Towards a Methodology for Investigating the Style of a Literary Translator*

Mona Baker
Centre for Translation Studies, UMIST

Abstract: Translation studies has inherited from literary studies its preoccupation with the style of individual creative writers and from linguistics the preoccupation with the style of social groups of language users. It also inherited from both disciplines the association of style with 'original' writing. Little or no attention has been paid so far to the possibility of describing the 'style' of a translator or group of translators in terms of what might be distinctive about the language they produce. This paper offers a first attempt to outline a methodological framework for investigating the question of style in literary translation — not in the traditional sense of whether the style of a given author is adequately conveyed in the relevant translation but in terms of whether individual literary translators can be shown to use distinctive styles of their own.

Résumé: Des études littéraires, les études de traduction ont hérité l’intérêt qu’elles portent à la créativité et au style individuel des auteurs, et de la linguistique celui qu’elles portent au style des groupes sociaux usagers de la langue. Aux deux disciplines, elles ont également emprunté l’association des notions de style et de création ‘originale’. Jusqu’à présent, peu d’attention a été accordée à la possibilité de décrire le ‘style’ d’un traducteur ou de groupes de traducteurs en fonction de ce qui peut distinguer leurs usages de la langue. Cet article constitue une première tentative pour dessiner le cadre méthodologique d’une analyse stylistique de la traduction littéraire: loin de vérifier si le traducteur a transposé de manière adéquate le style d’un auteur donné, il s’agit d’examiner à quel point des traducteurs littéraires individuels se servent de styles distinctifs qui leur appartiennent.
She [Ros Schwartz] said that when someone complained to a well-known Czech author that he had changed his style, his reply was, ‘No, I’ve changed my translator.’ (The Times, 12.2.1998)

**Style in Translation**

A number of translation scholars have attempted to apply various interpretations of the notion of style to the study of translation, mostly with a view to elaborating criteria for quality assessment. The best known and most explicit treatment to date is House (1977/1981, 1997).

House sets out to develop a model for describing the linguistic and situational peculiarities of the source text, comparing source and translation texts, and making informed statements about the relative match of the two. These statements are meant to be evaluative, to say something about whether the translation is good, bad or indifferent. The evaluation is based on analyzing two sets of ‘situational dimensions’: the dimensions of language user and the dimensions of language use. The first covers geographical origin, social class, and time; the second covers medium, participation, social role relationship, social attitude, and province. These are all elements that figure prominently in many types of stylistic analyses, and indeed most of these categories are borrowed from Crystal and Davy’s *Investigating English Style* (1969). The definition of social attitude (under dimensions of language use) is based on the distinctions proposed by Joos (1961) between frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate styles.¹

House in effect combines two of the most common interpretations of the notion of style: as variation in the level of formality, hence the borrowing of the categories from Joos, and as patterned choices across all linguistic levels.² She does not attempt a systematic treatment of the notion of style as such, since ultimately what she aims to describe is not so much the style of the original text or author, and certainly not the style of the translation or translator, but where the two texts diverge along the two dimensions of language user and language use, and only along those two dimensions. Hers then is essentially a checklist of features designed to allow the scholar to formulate a statement of the relative match of source and target texts and the relative success of the latter in reproducing the ‘style’ of the original.

Apart from this extended study by House, there have been various attempts to use insights from both linguistic and literary studies of style to explain the choices made by specific translators or, more frequently, to
prescribe guidelines for the selection of specific translation strategies on the basis of broad stylistic categories formalized as text types or registers. This reflects the fact that the notion of style in both linguistic and literary studies has traditionally been associated with one of three things: the style of an individual writer or speaker (e.g. the style of James Joyce, or Winston Churchill), linguistic features associated with texts produced by specific groups of language users and in a specific institutional setting (e.g. the style of newspaper editorials, patents, religious sermons), or stylistic features specific to texts produced in a particular historical period (e.g. Medieval English, Renaissance French).

Translation studies has specifically inherited from literary studies its preoccupation with the style of individual creative writers, but only insofar as describing the style of a writer can inform the process of translating his or her work. The most recent example is Tim Parks’ *Translating Style* (1998), which includes chapters on *Women in Love*, James Joyce, *Mrs Dalloway*, Samuel Beckett, etc. From linguistics, on the other hand, translation studies inherited the interest in studying the style of social groups of language users (more commonly known as register analysis), for similar reasons. The most recent example of this is *Text Typology and Translation* (Trosborg 1997), which continues a long tradition in translation studies of using text type classifications as a shorthand for clusters of linguistic features to which the student or practitioner of translation should pay particular attention. The classifications may be based on different criteria: the context in which language is used (e.g. journal articles, radio broadcasts), subject matter (medical discourse, legal language), a combination of both (medical journal articles, law textbooks), or the nature of the message and addressee relationship (argumentative discourse, the language of instructions). Whatever the basis for the various classifications, the aim is generally to provide a starting point for identifying the distinctive features of the source text in order to reproduce in the translation either those same features or the typical features associated with the same text type in the target language.

