

A Timbre of Its Own: investigating style in translation and original writing

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ABSTRACT

Situated within descriptive translation studies, this paper uses a corpus-based, target-oriented approach to effectuate a case study on the style of a translator-author. Specifically, it compares stylistic features in samples of one contemporary translator-author's translations and his original writing. By addressing the question of whether there are discernible stylistic similarities and/or differences in the two types of texts produced by the same writer, this research aims at improving the understanding of the translation process and the relation between the two writing activities, i.e. translation and original writing. It sets out to determine whether the translator's voice still has a timbre of its own. Results suggest that similarities between the translations and the original writings are not limited to subconscious features only. They further suggest that, even though it holds partially, the division of subconscious/similar versus conscious/dissimilar stylistic features may be too simplistic.

KEYWORDS: translation and writing, translation process, translator presence, translator style, voice.

Introduction

Translation and original writing both involve the art of producing texts. Yet, a majority of readers and reviewers today see them as clearly distinct activities and perceive translation as lower, derivative, a form of copying even, as Bassnett (2006/2007:1) and Venuti (2008:6) point out and criticise. However, the relation between the two activities is not that simple. The distinction between translation and original writing is a modern one (Bassnett 2006/2007:10), and blurry at that: texts based on previous works in other languages, with varying degrees of fidelity, have been and are variously labelled translations, variations, adaptations, imitations and transmogrifications – or even originals (Kellman 2010:10-11). Pseudo-translations present themselves as translations without there being a source text (Toury 1995:46), and translation strategies such as “hijacking” (von Flotow 1991:74) intentionally intervene in the creation of meaning. In addition, there are hardly any texts which can claim to stand in isolation – “all creativity is translational” (Pym 2010:2).

A cursory glance at literary history reveals furthermore that many renowned authors – Aphra Behn, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Baudelaire, W.H. Auden, Boris Pasternak, and José Saramago are names that spring immediately to mind – were also translators. And while the mark of a good literary author is arguably their distinctive style, translators today are usually expected to “[expunge] their own identities” (Kellman 2010:16). Yet, if it is the same hand – or mind – that creates these different types of texts, the question arises whether the writer's voice, which displays a distinctive tone when s/he appears as an author, might not still have a ‘timbre’ of its own when s/he speaks as a translator.

One way of looking for such a ‘timbre of its own’ is to look at translator style. Drawing on studies such as Baker's (2000) and Saldanha's (2011) examinations of individual translator style, the present research compares stylistic features in a sample of translations and original

writings by contemporary translator-author Donal McLaughlin, who translates mostly Swiss German prose into English. The study adopts a descriptive, target-oriented approach, and uses corpus-based methods to examine the question of whether there are discernible stylistic similarities and/or differences in the two types of texts if produced by the same agent. Contextualized in the larger discussion of the concepts of translator style and presence (see Hermans 1996 and Venuti 2008), the findings at hand are presented as a contribution towards a further understanding of the relation between translation and original writing in terms of style.

In the following, definitions of the main terms precede an examination of the academic literature and the main concepts of style in translation, translator presence, and translator style. Subsequent to the design, method, and material of the case study, the presentation of the results and interpretations will be given. The investigation concludes by tying the results back to the theoretical reflections and by suggesting a rough model of the relation between translator and author style.

Terminology: Writing, Translation, and Original Writing

The terms *translation*, *original writing* and *writing* have varying, partly overlapping and disputed meanings, especially in the context of the persisting hierarchization of these activities. The terms *writer* and *author* are also used differently in relation to translation.¹ It is important to be aware of the controversial nature of these terms, since some of the underlying issues, e.g. the relative creativity of translation and original writing, or the translator's contribution to a text, also figure in the present analysis and discussion. The following definitions are working definitions. They are neither meant to be normative or programmatic, nor to eclipse these controversies or imply any judgements about relative creativity, responsibility, etc. (compare e.g. Bassnett 2006/2007 or Pym 2010).

In the present paper, *translation* is used in the sense of Jakobson's *interlingual translation* as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" (1959:139). For the space of this argument, the term will be further limited to designate the process and product of written translation only. The term *translator* will designate the agent engaging in this process. *Original writing* will mean the production of non-translated texts in this analysis. As above, it will cover the process as well as the product of said activity. The agent engaging in original writing will be called an *author*. The term *writing* (without the qualifier *original*) will be used to signify the cognitive and/or physical process of producing a text, i.e. of composing a (more or less) meaningful linguistic unit. The agent engaging in such activity will be called a *writer*. Thus, the term *writer* is not synonymous with *author* in this text; rather, *author* and *translator* are hyponyms of *writer* in the presently established terminology.

