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A Corpus-Based Contrastive Study of English Translation of *Tao Te Ching*

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Abstract: *Tao Te Ching* is a work by Laozi, one of the greatest philosophers in Chinese history. Despite the large number of existing translations, it is still necessary to revisit, reinterpret and retranslate it for the need of changing readers and market. Previous translation studies of *Tao Te Ching* focused on the interpretation of important terms and concepts, the comparison of different versions to discuss translation strategies. Some researchers used corpus tools to compare overall stylistic differences, but ignored minute details reflected in translators' word choice. Improving upon previous ones, this study uses corpus tools to comparatively analyze two English versions of *Tao Te Ching* translated by Lin Yutang and by James Legge. Their lexical diversity is calculated with a more reliable measure: moving average type/token ratio (MATTR). A wordlist is then made to extract 10 most frequent content words in the source text for detailed comparison of their translation. Similarities are found in both translations. First, they have a similar level of lexical diversity. Second, they share a degree of inconsistency of word choice when translating high-frequency words. Third, both combine the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization. Differences are found as well. First, Legge has a preference for explicitation and poetic effect. Second, Lin makes his choice more dependent upon the changing context.

Keywords: *Tao Te Ching*, English Translation, Lin Yutang, James Legge, Corpus

1. Introduction

Tao Te Ching, a classic by Laozi, one of the greatest philosophers in Chinese history, embodies his thoughts on philosophy, politics and life. Its international impact is best illustrated by its circulation and translation. With circulation only next to the *Bible* and *Bhagavad Gita*, *Tao Te Ching* has been translated into 73 different languages, with over 500 English versions.

Despite the large number of existing translations, classics are often revisited, reinterpreted and retranslated for the need of changing readers and market. English translation of *Tao Te Ching* has been extensively studied, among which the comparison of different translations, the discussion of how certain words and phrases are translated, the analysis in light of a certain translation theory, and diachronic studies are the main ones. Some studies use corpus for statistical analysis to gain fresh insights into the style of translation.

With the help of corpora, this paper chooses James Legge's and Lin Yutang's translations of *Tao Te Ching* to contrast the stylistic differences in terms of lexical diversity and their word choice in translating high-frequency words. Combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study aims to observe how some polysemous words like 天下 (*tianxia*) are treated by Legge and Lin and what their solutions are to ambiguity of the source text. Based upon a summary of their translation patterns and strategies, we tentatively explain how the two translators are affected by their respective backgrounds, intentions and understanding of the text. Hopefully, our findings and analysis could provide some clues for further interpretation and translation of *Tao Te Ching* and other Chinese classics.

2. Corpus-Based Studies on the English Translation of *Tao Te Ching*

The corpus-based approach has the advantage of data-based credibility, hence provides a unique perspective for translations studies. Wang & Li discusses some technical

problems of selecting the source and target texts in the construction of a Chinese-English parallel corpus of *Tao Te Ching* [1]. In addition to corpus construction, Zhao made a stylistic comparison of Wu Jingxiong's and Waley's translations at word, sentence and discourse levels [2]. Mei analyzed the phenomenon of polysemy of words in *Tao Te Ching* with the help of corpus [3]. One noticeable problem with this study is that variations in individual translation of the same word are inappropriately ignored, which is to say, she presumes translators are consistent in word choice—one fixed word for each important term in the ST. In this study, however, you will find how translators could waiver between choices, and their flexible, diverse and creative solution to the same word in different contexts.

The quantitative approach of the corpus could provide valuable data, but cannot fully reveal all aspects of translation style. For example, the comparison of lexical diversity and average sentence length only indicates some stylistic differences overall. Few researchers studying the translation of *Tao Te Ching* have used corpus tools to study minute differences reflected in word choice, thus ignoring one interesting angle to observe translation. Due to this inadequacy, this study, other than calculating the lexical diversity of both TTs with a more reliable measure—moving average type/token ratio (MATTR, which has not been used frequently even in some recent studies), their translation of high-frequency words is collected to demonstrate how the two translators differ in their strategies and differences, and what we can learn from their successes and failures in bringing this classic to another culture.

3. Research Methodology

This study starts from the statistical methods of calculating lexical diversity and making a wordlist, which is followed by a comparison of ten high-frequency words in the two translated versions. Then, similarities and differences in strategies or preferences of the two translators are briefly discussed.

3.1. Lexical Diversity

Lexical diversity is usually indicated by the type/token ratio (TTR) of the text. According to Brezina, token is a single occurrence of a word form in the text; a type is a unique word form in the corpus [4]. A word form, no matter how many times it occurs in the text, will only be counted as one type, but each time of its occurrence is counted as different tokens.

