65**	**0.003**
B	9.16	11.81	1.83	0.176
C	3.48	18.48	**38.61**	**<0.001**
D	20.08	25.04	1.93	0.165
E	7.08	12.91	**13.29**	**<0.001**
F	13	10.15	3.17	0.075
G	16.73	18.96	2.16	0.142
H	5.07	35.46	**155.68**	**<0.001**
J	10.25	17.01	**27.75**	**<0.001**
K	15.08	13.05	0.88	0.347
L	21.65	12.06	**13.56**	**<0.001**
M	13.56	10.6	0.45	0.502
N	12.91	16.94	3.24	0.072
P	11.53	12.03	0.06	0.802
R	6.97	11.01	1.72	0.189
Mean	12.1	16.42	**69.59**	**<0.001**

According the contrastive analysis of passives in English and Chinese presented in Xiao et al. 2006 (141-142), the overall frequencies in native English is about ten times as frequent as in native Chinese. Hence, it is hardly surprising to find that passives are significantly more common in Chinese texts translated from English in relation to

native Chinese texts (Xiao 2010: 26).

More importantly, our data suggests that translated Chinese and native Chinese demonstrate different behaviours in their use of passive constructions. As can be seen in Figure 1 and Table 2, in genres of expository writing (A, C, E, H), passives are significantly more frequent in translational Chinese while the contrast less marked in genres of imaginative writing, whereas in imaginative writing (K-R), significant difference is found only in the genre of mystery and detective fiction (L), where passives are significantly more common in native Chinese. The different distribution patterns of passives in translational and native Chinese provide evidence that translated Chinese is distinct from native Chinese (Xiao 2010: 27).

Such distribution patterns of passives in native and translational Chinese are closely related to the different functions of passives in Chinese and English, the overwhelmingly dominant source language in our translational corpus. Since mystery and detective fiction (L) is largely concerned with victims who suffer from various kinds of mishaps and the attentions of criminals, it is hardly surprising to find that the inflictive voice is more common in this genre in native Chinese. On the other hand, expository genres like reports and official documents (H), press reviews (C), and academic prose (J), where the most marked contrast is found between translational and native Chinese, are all genres of formal writing that make greater use of passives in English. When texts of such genres are translated into Chinese, passives tend to be overused because of source language interference or shining through.

In such cases, a native speaker of Chinese would not normally use the passive when

they express similar meanings. For example, the translated example 该 证书 就 必 须 被 颁发 (this certificate then must PASSIVE issue) (ZCTC_H) is clearly a direct translation of the English passive "Then the certificate must be issued". To express this meaning, a native Chinese is very likely to avoid using the passive: 该 证书 就 必须 颁发 (this certificate then must issue) (Xiao & Dai 2010; Xiao 2010: 28).

Our finding about the more frequent use of passives in translated Chinese echoes Teich's (2003) observation of translated German in English-to-German translation: "In the case of the German translations, there is SL shining through because there are more passives in the translations than in the German originals" (Teich 2003:196).

We can see that the effect of SL shining through in the translational Chinese. Then to what extent does SL shining through occur in English-to-Chinese translation? We will seek to answer this question on the basis of English-to-Chinese parallel corpora.