Underlying these definitions is the assumption of translation as a dual activity combining a process of decoding, i.e. reading/understanding, with a process of recoding, i.e. writing. This dual nature of translation figures in the work of scholars such as Reiss (1971). Boase-Beier (2006) also explicitly separates the two aspects in her *Stylistic Approaches to Translation* as she examines style "in its effects on [...] the translator as reader" (2006:5) and style as "an expression of choices made by [the target text's] author (who is the translator)" (ibid.). Her focus on, as well as her choice of, the term *author* for the translator – with which Pym (2010)

¹ See e.g. in the different contributions to the anthology, *The Practices of Literary Translation: Constraints and Creativity*, edited by Boase-Beier and Holman (1999).

disagrees² – imply her view of writing in translation as a creative act rather than a purely technical activity. Further implications of *style* will be addressed in the consequent section.

Style in Translation

The term *style* is difficult to define and can cover a wide range of activities as well as appearances (see e.g. “style, n.”. OED Online. June 2011). Even within literature and language studies, where “at its simplest, style refers to the perceived distinctive manner of expression” (Wales 2001:371), it can be understood in different ways. As a relational term, it can furthermore be applied to different domains, such as author, genre, period, etc. (Leech and Short 1981:11; Wales 2001:370-372). However, translation and the translator are usually not seen to figure among these domains: Wales’ *A Dictionary of Stylistics* (2001) has no entry for translator or translation, and in its entries on style and on author/authority neither term is mentioned. Instead, it lists the three nodes of literature as being “an author, a text and a reader” (2001:35).

Yet, the question of style in translation is not a new one. Ancient writers such as Horace, Cicero and Pliny the Younger have already addressed the importance of style in and of translation, and various scholars continue to engage with this issue (Boase-Beier 2006:10-11; Saldanha 2011:25). In fact, throughout most of history, translation and original writing were not understood as fundamentally separate activities. In the eighteenth century, the translator was still seen as the author of a new, original work: his (or her) “form-creating labour – the ‘skill in language’ that resulted in the production of ‘his own style and expressions’ – made him the owner of the translations” (Venuti 1998: 57, quoting the 1720 case *Burnett v. Chetwood*). This perception changed over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: in modern copyright law, it is the author who ultimately holds the rights over any translations, since they are seen as derivative works. The idea that translators have their own individual style is – or must be – suppressed since, as one contemporary author writes, “writing-style is the uniqueness of embellishing a calyx such that everyone knows: stop right there, that belongs to such-and-such” (Elsässer 2008:28). Thus, the normative view that translators are not supposed to exhibit an individual style of their own (see e.g. Kellman 2010), is closely linked to the question of ownership.

As there is presently no space for individual translator style, i.e. for a creative contribution by the translator, the translator’s discursive presence disappears. This “blind spot where it comes to the Translator’s [*sic*] voice” (Hermans 1996:209) effectively renders the translator invisible.

Translator Presence and Translator Style

The illusion that the reader of a translation has direct access to the source text author is criticised by Venuti (2008), who analyses the translator’s situation and activity in the anglophone literary world, specifically in the US and the UK, and ascribes the phenomenon to two factors: firstly, the self-effacing translation strategies practised by most translators as they opt for fluency and transparency (what Venuti calls *domesticating translation strategies*), and secondly, the cultural conditioning of readers and critics who want direct access to foreign works of literature (2008:2, 7). While Venuti (2008:20-21) goes on to investigate and advocate other, *foreignizing* translation strategies, i.e. strategies which make the translator’s intervention visible and remind the readers that they are reading a text from a different

² Pym (2010) argues that the translator does not assume (or does not have to assume) responsibility over a text’s content in the way the author does.

language, culture and background, Hermans (1996) focuses on demonstrating that the perceived direct access to a translated work of narrative fiction is indeed an illusion. Interposed between the source text author and the target text reader is the translator whose discursive presence must always be implied.³ According to Hermans, this presence, i.e. the translator's "voice", becomes visible in paratexts (footnotes, prefaces, glosses, etc.) and in cases where the act of translation leads to "obvious, textually traceable contradictions", but it also "may remain entirely hidden" (Hermans 1996:198).