Seemingly, the larger the number of TTR is, the higher lexical diversity of the text will be. But TTR is affected by the length of the text: the longer the text is, the more likely the same word is repeatedly used [4]. Improved calculation of TTR includes standardized type/token ratio (STTR) or mean segmental type/token ratio (MSTTR) [5] and moving average type/token ratio (MATTR) [6]. In calculation of the former, text is divided into standard-size segments, the TRR for each of which is calculated and the mean value of the TTRs is MSTTR. MATTR improved upon MSTTR, using an overlapping window smoothly moving through the text (unlike the successive non-overlapping segments in MSTTR). For example, a text of 7200 words is to be analyzed and the segment/window size is set at 1000 words, it is divided into 7 chunks of 1000 words and the last 200 words will be ignored in the calculation of MSTTR, which could produce unreliable results. The MATTR method, in contrast, computes the TTR for words 1–1000, then 2–1001, 3–1002, all the way to 6201–7200, so that all words are included. Brezina concluded that "MATTR is thus a more robust measure of lexical richness than STTR [4]."

3.2. Wordlist

Wordlist shows the most frequent words in the text along with their frequencies, the Absolute Frequency (AF) in particular, i.e., the actual count of all occurrences of a particular word in a corpus [4]. As an indicator of the most frequent words, wordlist serves as an important aspect for the comparative translation study since the word choice of translators might show their similarities and differences in translation strategies.

3.3. Corpus Construction

Corpora in this study are constructed with the help of ABBYY FineReader and ABBYY Aligner. ABBYY FineReader is used for OCR (optical character recognition), with which letters on paper books or documents can be scanned and then manually checked to find out errors and delete unnecessary information, producing text files. In this study, the source text (from Wang Bi's commentary with some revisions by J. Zhang & S. H. Zhang) [7] and the target text by Lin [8] & Legge [9] of *Tao Te Ching* are scanned and processed for further analysis and alignment.

With ABBYY Aligner, ST and both versions of TT are aligned paragraph by paragraph. It is difficult to align them at the word or sentence level for the distinct structures of the two languages. The lack of punctuation system in Classical Chinese, coupled with the fact that *Tao Te Ching* has more than one version, adds to complexity of this task. When finished, a parallel file presenting ST, TT (Lin) and TT (Legge) is produced and used for detailed contrastive analysis.

3.4. Data Collection

Our data are collected with "Jiayan" (a Python NLP tool for Classical Chinese) and "quanteda" (an R package for the quantitative text analysis) developed by Benoit *et al.* [10].

To make a wordlist of *Tao Te Ching* ST, multiple tools are tested, many of which lack accuracy due to the blurry boundary between words in Chinese—there is no space between them as in languages like English. Parsing is thus a tricky task. Some tools have the capability to process modern Chinese, but run into problems when the material is written in Classical Chinese. Jiayan is relatively accurate and therefore used in this study. While comparing the two translators' styles, quanteda serves to collect information such as TTR, MSTTR and MATTR to measure the lexical diversity of text.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Lexical Diversity of TT (Lin) and TT (Legge)

Several measures of lexical diversity in TT (Lin) and TT (Legge), including type/token ratio (TTR), mean segmental type/token ratio (MSTTR) and moving average type/token ratio (MATTR) generated by quanteda are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. *TTR, MSTTR and MATTR of TT (Lin) and TT (Legge).*

	TT (Lin)	TT (Legge)
TTR	21.24	18.62
MSTTR	38.27	38.33
MSTTR segment size	1000 words	1000 words
MATTR	38.25	38.47
MATTR window size	1000 words	1000 words

TTR of TT (Lin) is higher than that of TT (Legge), but the result is not reliable as it is affected by the length of the two. MSTTR and MATTR of TT (Legge) are both slightly higher than those of TT (Lin). Obviously, Legge's translation, in comparison, exhibits higher lexical diversity.

4.2. Most Frequent Content Words in ST

With "Jiayan", a wordlist of *Tao Te Ching* is constructed, showing a list of the most frequent words along with their frequency in the text. Filtering out the common function words in Classical Chinese (for example, 之 and 以) and negation adverbial 不, ten words with the highest frequency are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *A Wordlist of ST.*

Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
为	116	天下	61
无	101	大	58
人	85	知	57
有	83	善	52
道	75	德	44

4.3. Translation of the Ten Most Frequent Words

4.3.1. Translation of 为

Determining the parts of speech of Chinese words is challenging since many characters belong to multiple word classes. 为 is one such typical word with both concrete meaning being a verb or a noun, and functional meaning being a preposition, a conjunction, a particle or an interjection.

Comparing the translation of 为 is especially difficult not merely because of its versatility, but disagreements concerning its role in the sentence structure. Consider example (1) where it is treated as a preposition (as) in Lin's translation, but a verb (administer) in Legge's.