It is worth pointing out that studying the style of social groups (register analysis) may be extended to studying the language shared by a group adhering to a certain poetics (including, in the case of translation, a certain tradition or programme in translating), in which case the possibility of any clusters of linguistic features identified being attributable to socially shared preferences for certain uses of language must be worth examining. In the study presented
here, this particular line of investigation is not pursued. Such a study would have to involve calculating the deviation shown by individual translators against the percentage norm derived from an entire corpus of translations (and against the source text in each instance). We can then subsequently see if we can group translators showing certain manifest preferences together and suggest that their output in a sense realizes a certain ‘register’ or ‘sociolect’. To the best of my knowledge, Kenny (1999, in press) is the only study that attempts to pursue this line to some extent, using corpus methodology.³

**Style of Translation?**

Translation studies then essentially inherited from both disciplines — literary studies and linguistics — the association of style with ‘original’ writing. So far there has been little or no interest in studying the style of a translator, or group of translators, or a corpus of translated material that belongs to a particular historical period. This is clearly because translation has traditionally been viewed as a derivative rather than creative activity. The implication is that a translator cannot have, indeed should not have, a style of his or her own, the translator’s task being simply to reproduce as closely as possible the style of the original. We may well want to question the feasibility of these assumptions, given that 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. Moreover, several theorists of translation have been calling in relatively recent years for more visibility for translators, whether as a professional group or in terms of an individual translator’s presence in the text (see, in particular, Venuti 1995 and the growing literature on feminist translation strategies). And yet these calls have not been accompanied by any attempt to demonstrate that a translator does indeed leave his or her individual imprint on every text they produce.

The translator’s presence in the text, or rather the traces that this presence leaves in the text, has received some attention in the literature, most notably in May (1994), Hermans (1996a, 1996b), and Gullin (1998).⁴ Here, the discussion has been largely restricted either to describing general tendencies for translators to, for example, focus on the semantics of the source text and ignore its idiosyncrasies (May 1994), or describing instances of open intervention by the translator, mainly in terms of adding paratextual material or
glosses. The latter aspect of the translator’s presence is developed in Hermans (1996a), where it is clearly acknowledged that “that other voice [i.e. the translator’s] is there in the text itself, in every word of it” (1996a: 9). Hermans (1996b) pursues this issue at greater length and starts by asking whether “the translator, the manual labour done, disappear[s] without textual trace” (1996b: 26). One of his proposed answers is that the translator’s voice “may remain entirely hidden behind that of the Narrator, rendering it impossible to detect in the translated text” (1996b: 27; emphasis added), a conclusion we may wish to revisit in the light of recent advances in corpus methodology, as I will attempt to demonstrate in this paper. At any rate, Hermans’ main focus remains on those instances where the translator’s voice “breaks through the surface of the text speaking for itself, in its own name, for example in a paratextual Translator’s Note employing an autoreferential first person identifying the speaking subject” (1996b: 27).

This is the nearest we have come in translation studies to the idea of studying the style of a translator, in terms of his or her presence in the text, which is to say we have done very little and thought very little about the issue. Given not only the fact that the notion of style is very difficult to define even in established disciplines such as literary criticism and stylistics (Wales 1989: 435), but also that, to my knowledge, no one seems to have tried to apply it specifically to translation so far, at least not in the way I propose here, it is important to spell out at this point what I mean by ‘style’ and what I think the notion might cover in an analysis of translated text specifically.