4.2 Passive constructions in Babel

The comparative analysis above of the passives in LCMC and ZCTC shows that passives are significantly more common in Chinese texts translated from English in relation to native Chinese texts. This section will explore to what extent passives in Chinese translations are transferred from the English source texts.
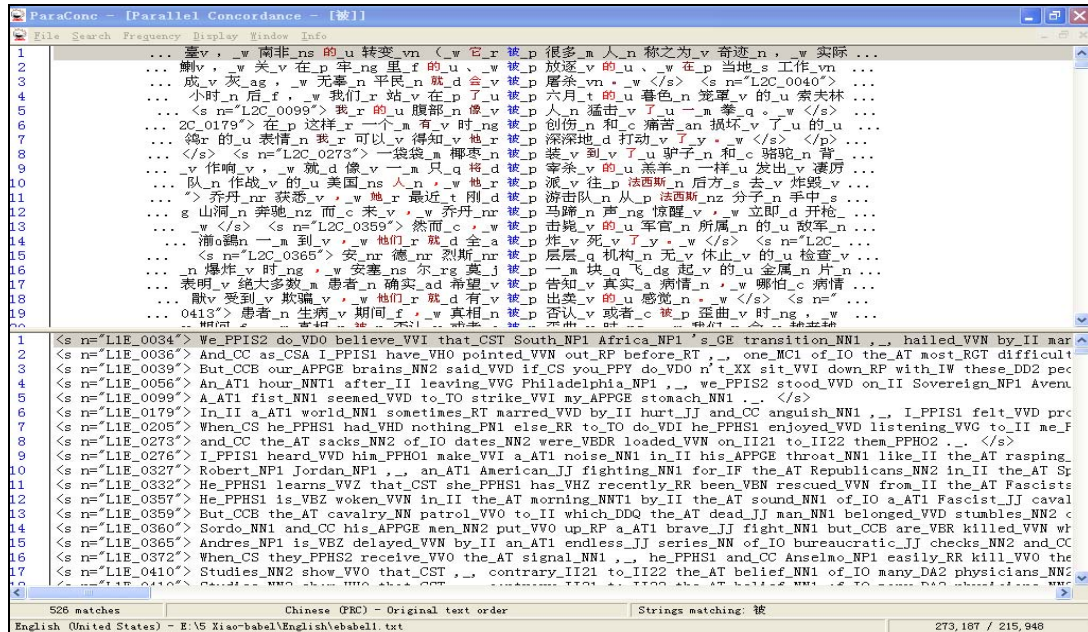
Figure 2. Passives in the Babel Parallel Corpus

A search for the Chinese passive marker *bei* in the Babel parallel corpus returned 526 passive constructions in Chinese translations (see Figure 2). These passives in Chinese translations can be divided into two categories according to whether a passive form is used in the English source text. A total of 446 instances of passives in the first category are transferred from English (including the structure of *be* + past participle and other copular verbs such as *get*, *become*, *feel*, *look*, *remain* and *seem*). For the remaining 80 instances of passives in Chinese translations in the second category, a passive form is not used in the English source text. It can be seen that most of the passives (about 85 per cent) in the target language, i.e., Chinese translations, are transferred from English passives. This finding is in line with Teich (2003:196). Furthermore, even the passives in Chinese translations which are not directly carried over from English passives can be traced back to the influence of English source texts.

For example:

(1) If he turns out to be a presentable, coherent but otherwise ordinary young man--reasonably law-abiding, amused by his good fortune and never taking himself too seriously--he will be from time to time spotted by photographers, snapped with girlfriends, mentioned in gossip columns, invited onto talk shows and we will know him so well we won't care that, strictly speaking, somebody else was born first.

（如果他长成了一个体面的、思路清晰的、而在其他方面又同于一般的年轻人－相当地遵纪守法，为他的好运而高兴，从来不把自己太当回事－他会时常被摄影师捕捉，与女朋友在一起的时候被拍快照，在闲聊栏目中被提及，被邀请参加电视访谈节目，而我们将如此地了解他，严格说来，我们不会在乎第一个出生的其实另有其人。）

(2) The word 'gift' has got dangerously devalued of late.（"礼物"一词近来已被危险地贬值了。）

(3) One theory is that fatty acids and the bile acids released to process them damage the cells and stimulate abnormal growth.（有一理论指出，被释放出来处理高脂食品的脂肪酸和胆汁酸破坏了这些细胞并促使它们生长异常。）

(4) Or at least I was an extra in a long-forgotten Crocodile Dundee sequel.（或者至少我是早被遗忘的《鳄鱼邓迪》续集中的替补人选。）

In example (1), in the English source language, the passive constructions use one

copular verb *be* and four participial verbs (*spot*, *snap*, *mention*, *invite*), which are all translated as *bei* passives in Chinese. In (2), the semi-linking verb *get* is used. Example (3) contains a past participial clause while the past participle *long-forgotten* functions as a nominal modifier. All these instances show the source language shining through.