(1) ST: 故贵以身为天下，若可寄天下；爱以身为天下，若可托天下。(Chapter 13)

TT (Lin): Therefore he who values the world *as his self* / May then be entrusted with the government of the world; / And he who loves the world *as* his self— / The world may then be entrusted to his care.

TT (Legge): Therefore he who would *administer* the kingdom, honoring it as he honors his own person, may be employed to govern it, and he who would *administer* it with the love which he bears to his own person may be entrusted with it.

The complexity of 为 is clearly demonstrated in the collocation of 无为 that appears 12 times in ST. Table 3 provides a glimpse of the two translators' approaches to this essential Taoist idea.

Table 3. *Translation of 无为.*

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequency
taking no action	2	non-action	2
do nothing	1	(appear to) be without knowledge	1
does not act	1	abstinence from action	1
doing nothing	1	did nothing (with a purpose)	1
doing nothing (laissez-faire)	1	do nothing (of purpose)	1
do-nothing	1	does not act (so)[a]	1
never acts	1	does nothing (for the sake of doing it)	1
never does	1	doing nothing (on purpose)	1
renounce the mind	1	doing nothing (with a purpose)	1
without action	1	without (thinking of) acting	1
without deeds	1	without doing anything	1

[a] "So" here means "with an ulterior purpose".

Both Lin and Legge interpret 无为 as the opposite of taking action or doing anything. What distinguishes them is that in many instances Legge takes an explicitation approach and adds more information in parentheses: *with a purpose*, *on purpose*, *of purpose*, or *for the sake of doing it*. Under Legge's translation this delicate notion is explicit—action with a purpose should not be taken. In contrast, Lin only adds *laissez-faire*, an economic term from French, to one instance [example (2)]. *Laissez-faire* is normally associated with the non-interference policy of a government and fits well in the

context since chapter 29 is about administration of a kingdom.

(2) ST: 损之又损，以至于无为。(Chapter 48)

TT (Lin): By continual losing / One reaches *doing nothing (laissez-faire)*.

TT (Legge): He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at *doing nothing (on purpose)*.

The interpretation of 无为 has long been under debate. Legge comments that "all efforts made with a purpose are sure to fail [9]." Lin again understands differently and sees this chapter as "advice against interference and strife and contention [8]."

4.3.2. Translation of 无

The translation of 无 is tricky because of its ambiguity. When 无 functions as verb, adverb or pronoun, not much variation is shown in its translation (*without*, *no*, and the suffix "*-less*"). However, problems arise when it means "space" or a philosophical concept as the opposite of "being" or "existence". See Table 4.

Table 4. *Translation of* 无.

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequency
non-being	2	empty hollowness	1
non-existence	1	empty space (for the axle)	1
not-being (empty space)	1	empty space (within)	1
not-being (in the vessel's hollow)	1	It as non-existent (and not named)	1
not-being (loss of their individuality)	1	not-existence	1
		what has not a (positive) existence	1

The first 无 in example (3), according to J. Zhang and S. H. Zhang, refers to the space inside a vehicle for people to sit in [7]. Lin's translation evokes a flavor of personification by considering 无 as "the spokes losing their individuality, so that they unite to make a functioning wheel". Differently, Legge takes it as the space for the axle connecting two wheels. Despite the difference, both agree upon one unequivocal purpose—the utility of the wheel/vehicle. It is only the process to achieve the purpose is understood in different manners. About the second and the third 无, both translators interpreted it as the empty space/hollowness in a vessel/house.

(3) ST: 三十辐共一毂，当其无，有车之用；埏埴以为器，当其无，有器之用；凿户牖以为室，当其无，有室之用。故有之以为利，无之以为用。(Chapter 11)

TT (Lin): Thirty spokes unite around the nave; / From their *not-being (loss of their individuality)* / Arises the utility of the wheel. / Mold clay into a vessel; / From its *not-being (in the vessel's hollow)* / Arises the utility of the vessel. / Cut out doors and windows in the house (-wall), / From their *not-being (empty space)* arises the utility of the house. / Therefore by the existence of things we profit. / And by the *non-existence* of things we are served.

TT (Legge): The thirty spokes unite in the one nave; but it is on the *empty space (for the axle)*, that the use of the wheel depends. Clay is fashioned into vessels; but it is on their *empty hollowness*, that their use depends. The door and windows are cut out (from the walls) to form an apartment; but it is on the *empty space (within)*, that its use depends. Therefore, what has a (positive) existence serves for profitable adaptation, and *what has not that* for (actual) usefulness.

In chapter eleven, both translators explicitly explain the meaning of 无 using parentheses. It is important to note that although Lin clarifies the meaning of the three cases of 无, he prefers to retain a unified word *not-being* for this notion. By doing this, he recognizes the value of 无 in Laozi's texts and preserves it for target readers. Legge's translation is more straightforward by adding some detail.