I understand style as a kind of thumb-print that is expressed in a range of linguistic — as well as non-linguistic — features. As such, it covers the notion of ‘voice’ as defined by Hermans above, but also much more. In terms of translation, rather than original writing, the notion of style might include the (literary) translator’s choice of the type of material to translate, where applicable, and his or her consistent use of specific strategies, including the use of prefaces or afterwords, footnotes, glossing in the body of the text, etc. More crucially, a study of a translator’s style must focus on the manner of expression that is typical of a translator, rather than simply instances of open intervention. It must attempt to capture the translator’s characteristic use of language, his or her individual profile of linguistic habits, compared to other translators. Which means that style, as applied in this study, is a matter of patterning: it involves describing preferred or recurring patterns of linguistic behaviour, rather than individual or one-off instances of intervention.
I am particularly interested at this stage in linguistic features which are probably more in the domain of what is sometimes called ‘forensic stylistics’ than literary stylistics (Leech and Short 1981: 14). Traditionally, literary stylistics has focused on what are assumed to be conscious linguistic choices on the part of the writer, because literary stylisticians are ultimately interested in the relationship between linguistic features and artistic function, in how a given writer achieves certain artistic effects. Forensic stylistics, on the other hand, tends to focus on quite subtle, unobtrusive linguistic habits which are largely beyond the conscious control of the writer and which we, as receivers, register mostly subliminally. But like both branches of stylistics, I am interested in patterns of choice (whether these choices are conscious or subconscious) rather than individual choices in isolation.

As things stand at the moment, we have no model to draw on for conducting stylistic analyses of translators or translated text specifically. We do not, for instance, have a methodology for isolating stylistic features which can reasonably be attributed to the translator from those which are simply a reflection of the stylistic features of the original. I will attempt to look at this issue in more detail in the discussion section of this article. More importantly, in my view, until very recently we had no readily available data for analysis, especially for analysing linguistic habits which are beyond the conscious control of the translator and for capturing patterns of choice rather than individual choices. This type of study can be greatly aided by access to a large body of data and relevant software to process it at least semi-automatically, and hence ought to draw to some extent on the methodology used in corpus linguistics. Unfortunately, however, corpus linguists have traditionally excluded translated text from their corpora, on the basis that it is not representative of the language being studied (see Baker 1996, 1999), which meant that until very recently no one had access to a large corpus of translated material that could be used for stylistic analysis of the type I am proposing here.  

The Translational English Corpus (TEC)

We have tried to address this problem at the Centre for Translation Studies, UMIST (Manchester), by building a large computerised corpus of English text translated from a variety of source languages, both European and non-European, and developing software for processing it semi-automatically. The
overall size of the corpus at the time of writing is 6.5 million words; it should reach 20 million words by the end of 2001. The corpus consists largely of fiction and biography (with smaller subcorpora of news and inflight magazines). This is a resource that is made available to the research community worldwide on the web (http://www.umist.ac.uk/ctis/research/research_overview.htm).

The Translational English Corpus is meticulously documented in terms of extralinguistic features such as gender, nationality and occupation of the translator, direction of translation, source language, publisher of the translated text, etc. This information is held in a separate header file for each text (see Appendix for an example of a full header file). The concordancing software is designed to make the information in the header file available to the researcher at a glance, as can be seen in figure 1.

The corpus (TEC) is specifically designed to include, among other things, several works by individual experienced literary translators. In many cases we
have perhaps five or six translations by the same person, translating different writers and sometimes from different source languages. The idea is to have a snapshot of the work of individual translators as well as a snapshot of translated English in general. The corpus also includes several works by the same author, translated by different translators, thus allowing us to look at the issue of style from different perspectives.

**Some Interesting Patterns**

The overall question as far as the present study is concerned is whether individual literary translators can plausibly be assumed to use distinctive styles of their own, and if so how we might go about identifying what is distinctive about an individual translator’s style. We need to explore the possibility that a literary translator might consistently show a preference for using specific lexical items, syntactic patterns, cohesive devices, or even style of punctuation, where other options may be equally available in the language. If there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this might be the case, we then need to address a number of questions, none of which can be answered satisfactorily on the basis of this exploratory study. The questions might include the following: (a) Is a translator’s preference for specific linguistic options independent of the style of the original author?; (b) Is it independent of general preferences of the source language, and possibly the norms or poetics of a given sociolect?; (c) If the answer is yes in both cases, is it possible to explain those preferences in terms of the social, cultural or ideological positioning of the individual translator?