Although Baker (2000) partially agrees with Hermans (1996), she contends that the translator's discursive presence always leaves a trace: "it is as impossible to produce a stretch of language in a totally impersonal way as it is to handle an object without leaving one's fingerprints on it" (Baker 2000:244). This 'fingerprint' is the translator's individual style, defined as "preferred or recurring patterns of linguistic behaviour" (Baker 2000:245). Baker also includes non-linguistic features, such as patterns in the choice of material or of translation strategies, in her understanding of translator style. However, the main focus in her analysis of linguistic patterns is on *forensic stylistics* – understood to describe subconscious elements used e.g. in stylometry for authorship attribution (Wales 2001:374)⁴ – as she is "studying the style of a translator, in terms of his or her presence in the text" (Baker 2000:245). As an example for her target-oriented, corpus-based approach, Baker investigates the work of two translators, Peter Bush and Peter Clark, across texts from several source text authors by looking at *standardized type-token ratio*, *mean sentence length* and *reporting structures* (Baker 2000). Finding different linguistic patterns in these variables for the two translators, she suggests possible extra-linguistic explanations, and cautions that influence from the source language or author cannot be excluded at this stage.

Pym (2008) sees in this last caveat one of the major flaws in Baker's (2000) study, and considers her to be focussing solely on overlapping and contradictory features of standardization. Yet, Baker's (2000) notion of an individual translator style is taken up in further research, and features, for example, in Olohan's (2003) study of contractions in corpora of translated text, or Saldanha's (2004) study of split infinitives in translational English, as a possible explanation for "individual variation within a corpus of translated text" (Baker 2004:29). Munday (2008) investigates the connection between translator style and ideological motivation (an avenue of research also suggested by Baker (2000) as a next step), and Saldanha focuses again on methodology and calls for "a coherent theory of translator style" (2011:25).

Translator Style: Different Comparisons

Situating the study of translator style within the broader context of what Malmkjaer (2003) terms *translational stylistics*, Saldanha (2011) tries to establish a concise working definition of translator style. Drawing on a definition of authorial style by Short (1996), which she adapts to translation, Saldanha then refines this basic definition to include the criterion of literary relevance and to explicitly exclude stylistic interference from the source text or author. She thus defines translator style as:

³ For a narratological model including the real and implied translator, see e.g. O'Sullivan's (2003) examination of translator voice in children's literature.

⁴ Oakes only speaks of 'forensic stylometry' in the context of linguistic criminal investigations (1998:200, 226).

A 'way of translating' which

- is felt to be recognizable across a range of translations by the same translator,
- distinguishes the translator's work from that of others,
- constitutes a coherent pattern of choices,
- is 'motivated', in the sense that it has a discernible function or functions, and
- cannot be explained purely with reference to the author or source-text style, or as the result of linguistic constraints.

(Saldanha 2011:31)

Saldanha goes on to test this definition by comparing parallel corpora of translations by Peter Bush and Margaret Jull Costa for their use of emphatic italics and source culture borrowings. She finds that Costa uses emphatic italics more frequently and shows a greater tendency to gloss over foreign terms than Bush who, she argues, "is more willing to allow his readers to confront and negotiate cultural differences" (2011:45).

In the ongoing research into translator style, there are thus a number of studies (e.g. Baker 2000; Olohan 2003; Saldanha 2004; Saldanha 2011) which look for an individual translator style by means of a comparison that searches for patterns differentiating the translations of individual translators. Others (e.g. Malmkjaer 2003; Boase-Beier 2006; Munday 2008) examine patterns and shifts by taking into account the source texts and comparing them to the translations of individual translators. However, so far, no study has followed Olohan's suggestion "to analyze texts written by the translators that are not translations" (Olohan 2004:150), even though she mentions this as "the most fruitful avenue to pursue if we wish to establish the extent to which translated texts display the translator's linguistic habits" (ibid.). The idea that a translator-author's linguistic habits – and thus her/his discursive presence – might be discernible in both his/her original writings and his/her translations are further encouraged by the definition of authorial style given by Leech and Short – and echoed by Baker (2000) in her understanding of translator style – as a "linguistic 'thumb-print', an individual combination of linguistic habits which somehow betrays him *in all that he writes*" (Leech and Short 1981:12, my emphasis).

Although the distinction between conscious and subconscious elements, advocated by Baker (2000) and Munday (2008), and cautiously endorsed by Saldanha (2011), raises various problems (Olohan 2004:94), it seems nevertheless useful for this line of enquiry: conscious stylistic features can be manipulated deliberately by translators to imitate or "usurp the original voice" (Hermans 1996:197) of the source text author or by authors to create works pertaining to different genres.⁵ Subconscious elements, however, may be expected to remain the same for different texts by the same writer even across genres. They might therefore also be present across the habitually drawn line between translation and original writing, especially considering that Baker's view of translation "as a *genre*..." (2004:28, my emphasis)⁶ has found a certain validation through corpus-based studies which show that translational English exhibits distinctive linguistic features: Laviosa (1998), for example, found evidence for *simplification*, Olohan and Baker (2000) as well as Mutesayire (2004) for

⁵ See e.g. Oakes (1998:200) for the problem of an author having different styles.