4.3.3. Translation of 人

The word 人 usually appears in the collocation of 圣人 which appears 31 times in the text. Although Lin translates 圣人 as *the sage* (see also Gu [11] and Xu [12]), there are some variations in Legge's translation. See Table 5.

Table 5. *Translation of* 圣人.

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequency
the Sage	31	the sage(s); a sage; (he)	27
		the ruling sage; the sage (ruler)	3
		a wise prince	1

Consider example (4) in Chapter 60 in which the sage is associated with the role of ruling a state in Legge's translation. Interestingly, the missing subject in the second sentence "以道莅天下，其鬼不神" is presumed by Legge to be the sage ruler of a state. But example (5) proves that the sage is not equivalent but the opposite of a ruler. In actuality, a sage in ancient China is not usually ruling, but giving advice. Chapter 30 explicitly states that "以道佐人主者，不以兵强天下 (He who by Tao purposes to help the ruler of men / Will oppose all conquest by force of arms)". Normally, the sage is the embodiment of virtues, as can be seen in example (6), where he is described as not claiming credit or displaying superiority.

Apparently, it might be a case of misinterpretation when Legge translates 圣人 as a wise prince or the (ruling) sage in examples (5) and (6).

(4) ST: 以道莅天下，其鬼不神。非其鬼不神，其神不伤人。非其神不伤人，圣人亦不伤人。夫两不相伤，故德交归焉。(Chapter 60)

TT (Lin): Who rules the world in accord with Tao / Shall find that the spirits lose their power. / It is not that the spirits lose their power, / But that they cease to do people harm. / It is not (only) that they cease to do people harm, / *The Sage* (himself) also does no harm to the people. / When both do not do each other harm, / The original character is restored.

TT (Legge): Let the kingdom be governed according to the Tao, and the manes of the departed will not manifest their spiritual energy. It is not that those manes have not that spiritual energy, but it will not be employed to hurt men. It is not that it could not hurt men, but neither does *the ruling sage* hurt them. When these two do not injuriously affect each other, their good influences converge in the virtue (of the Tao).

(5) ST: 是以圣人终日行不离辎重，虽有荣观，燕处超然。奈何万乘之主，而以身轻天下？轻则失本，躁则失君。(Chapter 26)

TT (Lin): Therefore *the Sage* travels all day / Yet never leaves his provision-cart. / In the midst of honor and glory, / He lives leisurely, undisturbed. / How can the ruler of a great country / Make light of his body in the empire? / In light

frivolity, the Center is lost; / In hasty action, self-mastery is lost.

TT (Legge): Therefore *a wise prince*, marching the whole day, does not go far from his baggage waggons. Although he may have brilliant prospects to look at, he quietly remains (in his proper place), indifferent to them. How should the lord of a myriad chariots carry himself lightly before the kingdom? If he do act lightly, he has lost his root (of gravity); if he proceed to active movement, he will lose his throne.

(6) ST: 孰能有余以奉天下？唯有道者。是以圣人为而不恃，功成而不处，其不欲见贤。(Chapter 77)

TT (Lin): Who can have enough and to spare to give to the entire world? / Only the man of Tao. / Therefore *the Sage* acts, but does not possess, / Accomplishes but lays claim to no credit, / Because he has no wish to seem superior.

TT (Legge): Who can take his own superabundance and therewith serve all under heaven? Only he who is in possession of the Tao! Therefore *the (ruling) sage* acts without claiming the results as his; he achieves his merit and does not rest (arrogantly) in it:—he does not wish to display his superiority.

4.3.4. Translation of 有

The Chinese character 有 is highly versatile and polysemous, a table that lists all of its translation will be long and complicated. It can be understood either as *being/existence*, the opposite of 无, or as verbs like *own*,

possess, *arise*, *appear*. Thanks to this, both translators translate it flexibly. Consider example (7):

(7) ST: 大道废，有仁义；慧智出，有大伪。六亲不和，有孝慈；国家昏乱，有忠臣。(Chapter 18)

TT (Lin): On the decline of the great Tao, / The doctrines of "humanity" and "justice" *arose*. / When knowledge and cleverness appeared, / Great hypocrisy *followed* in its wake. / When the six relationships no longer lived at peace, / *There was* (praise of) "kind parents" and "filial sons." / When a country fell into chaos and misrule, / *There was* (praise of) "loyal ministers."

TT (Legge): When the Great Tao (Way or Method) ceased to be observed, benevolence and righteousness *came into vogue*. (Then) appeared wisdom and shrewdness, and there *ensued* great hypocrisy. When harmony no longer prevailed throughout the six kinships, filial sons *found their manifestation*; when the states and clans fell into disorder, loyal ministers *appeared*.