These are ‘large’ questions which will take time to answer satisfactorily, especially given the current lack of large-scale descriptive studies in the discipline, a lack which inevitably means that we have little or no reliable data to use as a backdrop to some of the patterns we might identify. Nevertheless, I would like not only to raise these ‘large’ questions but also to encourage other researchers to address them by exploring them in a very tentative way in the rest of this article. I will do so by looking at some aspects of linguistic patterning in a subset of the Translational English Corpus: the works of two British literary translators represented in the corpus, Peter Bush and Peter Clark. The subcorpus I have used for analysis at this stage consists of the following texts:
(a) Peter Bush: overall number of words in the corpus: 296,146

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filename</th>
<th>Source Language</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fn000003</td>
<td>Brazilian Portuguese</td>
<td>Chico Buarque</td>
<td>Turbulence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fn000028</td>
<td>Spanish (mainland)</td>
<td>Juan Goytisolo</td>
<td>Quarantine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fn000035</td>
<td>Spanish (South America)</td>
<td>Senel Paz</td>
<td>Strawberry and Chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb000002</td>
<td>Spanish (mainland)</td>
<td>Juan Goytisolo</td>
<td>Forbidden Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb000004</td>
<td>Spanish (mainland)</td>
<td>Juan Goytisolo</td>
<td>Realms of Strife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Peter Clark: overall number of words in the corpus: 173,932

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filename</th>
<th>Source Language</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fn000048</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Muhammad al Murr</td>
<td>Dubai Tales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fn000049</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Ulfat Idilbi</td>
<td>Grandfather’s Tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fn000050</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Ulfat Idilbi</td>
<td>Sabriya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Files beginning with fn are works of fiction, those beginning with bb are biographies or autobiographies. The files bb000002 and bb000004 are the autobiography of Juan Goytisolo, in two parts. All the authors translated by Peter Bush are male, but there are several source languages — or varieties of source language — represented, though all three (Brazilian Portuguese, mainland Spanish and South American Spanish) are closely related.

As for Peter Clark, there is only one source language represented and two authors, but the two authors are very different, and we might expect their writing to reflect this difference. Muhammad al Murr is a male writer from Dubai. Age-wise, he is in his mid-forties. Ulfat Idilbi is a Syrian woman writer, in her late eighties. Her life experiences and her style of writing are very different from al Murr’s.

I will first describe some of the more interesting patterns I have identified so far and then offer a number of possible explanations for these patterns as a way of opening up the debate on methodology, which is the main focus of this article. The patterns relate to type/token ratio; average sentence length; variation across texts; frequency and patterning of SAY (the most frequent reporting verb in English). They are presented below as they are encountered in the translations, with little or no reference to the source texts to start with. The difficult issue of how we establish what is attributable to the translator and what is a direct reflection of the source text will be tackled in the discussion section.
Type/Token Ratio

One obvious difference between the two translators concerns the overall type/token ratio. In simple terms, type/token ratio is a measure of the range and diversity of vocabulary used by a writer, or in a given corpus. It is the ratio of different words to the overall number of words in a text or collection of texts. A high type-token ratio means that the writer uses a wider range of vocabulary. A low type-token ratio means that a writer draws on a more restricted set of vocabulary items. In studies of original English, texts addressed to non-native speakers of English (for example BBC World Service broadcasts) tend to have a lower type-token ratio than texts addressed to native speakers (for example Radio Four broadcasts). The relevant figures for Peter Bush and Peter Clark are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>FT</th>
<th>RofS</th>
<th>Turb.</th>
<th>Quar.</th>
<th>S&amp;C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>49.87</td>
<td>52.42</td>
<td>51.96</td>
<td>44.51</td>
<td>54.88</td>
<td>43.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>42.34</td>
<td>39.53</td>
<td>41.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, a note about the procedure for calculating the above figures. Standardized type/token ratio figures are much more reliable than raw type/token figures, especially if the texts and subcorpora used are of different lengths, as in the present case. Wordsmith Tools, the software used to obtain the above figures, computes type/token ratio (mean) every 1000 words as it goes through each text file. In other words, the ratio is calculated for the first 1000 running words, then calculated afresh for the next 1000, and so on to the end of the text or corpus. A running average is then computed, which means that the final figure represents an average type/token ratio based on consecutive 1000-word chunks of text.

The above figures show that the type/token ratio is lower overall for Peter Clark, with a very restricted range of variation among individual texts. It is higher overall for Peter Bush, with much more variation among individual texts.
Average Sentence Length

The average sentence length for all the texts in the corpus is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>FT</th>
<th>RofS</th>
<th>Turb.</th>
<th>Quar.</th>
<th>S&amp;C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Std. Sent. Length</td>
<td>23.76</td>
<td>31.82</td>
<td>28.49</td>
<td>10.34</td>
<td>19.64</td>
<td>10.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Clark</th>
<th>Dubai Tales</th>
<th>Grandfather</th>
<th>Sabriya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Std. Type/Token</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>7.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, we see that average sentence length (using the same process of standardization used for calculating type/token ratio) is much lower for Peter Clark, and again with very much less variation among individual texts.