⁶ Baker's viewpoint takes up Even-Zohar's polysystemtheory where "translated literature [may exist] as a particular literary system" (1990:199) and "may possess a repertoire of its own" (1990:200).

explicitation, and Olohan (2003) for *normalization*. In the following, these reflections are applied to a sample of work by a contemporary translator-author in the case study.

Case Study: Research Design

To test the preceding reflections and as a foray into this particular aspect of the relation between translator style and author style, a limited case study has been carried out. Expectations as to the textual traces of this relation have been externalised as hypotheses, so that they can be addressed and help focus the present approach. Based on the notion of style as a ‘fingerprint’ present in all types of text by the same writer, and taking into consideration the reflection that writers may adapt their writing to the purposed genre, the main hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- a) The translations and the original writings, as products by the same writer, exhibit similarities in at least a number of linguistic features; this is more likely to be the case for stylistic features which are used subconsciously.
- b) The translations and the original writings, as expressions of different genres, exhibit dissimilarities in at least a number of linguistic features; this is more likely to be the case for stylistic features which are used consciously.

Hypothesis b) touches on another question which can be formulated as a third hypothesis:

- c) The translations, as expressions of a specific genre, exhibit at least a number of the genre-typical linguistic features, i.e. of translational English.

To examine these hypotheses, the investigation took a corpus-based, target-oriented approach. The corpus software WordSmith Tools Version 5 (Scott 2008) was used to extract the data necessary for the analysis which consisted of an examination of a limited number of variables in a set of comparable corpora. These are defined by Baker as:

separate collections of texts in the same language: one corpus consists of original texts in the language in question and the other consists of translations in that language from a given source language or languages ... both corpora should cover a similar domain, variety of language and time span, and be of comparable length (Baker 1995:234).

The primary material thus had to fulfil the following criteria: the texts of the two main sub-corpora – one comprising translations, the other original writings – had to be by the same writer (translator-author). The scope of the project allowed only for a limited size of the overall corpus, yet the sub-corpora each had to include several texts in order to rule out text-specific features. The translations furthermore had to include texts from different source text authors to rule out – at least to some degree – source author-specific features.

Accordingly, the corpora for examination have been compiled as follows: The main *translation sub-corpus* (ts) consists of short prose texts translated from German to English by Donal McLaughlin and published in the 2008 and 2009 *New Swiss Writing* anthologies (Zingg 2008 and 2009). The overall size of the translation sub-corpus is 29,672 words (*tokens*) contained in 52 texts by 47 source text authors, and with an average text length of approximately 570 words. The *sub-corpora for original writing* are compiled of texts from the book *An Allergic Reaction to National Anthems and Other Stories* by Donal McLaughlin, published in 2009. The 20 short stories add up to a total length of 61,028 words. In order to

have comparable sub-corpora of similar length, the 20 stories have been divided into two sub-corpora: one (ow1) comprising all 11 stories featuring the same fictional characters, the family O'Donnell, with a total size of 31,731 words, and an average text length of approximately 2,885 words. The second original writing sub-corpus (ow2) comprises the other 9 – unrelated – stories of approximately 3,255 words on average, adding up to a total of 29,297 words.

To contextualize the results of the comparison between these main sub-corpora, a *reference or control corpus* (cc) has been added. It comprises 15 texts by 15 different source text authors, translated by 19 different translators (some are collaborations). The overall corpus size is 32,883 words; the average text length is approximately 2,190 words. The corpus consists of short translations from German to English published in the online translation journal *No Man's Land* (issues 2 (2007), 4 (2009), and 5 (2010)), which also featured translations by Donal McLaughlin over that time period. Having passed the same editorial selection process as some of McLaughlin's work, and involving the same language pair, the texts – only literary prose translations have been included – are assumed to be of a similar kind, even though slight differences might persist as the source authors are from/living in Switzerland, while those of the control corpus cc are mainly from/living in Germany. However, this approach has the advantage that the selection does not hinge solely on the researcher's judgement as to what might be similar kinds of texts. Copyright considerations, too, played a role in the choice of material and the compilation of the corpora.

The corpora were compared with respect to four variables: *standardized type-token ratio*, *mean sentence length*, *punctuation* (dashes) and use of different *varieties of language*. Although in practice, it is not always possible to draw a clear line between elements which are consciously applied and those used subconsciously,⁷ an attempt to do so has nevertheless been made in the present paper.