4.3.5. Translation of 道

The word 道 appears 75 times in ST. It originally means the path towards a destination, and developed by Laozi to be the umbrella term for all the laws, truths and principles. In most cases, 道 is translates as *Tao* through transliteration. In Lin's translation, it is often associated with ideas such as *way*, *path*, *road* or *course* and even *teaching* and *truth* as Table 6 shows.

Table 6. *Translation of 道.*

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequency
(the) Tao	61	(the) Tao; (it)	60
(the) Way/way	5	(the) Way/way	9
the Tao (Path); the Path (Tao)	2	the Tao (or way); the Way (or Tao)	2
Way (Tao); The Tao (way)	2	(the course) of the Tao	1
be told of	1	be trodden	1
my teaching (Tao)	1	the Tao (the Way or Course)	1
the religious man (possessed of Tao)ª	1	the Tao (Way or Method)	1
the road	1		
the Tao (truth)	1		

ª Here the ST is "有道者".

In effect, it is a demanding task to exactly interpret 道. In example (8), Lin literally translates 道 as the main path, but Legge focuses on its metaphorical sense, interpreting it as *the Great Tao*.

(8) 行于大道 (Chapter 53)

TT (Lin): Walking on the Main Path (Tao)

TT (Legge): … and (put into a position to) conduct (a government) according to the Great Tao.

In Chapter 31, Legge's translation of 有道者 is *they who have the Tao*, whereas Lin translates it as *the religious man*

(*possessed of Tao*). To relate Tao to religion might be misleading in that "*Tao Te Ching* is originally but a work of philosophy although later scholars take Laozi as the founder of the religion of Taoism [13]." In Chapter 24 and 77, 有道者 is translated as *the man of Tao* (by Lin), *those who pursue* (*the course*) *of the Tao* or *he who is in possession of the Tao* (by Legge). Both versions lack consistency in terms of word choice. However, when translating 天(之)道 as Table 7 shows, 道 is mostly translated as *the Way*, the abstract law governing the universe.

Table 7. *Translation of 天(之)道.*

Chpt. No.	ST	TT (Lin)	TT (Legge)
9	天之道	Heaven's way	the way of Heaven
47	天道	the Tao of Heaven	the Tao of Heaven
73	天之道	Heaven's Way (Tao)	the way of Heaven
77	天之道	the Tao (way) of Heaven	the Way (or Tao) of Heaven
	天之道	the Way of Heaven	the Way of Heaven
79	天道	the way of Heaven	the Way of Heaven
81	天之道	the Tao of Heaven	the Way of Heaven

4.3.6. Translation of 天下

The translation of 天下 shows a disagreement. Lin uses *the world* predominantly, while for Legge it refers to *the kingdom*. In Lin's translation of Chapter 43, 45 and 52, 天下 is even wider interpreted as *the universe* (Table 8).

Table 8. *Translation of* 天下.

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequency
the world; (omitted for repetition)	39	the kingdom; it; (omitted for repetition)	15
the universe/Universe	4	the world; (omitted for repetition)	9
(omitted)	3	all beneath the sky; (omitted for repetition)	5
no one; no one in the world[a]	3	all under heaven	5
all the world	2	all the world	3
the people of the world	2	all under the sky; them all	3
All Things	1	no one in the world; no one[b]	3
anyone	1	all (pronoun)	2
people of the Earth	1	all in the world	2
the empire	1	all things	2
the entire world	1	others	2
the people	1	the whole world	2
this world	1	under heaven	2
what is happening in the world	1	(all that takes place) under the sky	1
		(all the small states) under heaven	1
		(omitted)	1
		all (determiner)	1
		all they	1
		every one in the world	1

[a][b] Here the word is followed by "莫", a negation adverbial.

According to Zhao, 天下 for Chinese has three senses (the world, China and a dynasty-state) [14]. A number of dynasties in ancient China also call the countries they govern 天下. It appears that Legge chooses the right word for it. But ever since the Ming Dynasty, when the idea of 天下 being equal to five major continents was introduced to China by Matteo Ricci, an Italian Catholic missionary, the connotation of this word has changed. After the establishment of the Republic of China, 天下 is generally taken as the world and China is only a part in it. In view of this, Lin's translation is then more up-to-date.

Besides the issue concerning the scope of the word, Legge sometimes translates it literally as two individual morphemes: sky (天) and *under/beneath* (下). Adopting a domesticating approach, 天 is also translated as *heaven*, a religious notion familiar to the English readers.

4.3.7. Translation of 大

The word 大 might be an adjective (sometimes in comparative and superlative forms), a noun and an adverb in Chinese. The translation of 大 witnesses a greater variety in Lin's translation as Table 9 demonstrates.

Table 9. *Translation of* 大.