So far, I would tend to interpret these overall statistical findings as showing a stronger (probably largely subconscious) attempt on the part of Peter Clark to mediate the Arabic texts by making them, in a sense, less challenging linguistically. Perhaps he subconsciously realizes that the English reader faces sufficient challenges at the level of digesting the details of a very different world, with different values, priorities, and style of life. I will return to this point in the discussion.

Let us now look at some differences in actual language patterning.

Reporting Structures

Reporting structures in fiction and (auto)biography are both common and important in terms of providing a framework for dialogue and, consequently, for interpreting the role of the narrator and supporting characterization. We might expect a high level of variation here, given that different characters in a novel, for instance, are likely to speak in different ways, report others’ speech in their own style, and so on. Within the scope of this initial study, it is not feasible to explore all or even several reporting verbs, given their very high frequency and the need to look closely at recurring patterns in a large number of concordances. I have chosen to look at SAY in all its forms (say, says, said, saying) because it is the reporting verb with the highest frequency in English.

Frequency-wise, it is immediately noticeable that Peter Clark makes much heavier use of this verb (bearing in mind especially that his is a smaller corpus), and particularly of the past tense of the verb. This may be explained by the overall tendency of writers in Arabic to make very heavy use (com-
pared to English) of the ‘equivalent’ verb *qaal* (see Sham’a 1978: 168-171). I will return to the methodological implications of potential source language influence later in the discussion. In the meantime, here are the relevant frequencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Clark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(296,146 words overall)</td>
<td>(173,932 words overall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>says</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>said</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saying</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>1193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the predominance of the past tense form *said* in Clark, I looked briefly at the frequency of a few other reporting verbs and found that there does seem to be a tendency for Peter Clark to use the past tense more often than other forms, and to use the singular form of the present tense in particular very sparingly (*says*, *tells*, *admits*, *advises*, *assures*, *begs*, *suggests*, etc.). A very brief comparison of selected passages in the source and target texts also suggests that he sometimes opts for using the past tense even when the source text employs the present tense. This is quite revealing stylistically, because it has implications for the level of formality or informality in tone and for the sense of immediacy of the narration. There is also the question of whether a particular form is used in narration or in direct speech. Used in narration, rather than in direct speech or in proverb-style expressions for instance, a verb like *says* reflects a very different tone from *said* in the same function, heightening the sense of immediacy and drawing the reader closer to the narrator’s world, giving the reader the impression that he or she is experiencing the event being narrated at first hand. Peter Bush tends to use *says* frequently in narration, as in the following examples:

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fn000035 As he passes by the Virgin he gives her a knowing smile and *says* in a low voice: DIEGO.

fn000035 … of the opportunity to walk on. DIEGO *says* goodbye to the youth and then DAVID walks …

fn000035 … goes along with him, everybody is in the know but nobody *says* a word. So there are members …

fn000028 If the subject matter oppresses or disturbs you, she *says*, you can switch channels. But the …

fn000028 … knees, bitten by snakes. Oh, comme ils sont emmerdants *says* the Lady with the Parasol.

fn000028 … the computer screen. Excusez-moi, she *says* as she finally turns to face you. Je suis toute à vous!

fn000003 … ring of her broken bell. The porter *says* nothing, only nods, but does it with such solicitude …

fn000003 I’d end up ringing my ex-wife. Her answering machine *says* she’s at the Custom House, on such …

fn000003 He covers one nostril in order to blow the other, and *says* he’s only got the kids left.

bb000002 … left again with me. That fellow *says* that my companion touched me up, the whole works, …

bb000004 … and the one who is seen are one within yourself, *says* Mawlana; but the expatriate you now …
INVESTIGATING THE STYLE OF A LITERARY TRANSLATOR

Peter Clark’s few uses of says, by contrast, are either in direct speech or proverbs, very rarely in narration:

fn000048 ... polite to say and replied, ‘Umm Kulthum says in her song from the Rubaiyat of Omar ... 
fn000048 ... without mixing it with other drinks.’ ‘Who says so?’ ‘It’s well known. Everybody drinks beer ... 
fn000048 ... was Umm Salih.’ ‘Where has this man come from?’ ‘He says he has come from Damascus ... 
fn000048 ... the shop and stood before me. ‘Is what ‘Abd al-Samad says true or is he joking?’ said Ahmad, ... 
fn000050 ... you. Oh, you men! As the proverb says, ‘She who trusts a man is like one carrying water in a ... 
fn000050 ... again for as long as I live.’ ‘Good riddance. Who says we want to see your face of ill omen? ... 