The *type-token ratio* “is a measure of the range and diversity of vocabulary used by a writer, or in a given corpus” (Baker 2000:250). It is calculated by dividing the number of different words (*types*) by the number of all words (*tokens*) used in a text or corpus. The *standardized type-token ratio* (*sTTR*), as given by WordSmith Tools, is the running mean of type-token ratios calculated for text chunks of normally 1,000 words.⁸ This allows a comparison between texts/corpora which are not of precisely the same length. However, as the texts in the sub-corpus ts are on average only 570 words, this parameter has been changed to a lower value (200 words and 500 words), so that the *sTTR200* and *sTTR500* values are calculated instead. Baker uses the *sTTR* as a feature of individual translator style revealing mainly subconscious preference (Baker 2000:250; Olohan 2004:78-81); the same will be done in the present research.

WordSmith Tools calculates the *mean sentence length*, measured in number of words, based on “conventional sentence boundaries [...] followed by a space and an initial capital letter” (Olohan 2004:81).⁹ Although Baker regards this variable as revealing a largely subconscious preference (2000:251), my personal translation practice suggests that in translations from

⁷ This is due to the fact that a) many elements may be used in either way, that b) they might be the result of a combination of both conscious deliberation and subconscious preference, and that c), mostly we have access only to the product, but not the translator's/author's thought processes and intentions (Olohan 2004:94).

⁸ For the overall corpus, the value approximates the weighted mean (weighted by tokens).

⁹ Again, WordSmith Tools gives us a weighted mean for the overall corpus, although here it is weighted by the number of sentences.

German to English, the long German sentences frequently force the translator to consciously choose a translation strategy that deals with the source text sentence length.

Looking at *punctuation*, this study examines the frequency of dashes (total occurrence and occurrence per 1,000 words).¹⁰ The present analysis only includes dashes with a function at sentence level (e.g. parenthetical or elliptical) where “other options may be equally available” (Baker 2000:248).¹¹ In the present case, the preference is considered to be mostly subconscious, because they are far more frequent in the target texts than in the source texts despite the translator’s stated usual strategy to follow the source text sentence structure (McLaughlin, personal communication, 29.08.2011).

Translator style, as defined by Baker (2000), and authorial style, as examined by Hänlein (in Olsson 2004), also include non-linguistic patterns. Thus, the use of, or translation from, different *language varieties* is of considerable interest in the analysis of translator and/or authorial style. The use of different varieties of language in translation (translation strategy) and the translation from non-dominant language varieties (choice of material) will be treated as elements of conscious stylistic choice here. However, it must be kept in mind that “the degree of choice [...] varies a great deal among individual translators” (Baker 2000:263): due to economic or other reasons, translators may not always be able to freely choose (or refuse) their jobs and, when executing their commissions, may have to follow client specifications.

Case Study: Results

Standardized Type-Token Ratios

For both the sTTR200 and the sTTR500 values, the translation sub-corpus *ts* lies between the original writing sub-corpora *ow1* and *ow2*. Looking at the spectrum of values exhibited by the individual texts, the *ts* sub-corpus covers a wider spectrum of different values than the other two sub-corpora (see Table 1):

Table 1: sTTR200 and sTTR500 Values

sub-corpus	<i>ts</i>	<i>ow1</i>	<i>ow2</i>
tokens (running words)	29,638	31,710	29,260
sTTR200	63.55	63.26	64.76
range sTTR200: max – min	69.4 - 53	65.83 - 58.57	66.98 - 61.82
sTTR500	51.76	49.75	52.39
range sTTR500: max – min	58.8 - 43.6	53.57 - 44.2	55.24 - 48.2

Since the mean sTTR200 and 500 values for the translation and original writing sub-corpora cover similar spectra, the vocabularies McLaughlin employs as a translator and as an author seem to be similar in their degree of diversity. That the translations exhibit a slightly higher variation in their degree of diversity – as evidenced by the somewhat higher range, i.e. the wider span of the spectrum from minimum to maximum value – might be explained by the effort to represent different authors’ voices from different source texts. The comparison thus

¹⁰ For texts shorter than 1,000 words, WordSmith calculates a hypothetical value. For the overall mean of dashes per 1,000 words for a given corpus, the weighted mean has been calculated (weighted by the number of tokens of each text over the total number of tokens in the corpus).

¹¹ The analysis differentiates between different kinds of dashes based on function, not typography.

shows no evidence for a simplification in terms of a lower range of vocabulary in the translations. Correspondingly, the comparison of the overall sTTR values of the TEC (Translational English Corpus) and the BNC (British National Corpus) shows that these values are very similar to each other, and does not reveal evidence of simplification in terms of vocabulary: the TEC's sTTR is 44.63 versus 44.48 for the BNC (Olohan 2004:126). The value of the overall sTTR of the control corpus cc is similar as well: 44.61. This does not necessarily mean that there is no simplification, but to detect it might necessitate more sophisticated measures – as applied by Laviosa, for example (Laviosa 1998; see also Olohan 2004:99-100). Overall, the results suggest that hypothesis a) holds.