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequency
great	23	great; it (a great state)	40
big	10	greatest	6
(omitted)	3	greater	3
greater	3	(omitted)	2
greatest	3	greatly	2
greatness	3	greatness	1
Main	2	largest	1
master	2	loud	1
most	2	strong	1
far	1	what is more great	1
Grand	1		
greatly	1		
highest	1		
loud	1		
noble	1		
sheer	1		

Generally, Lin's translation is more context-dependent. Consider example (9) where 大 is translated as *Main*. When 大道 is translated as the Main Path, the metaphor of "Tao is path" is retained. Legge, in contrast, makes it explicit by translating it as *the Great Tao*.

(9) ST: 使我介然有知，行于大道，唯施是畏。大道甚

夷，而民好径。(Chapter 53)

TT (Lin): If I were possessed of Austere Knowledge, / Walking on the *Main* Path (Tao), / I would avoid the by-paths. / The *Main* Path is easy to walk on, / Yet people love the small by-paths.

TT (Legge): If I were suddenly to become known, and (put into a position to) conduct (a government) according to the *Great* Tao, what I should be most afraid of would be a boastful display. The *great* Tao (or way) is very level and easy; but people love the by-ways.

Similarly, In Chapter 74, Lin translated 大 as *master* to collocate with 匠 (the carpenter) to show his awareness of context, while Legge chooses a more general adjective *great*.

4.3.8. Translation of 知

As a word meaning "know/knowledge", the translation of 知 exhibits little variation. However, 知 frequently appears in the collocation of 知足, which explains the various translations of *contended*, *contentment*, *discontented*, *satisfied* as Table 10 shows. Interestingly, Legge translates 知 to *scan* in example (10), which proves his effort to rhyme *scan* with *man* to create a poetic effect.

(10)ST: 天之所恶，孰知其故？(Chapter 73)

TT (Lin): (Even if) Heaven dislikes certain people, / Who would know (who are to be killed) and why?

TT (Legge): When Heaven's anger smites a man, / Who the cause shall truly *scan*?

Table 10. *Translation of 知.*

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequency
know	41	know	44
contented	2	knowledge	3
contentment	2	(purpose of) action	1
have	2	be known	1
knowledge/Knowledge	2	become known	1
understand	2	content	1
wise	2	contentment	1
be aware of	1	discontented	1
be conscious of	1	get one's knowledge	1
be familiar with	1	satisfied	1
interference	1	scan	1

4.3.9. Translation of 善

Both translators interpret 善 as *good*, but Lin uses a variety of words in different situations. Legge has a preference for *skill/ skillful* (Table 11).

Table 11. *Translation of 善.*

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequency
good	18	good	10
love	7	excellence (5 omitted for repetition, 1 missing)	9
be good at; (omitted for repetition)	6	skilful	9
bad[a]	5	skill	9
declare good	2	be skilful in	4
well(-shut); well(-tied)	2	be skilful at	3
(omitted)	1	(omitted)	2
be adept at	1	beneficial (to the other)	1
brave	1	skilful and effective	1
evil[b]	1	skilfully	1
firm	1	the skilful	1
firmly	1	with most good will	1
goodness	1		
great	1		
know	1		
satisfactory	1		
the best of men[c]	1		
the wise ones[d]	1		

[a][b] Here the ST is "不善".

[c] Here the ST is "上善".

[d] Here the ST is "善为士者".

善 in *Tao Te Ching* could mean "kind" or "be good at". It appears Legge chooses the latter when disambiguating 善 in example (11). However, most interpretations agree on the philosophical or moral concept "good" (Lin [8]; Gu [11]; Xu [12]), considering the co-appearing pairs of opposing concepts of judgments in this chapter.

(11)ST: 天下皆知美之为美，斯恶已；皆知善之为善，斯不善已。(Chapter 2)

TT (Lin): When the people of the Earth all know beauty as beauty, / There arises (the recognition of) ugliness. / When the people of the Earth all know the *good* as *good*, / There arises (the recognition of) evil.

TT (Legge): All in the world know the beauty of the beautiful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what ugliness is; they all know the *skill* of *the skillful*, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what the want of skill is.

善 appears 11 times in Chapter 27, most of which means *be good at*. In example (12), Lin chooses *good/well* and Legge *skilful*. The last paragraph [example (13)] juxtaposes 善人 with 不善人, for which Lin's translation is *the good man* and *the bad man*, while Legge's is *the man of skill* and *he/him who has not the skill*.

(12)ST: 善行，无辙迹；善言，无瑕谪；善数，不用筹策；善闭，无关楗而不可开；善结，无绳约而不可解。(Chapter 27)

TT (Lin): A *good* runner leaves no track. / A *good* speech leaves no flaws for attack. / A *good* reckoner makes use of no counters, / A *well*-shut door makes use of no bolts, / And yet cannot be opened. / A *well*-tied knot makes use of no rope, / And yet cannot be untied.