4.3 Passive constructions in GCEPC English-to-Chinese sub-corpora

We noted earlier that there are considerable variations in the distribution of passives across genres. In genres of expository writing passives are significantly more frequent in translational Chinese while the contrast is less marked in genres of imaginative writing. This suggests that literary and non-literary texts behave differently in terms of their use of passives in English-to-Chinese translation.

As Babel is a corpuss of mixed genres, it cannot be used to investigate how SL shining through in literary versus non-literary texts. In order to explore SL shining through in literature and non-literature, this section compares the distribution of passives in GCEPC's English-to-Chinese Literature and English-to-Chinese Non-literature components . Figure 3 shows the SL shining through from the concordancing results.
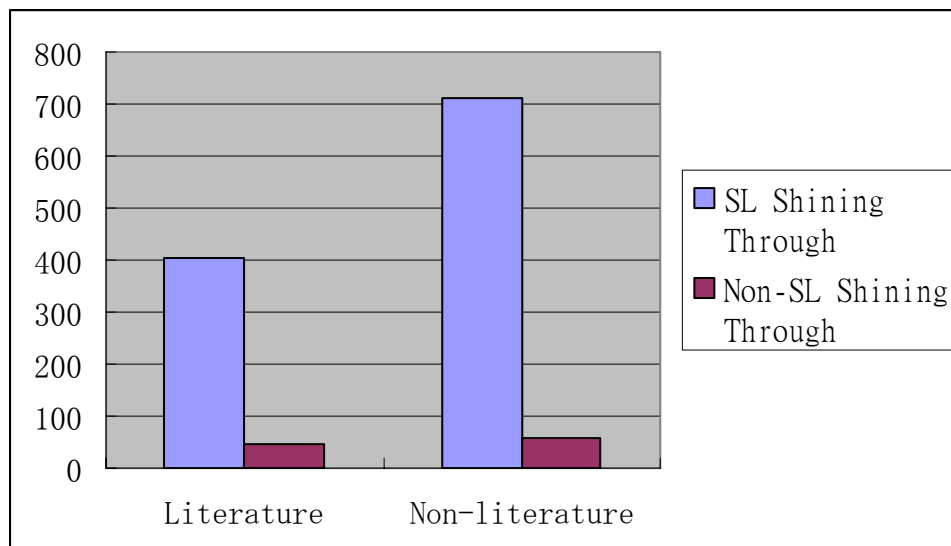
Figure 3. Literature and Non-Literature in the GCEPC

There are 553 instances of passives from the literature corpus, of which 405 instances are derived from English passives (about 73 per cent); and 768 from the non-literature corpus, of which 712 instances are transferred from English passives (about 93 per cent). This means that as far as English-to-Chinese translation is concerned, SL shining through is more likely to occur in nonliterary than literary translation. This is because a large part of nonliterary work relates to genres in English that tend to overuse passives including, for example, official documents and scientific writing.

5 Conclusions

This article first provided a brief introduction to the so-called translation universal hypotheses. A new feature of translation which has so far received little attention in

translation studies, source language (SL) shining through in translation, was then reviewed. .

Our study of passive constructions in comparable corpora of native and translational Chinese shows that passives are generally more frequent in Chinese translations, but the contrast is less marked in imaginative than expository writing, suggesting that translational Chinese behaves differently from native Chinese in their use of passives. The source-induced difference between translational and native Chinese in their use of passives indicates that the phenomenon of SL shining through is observable in English-to-Chinese translation, thus providing first evidence other than English-to-German translation that this feature is likely to be a common feature of translations. SL shining through may occur to varying extents, depending on the genres involved. More specifically, it is more likely to occur in non-literary Chinese translation from English. Parallel corpus analysis shows that SL shining through typically occurs in 85% cases in data of mixed genres, with a higher transfer rate of 93% for non-literary translation in comparison with 73% for literary translation.

Methodologically, the present study has developed an empirical approach to investigating the phenomenon of SL shining through in translation.

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