Mean Sentence Length

There are two texts in the translation sub-corpus which do not use standard punctuation and might be classified as experimental prose. As these seem to be exceptional cases distorting the overall average, the ts sub-corpus has been modified to exclude these two files (ts_mod).¹²

Table 2 shows the mean sentence lengths of the different corpora.

Table 2: Mean Sentence Length

sub-corpus/file	Ts	ts_mod	ow1	ow2	cc
Sentences	1,927	1,922	2,959	2,943	2,062
mean sentence length (in words)	15.36	14.69	10.71	9.93	15.93

The results show a considerable difference in mean sentence length between translations and original writings, and a comparative similarity between the sub-corpora consisting of translations, ts/ts_mod and cc. They seem to confirm Laviosa's approach (1998), which investigates mean sentence length as a feature of translation in general, rather than Baker's (2000), which interprets mean sentence length as an indicator of individual style. Baker (2000) cannot rule out the influence of the source language in her comparison of the two translators Bush and Clark: Bush only translates from two closely related languages (Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese) and Clark from one (Arabic).

The results also correspond with Laviosa's findings in that the mean sentence length is higher in translation than in original writing (1998). However, Laviosa's values are at a higher level overall: her results for the mean sentence lengths are 24.09 words for translation (18.62 if the corpus is modified to exclude extreme cases) and 15.62 for original fiction and biography (1998:5). One possible explanation for this difference between the results of her research and the present study – assuming that it is not due to differences in calculation methods – could come from a combination of Laviosa's (1998) and Baker's (2000) approaches: while it might be a general feature of translation to exhibit a higher mean sentence length, individual variation (i.e. style) might account for the level at which this relation (ts>ow) plays out. Other possible explanation attempts could look at the influence of text variety – taking into account the differing results of Laviosa's studies on newspaper articles and on narrative fiction (1998) – or at interference from the source language. In view of Donal McLaughlin's remarks that, to reflect the rhythm and structure of the source text, he tries to follow the source text's sentence length and structure unless this causes problems (personal communication, 29.08.2011), this latter explanation would be worth examining in more depth. However, his statement also indicates that he follows a consciously chosen strategy to deal with this feature. Thus, if sentence length is considered something the translator has to deal with consciously, the

¹² Laviosa, too, excludes experimental prose, because she deems it less representative (1998:4, 5, and 8).

dissimilarity discovered here would confirm hypothesis b). The partial correspondence with Laviosa’s (1998) results suggests that hypothesis c) holds, too.

Punctuation

In the translation sub-corpus ts, the two texts of experimental prose have once again been excluded. In addition, three texts had to be slightly modified in order to avoid dashes without a function at sentence level being counted. The adjusted sub-corpus is labelled ts_mod2:

Table 3: Occurrence of Dashes

sub-corpus	ts_mod2	ow1	ow2	cc
total occurrence	231	290	376	105
mean per 1000 words (weighted)	8.173	9.099	12.776	3.202

Table 3 shows that dashes with a function at sentence level are more frequent in McLaughlin’s original writings than in his translations. Nevertheless, for the occurrence per 1,000 words, the values of McLaughlin’s original and translated texts are situated closer to each other than to that of the control corpus. Furthermore, the two most similar sub-corpora are not the two ow sub-corpora, but ts_mod2 and ow1. As for the distribution,¹³ the translation sub-corpus ts_mod2 shows certain traits in common with the original writing sub-corpora (in all three of McLaughlin’s sub-corpora, over 60% of texts have values indicating more than 5 dashes per 1,000 words), but also with the control corpus cc (both have a mode of 0-5 dashes/1,000 words). Taking the analysis a step further, the dashes have been separated by function for the two sub-corpora ts_mod2 and ow2: they have been classified according to their grammatically correct alternative punctuation marks (parenthesis, ellipses, colon/semi-colon, comma, other). Looking at the different functions, the ranking is fairly similar, with one exception: the use of dashes in place of ellipses is considerably more frequent in ow2 (ranking second) than it is in ts_mod2 (ranking fourth).¹⁴