TT (Legge): The *skillful* traveller leaves no traces of his wheels or footsteps; the *skillful* speaker says nothing that can be found fault with or blamed; the *skilful* reckoner uses no tallies; the *skillful* closer needs no bolts or bars, while to open what he has shut will be impossible; the *skillful* binder uses no strings or knots, while to unloose what he has bound will be impossible.

(13)ST: 故善人者，不善人之师；不善人者，善人之资。(Chapter 27)

TT (Lin): Therefore *the good man* is the Teacher of the bad. / And *the bad man* is the lesson of *the good*.

TT (Legge): Therefore *the man of skill* is a master (to be looked up to) by *him who has not the skill*; and *he who has not the skill* is the helper of (the reputation of) *him who has the skill*.

4.3.10. Translation of 德

Much difference manifests in the translation of 德, a concept closely related with 道. 道 is the umbrella term for all laws and rules; 德 is the specific or concrete laws or nature of individual things, which could be inborn like human's instinct, or acquired through learning. 道 is a whole and 德 are its parts. 道 is objective and 德 is personal (J. Zhang & S. H. Zhang) [7]. Legge truthfully captures the essence of 德 by translating it as the attributes, operation or manifestation of Tao, despite the varied word choice (Table 12). He comments that rendering 德 as virtues only serves to obscure its meaning [9]. Lin, however, translates it mostly to *character/virtue*, and sometimes uses *Teh*, the transliteration of 德, to retain its original meaning.

Table 12. *Translation of* 德

TT (Lin)	Frequency	TT (Legge)	Frequnecy
Character/character	23	attributes of the Tao; them; those attributes	15
Virtue/virtue	8	(omitted)	7
Teh	3	excellence	5
be prepared and strenghthened	2	its (Tao's) outflowing operation; its operation; operation	4
Character (Teh); Teh (character)	2	manifestation of its course; that; its manifestation	4
humanity	2	virtue	2
power	2	force	1
vicious	1	kindness	1
virtuous	1	might	1
		Quality	1
		the virtue (of the Tao)	1
		vigour	1
		whose lot	1

5. Conclusion

5.1. Similarities Between TT (Lin) and TT (Legge)

5.1.1. Lexical Diversity

On the whole, TT (Lin) and TT (Legge) have a similar level of lexical diversity with respect to the calculation of MSTTR and MATTR, although the latter is slightly higher. Considering the possible inaccuracy of corpus tools, the minor gap does not show statistical significance.

5.1.2. Inconsistency in Word Choice

In terms of high-frequency words both translators exhibit a degree of diversity in word choice, which is probably due to either polysemy/ambiguity of these words, or the complex cultural connotation of these Chinese-specific concepts, or the translators' repetitive attempt to retranslate.

As a typical example with various interpretation, 大 represents the degree of not just size, but also significance, loudness, etc. Consequently, its translation varies in accordance with its specific meaning in different paragraphs. 大匠, for example, is *the master carpenter* in Lin's translation. Other words like 善 and 有 also demonstrate this quality.

The complex nature of culture-specific concepts is best illustrated by the translation of 道, which is essentially a metaphor in Taoism. It could be a concrete/physical concept as well as an abstract/metaphorical idea. Both translators transliterate it as *the Tao* most of the time, but add the *way/path/course* when the context requires or when it is difficult to tell apart whether the physical or the metaphorical meaning is intended.

Retranslation helps improve the result, which is a method employed by Legge according to Yue [15]. Legge would shelve a translation draft after finishing it, and retranslate the same ST without looking at the previous draft. In the process, new understandings might emerge; replacing of uninformed

ones in the past, and according revisions are made. It is probably for this reason that the inconsistency of word choice manifests itself in both TTs.

5.1.3. Combination of Domestication and Foreignization

Retaining or relating (in the sense of relating the content of one culture to another so as to facilitate understanding)? Translators need to make a choice when met with cultural elements. Venuti suggests that "foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation, it is highly desirable today, a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs [16]." Surely, foreignizing helps retain the original flavor of *Tao Te Ching*. However, in Baker's opinion "translators can oscillate within the same text between choices that Venuti would regard as domesticating and ones he would regard as foreignizing [17]."

Lin translates one case of 有道者 as *the religious man* (*possessed of Tao*). While Taoism does have a history of religion in China, *Tao Te Ching* was originally only a work of philosophy. Another case where Lin exhibits an inclination towards domestication is *doing nothing* (*laissez-faire*) in the translation of 无为 in Chapter 48. He associates it with the French economic term, which may be familiar to readers with some knowledge in financial policies, to help with understanding.