Overall, there seems to be a relation in the frequency and use of dashes (with a function at sentence level) between McLaughlin’s translation and original writing activities. Although the translation sub-corpus ts_mod2 also shares certain features with the control corpus cc (such as the mode), its values are, overall, closer to those of the original writing sub-corpora, in particular to sub-corpus ow1. If the initial surmise that the frequent use of dashes is subconscious in the translations is accepted, this further strengthens hypothesis a). A look at those source texts which were available (texts from NSW 2009, corresponding to files 28-52) reveals that in over 80% of texts, the translations use more dashes than the source texts;¹⁵ combining this fact with McLaughlin’s assertion that he follows the source text’s sentence structure, the initial surmise seems reasonable, though it might be hard to prove conclusively. The data may thus be interpreted to show that a conscious or subconscious linguistic habit in original writing influences subconscious preferences in translation – or the other way round

¹³ It must be kept in mind that the distributions might be influenced by the imbalance in the quantity of text files in each sub-corpus (i.e. the numbers of samples), as a higher number of samples is more likely to lead to a normal distribution.

¹⁴ A X²-test modelled after the one used in Yamamoto’s 1996 study (Oakes 1998:26-27), but with a 0.05 level of significance, leads to the conclusion that the two sub-corpora are significantly different if the dashes with elliptical function are included, but not if these are excluded.

¹⁵ Of these 25 cases, there was only 1 case in which there were more dashes in the source text and only 2 in which the number was equal. In the others, the translations had between 1-15 more dashes than the source texts.

(see Bassnett's experience, 2006/2007:14). However, to truly ascertain the existence and possible direction of such an influence requires further research.

Varieties of Language

The texts contained in the two original writing sub-corpora make use of Northern Irish English as evidenced by lexis (typical words like "craic" or "wean(s)", see e.g. Corrigan 2010:79, 86) and typical discourse markers (such as the sentence final "but" present in all ow1 and ow2 texts; see e.g. Corrigan 2010:177). The translations, on the other hand, are mostly written in standard British English with a few instances of Scottish English (evidenced by words such as "wee", "ah" (I) or "cannae", see e.g. Grant and Murison 1976). The use of Scottish English is a translation strategy to render Swiss-German texts or passages here (McLaughlin, personal communication, 29.08.2011; e.g. Zingg 2010:77-79). A further interesting aspect of McLaughlin's translation work is the fact that he mostly translates Swiss German authors – as witnessed in his newest translation projects: two books by Urs Widmer, an excerpt of Arno Camenisch's work for the 2012 *Best European Fiction Anthology*, and numerous texts for the *New Swiss Writing Anthology 2011*.¹⁶

Thus, there seems to be a conscious distinction between the varieties used by McLaughlin in his original writings and his translations: while he uses Northern Irish English in the short stories contained in ow1 and ow2 (in accordance with their content), he opts mainly for standard British English and, in certain cases, for Scottish English in his translations (McLaughlin, personal communication, 30.5.2011). However, the separation is not clear-cut: not only do the two language varieties overlap, but part of the settings and characters of the original writings are (or become) Scottish, which is reflected in the language. Despite these few overlaps, we might read the findings as an indication that hypothesis b) holds, at least partially. Furthermore, despite these conscious distinctions, there seems to be an underlying preference/choice¹⁷ common to both activities for working with non-dominant linguistic/cultural varieties.

In addition, McLaughlin's use of borrowings from Swiss languages in the translations (German, Rumantsch, and Italian) is echoed in his insertion of untranslated German (and French) expressions and sentences in his original writings. Assuming the use of such borrowings/insertions to be deliberate in both translation and original writing, this similarity calls for at least a partial reconsideration of the hypotheses: the conception that similarities will show primarily in subconscious features, but not in conscious ones, does not hold.