It seems that Lin has a penchant for domestication, but the real situation is that both translators mix domestication and foreignization: *the Tao* is the product of foreignization; *the Way/Tao of Heaven* is a case in which 天 is domesticated.

5.2. Differences Between TT (Lin) and TT (Legge)

5.2.1. Legge's Preference for Explicitation

According to the taxonomy of linguistic changes in translation by Vinay & Darbelnet, explicitation is a technique "making explicit in the target language what remains implicit in the source language because it is apparent from either the context or the situation [18]." Although non-obligatory explicitation may be a universal feature of translation, Legge's preference for saliently demonstrated in his translation of 无为, 圣人 and 德.

Lin simply translates 无为 as *taking no action*, *doing nothing* or phrases akin to these two, while Legge tries to supply more information about this paradoxical concept by adding his understanding in parentheses. In some instances 圣人 is thought to be a ruler or a prince, and this layer of meaning is made apparent in his translation, although this might be his misinterpretation. Legge's translation of 德 is more specific, capturing 德 to be *the attributes*, *operation* or *manifestation of Tao*. Whereas Lin's translation is more general: *character/virtue*, or the transliteration *Teh*.

Legge's long-term effort in studying and translating Chinese classics probably gives rise to his preference for explicitation. Examples of semantic explicitation reflect his principle of fidelity [15] and his "increasingly empathetic and parenthetical methods of 'sense by sense' translation" [19]. Legge's treatment of syntax is also especially careful because he sees readers as students [15].

5.2.2. Legge's Obsession with Poetic Effect

Both translators try to recreate Laozi's abstruse thoughts, succinct and highly structured language in the form of verse. 知 in Chapter 73 is translated by Legge as *scan*, an uncommonly-used word, to rhyme with the last line ending with *man*.

Legge made more effort to achieve poetic effect as he would even lament in the commentary of Chapter 2 that he could not succeed to his satisfaction in the endeavor to rhyme the second paragraph [9]. Lin's translation, in comparison, is often in the form of free verse.

5.2.3. Lin's Awareness of Changing Context

The translation of classics often hinges on interpretation. In Lin's translation, some concepts are understood and translated in a manner that is keeping up with the times.

天下 is a word that is seemingly simple but deeply intertwined with people's perception in different historical periods. It is a compound of two morphemes sky (天) and under/beneath (下). Legge sometimes translates it literally as *all under the sky/heaven*. While both translators use *the world*, *the kingdom* is the most frequent in Legge's translation. Although *the kingdom* is an apt description of Chinese people's conception of 天下 before the Ming Dynasty, the connotation of this word has been widened since then. Lin's translation echoes this contextual change since he chooses *the world* predominantly and *the universe* in some cases. Lin's awareness of the contextual factors is also demonstrated in his translation of 大 and 善, which accounts for the higher variety of his words choice.

This does not come as a surprise if we consider the time when these two versions of translation were published. Lin's translation was published 57 years later than Legge's. According to a H. J. Xin & S. B. Gao, the English translation of *Tao Te Ching* has witnessed three waves and works in these three periods all have their distinctiveness [20]. Most translators in the first wave are missionaries whose main task was to propagate Christianity in China, so Christian elements are often found in their translation and they generally employ a domesticating approach. The second wave is characterized by the involvement of Chinese, especially the Chinese scholars who immersed themselves in the Chinese culture and then moved to a foreign country. They weighed in with their interpretations and are said to have put an end to the time when English translation of *Tao Te Ching* was monopolized by the West. Legge's translation is part of the first wave while Lin's belongs to the second.

Translating *Tao Te Ching* is a strenuous task since the ST is ambiguous and controversial in many ways. To our regret, new translations of *Tao Te Ching* in recent years have not garnered much attention overseas as older versions do. The translation by Stephen Mitchell gains some popularity in the English-speaking audience, but is criticized as a free and unfaithful interpretation. In light of new academic findings, fresh interpretations and the need to renew the translation of *Tao Te Ching*, our suggestions for further translation of *Tao Te Ching* are the followings:

First, to retain the original Taoist thoughts, ensure consistency when translating core ideas. This study shows that the translation of 道 and 德 is inconsistent from chapter to chapter, which could risk confusing target readers and diminishing the gravity of these concepts. Commentary in preface or annotation could help present more information and clear up the complexity of these ideas. Secondly, to recreate Laozi's succinct and highly structured language, the English version should not be lengthy and cumbersome. More information, if necessary to facilitate readers' understanding, could be supplied through commentary.

Our study reveals that the easily accessible software for the study of Chinese is not commonly seen, let alone that for the study of Classical Chinese. Undoubtedly, our study leaves a wide range of aspects unexplored, so more fruitful studies one the translation of *Tao Te Ching* needs to be undertaken.

Acknowledgements

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