Conclusions: A Rough Model

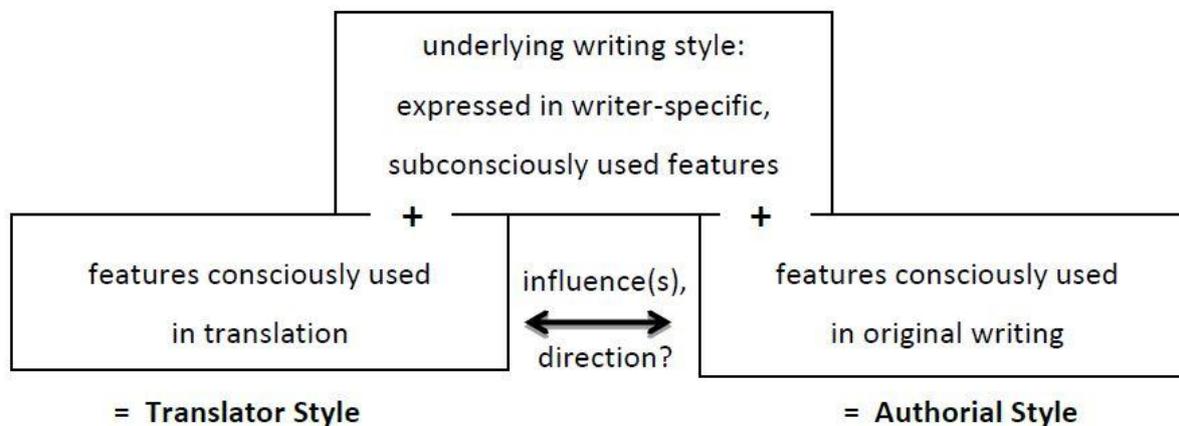
The working hypotheses a) and b) posited similarities in the subconsciously used stylistic features and dissimilarities in the consciously used features between the translation and original writing sub-corpora. In addition, hypothesis c) suggested that at least some of the features of translational English should be found in the translation sub-corpus. The results from the case study conform at least partially to these patterns: as expected, there is a combination of similarities and dissimilarities, but the division of subconscious/similar versus conscious/dissimilar, though it holds partially, is too simplistic. The results show that similarities between the translations and the original writings are not limited to subconscious features. The presence of typical features of translational English is hinted at in the present case study (sentence length), though a more conclusive confirmation requires further research.

¹⁶ See <http://donalmclaughlin.wordpress.com> (accessed 15/08/2011).

¹⁷ As cautioned before, this might also depend on the job situation and/or 'niche' of a translator.

Overall, a possible graphic representation of the dynamic relation between translator and authorial style might be expressed as follows (see Figure 1):

Figure 1: Relation between Translator and Authorial Style



In this rough explanatory model, writer-specific features – the linguistic thumbprint – underlie all writing activities by the same writer, but are complemented by deliberate stylistic features for each activity which, in turn, influence each other. In the present case study, the presence of borrowings and foreign language phrases in the original writings indicate the possible existence of an influence of the translation activity on the activity of original writing,¹⁸ while vice versa, the use of Irish expressions like “youngfella” (Zingg 2009:85) in the translations might hint at an influence from the original writing activity. Such bi-directional influence would also correspond to Chesterman’s notion of “multiple causality as a cluster of factors that may all influence each other” (2008:376). In the context of multi-causality, however, it must also be kept in mind that the present model focuses only on the relation between translator and author style; it does not, currently, include other factors/interactions influencing a writer’s style (reading habits, provenance, etc.). Overall, the model illustrated in Figure 1 is thus, admittedly, still crude, but it can explain the patterns of similarities and dissimilarities found in the case study. It retains the idea expressed by Baker (2000), as well as by Leech and Short, that the writer’s “thumbprint is more likely to be found in unobtrusive habits beyond conscious artistic control” (Leech and Short 1981:14), and accounts for the similarities (and differences) found in deliberately used features. Furthermore, it presents a dynamic view of style, allowing for changes and influences such as those described by Bassnett (2006/2007:14), or those implied by Sherry’s mention of translation as a “writer’s apprenticeship” (Sherry 1996:2).

Of course, the present case study – in its limited scope – can only offer a sectional contribution to a more comprehensive understanding of the relation between translator style and authorial style, and of the connection between translation and original writing. Issues such as the separation and classification of conscious and subconscious features need to be examined in more depth. More extensive studies might furthermore complement the present target-oriented approach by including a more thorough examination of the source texts, and/or by combining it with approaches such as the one used in Munday’s (2008) investigation of translator style and ideological motivation. Yet, comparative studies such as the present one may help to identify specific characteristics of an individual translator’s style and may, if

¹⁸ Even if it is only by expanding the ‘linguistic palette’ at the writer’s disposal to include other languages.

examined more deeply, be conducive to valuable insights into the development of the patterns exhibited in his/her translational activity. Particularly, if the goal is “a coherent theory of translator style” (Saldanha 2011:25), then the (possible) connection between translator and authorial style should be further explored.

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Online Resources

- Argyll Publishing – website of the publisher of McLaughlin's short story collection:
[www.argyllpublishing.com]
- BNC – British National Corpus, online access:
[www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk]
- McLaughlin, Donal – personal website of the translator-author:
[<http://donalmclaughlin.wordpress.com/about/breaking-news-2/>]
- Solothurner Literaturtage – website of the publisher of the anthology *New Swiss Writing*:
[www.literatur.ch/Anthologien.512.0.html]
- TEC – Translational English Corpus, online access:
[<http://ronaldo.cs.tcd.ie/tec2/jnlp>]
- WordSmith Tools – guides, FAQs and download of the corpus analysis software (Version 5)
[www.lexically.net/wordsmith/version5/index.html]
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