Perhaps Clark subconsciously realizes that the worlds of his narrator and reader are too different, too removed from each other for him, as a translator, to ‘fake’ a shared world and successfully introduce an element of immediacy. There also seems to be a clear preference for direct speech in Peter Clark’s translations, clearly marked as such through the explicit use of quotation marks:

fn000048 ‘And your family, how are they?’ Rashid laughed and said, ‘A strange business. My father ... 
fn000048 ... will be with us before long.’ Abdullah said, ‘Don’t exaggerate, Sultan. I don’t think things will ... 
fn000048 She quickly withdrew her hand from his and said angrily, ‘You want to abandon me just like ... 
fn000048 Shopkeepers stand up when I pass and they all say, “Come in, my Arab lord.” I walk along as if ... 
fn000049 ‘In the name of Allah Almighty,’ said her husband, ‘women are never satisfied. Now you are ... 
fn000049 ‘There’s nobody more dishonest than these agents,’ said Abu Qasim. ‘I wouldn’t have anything ... 
fn000049 ... for a moment. Then I found myself saying, ‘I fear, my dear, that one day you would regret such ... 
fn000049 ‘In the name of Allah Almighty,’ said her husband, ‘women are never satisfied. Now you are ... 
fn000050 She then opened her eyes, laughed and said derisively, ‘What’s the matter with you? Aren’t you ... 
fn000050 ‘It’s time for you to go home as well.’ ‘Allah,’ said Mother, ‘we’d like to spend the night here ... 
fn000050 ... a woman who was obviously well-to-do he would stop her and said, ‘Are you in need of a maid, ... 

Peter Bush, on the other hand, tends to use indirect speech. He is relatively sparing in the use of direct speech, and where he does use it, it is often unmarked in terms of opening and closing quotes:

bb000002 ... ordered us to keep quiet about it. Above all, said my father, not one word to the servant. 
bb000002 ... poem: read it slowly and you will understand, he said with a smile. But Gil de Biedma excuse ... 
bb000002 ... Politics only brings unhappiness, my son, he would say suddenly, interrupting the conversa ... 
fn000035 ... and with effeminate tone and gestures, says to her: DIEGO: Bye-bye, sweetie pie, big momma. 
fn000035 get it? Who gives it to you? DIEGO: (Upset) I can’t say. DAVID: Yes, you can DIEGO: It’s a ... 
fn000028 Yes, he’s here, his wife said after a while. Who’s that? Sorry? She passed him the phone ... 
fn000028 ... the transcendent? Nothing of the kind, she said. For Ibn Arabi, the multiplication of forms is ... 
fn000028 Your life is hardly exemplary, she finally said. You do agree with me, don’t you? Absent ... 
fn000028 ... from the baths. Arise, dress, and follow me, he said. You obeyed, trying to tiptoe over the floor ... 
fn000028 ... indissoluble friendship. If I know you, she says as she presses the stop button on her remote ... 
fn000028 His wife had advised him to take the bus — the 93 from the Porte Saint-Martin will drop you right on ...
Again, this is possibly an attempt to clarify and simplify the linguistic structure of the text on the part of Peter Clark. With unmarked direct speech, as in Peter Bush’s data, it is often difficult to tell where the ‘quote’ ends, and how much of what is said can be attributed to a particular character and how much to the narrator. Moreover, the ‘fusion’ of narrator and character speech also helps to reduce the distance between the reader and the world and events being narrated. There are no clear boundaries, no clear divide between the worlds, and worlds within worlds, so that the reader is encouraged not to separate him/herself from the fictional or autobiographical world.

There also seems to be a strong preference in Peter Clark’s texts for modifying verbs of speech, for adding something about the manner in which something was said. Clark’s world is one in which the focus is pretty much on people saying things to each other and reporting what they heard explicitly as direct speech. The characters frequently report things being said in a particular manner: angrily, apologetically, decisively, disapprovingly, in a shaky voice, in a strange voice, in a voice trembling with genuine affection, in an alarmingly imperious way, indignantly, insistently, quickly, quietly, sympathetically, tenderly, gently, aggressively, affably, defiantly, with a mixture of bafflement and disapproval, with a slight foreign accent, with an air of condescension, with a smile, with a grin, with a laugh, with some asperity, with all courtesy, … Here are some examples:

fn000048 ‘Don’t worry’, he said. She said affectionately, ‘Promise me you’ll write every day.’
fn000048 ‘They say his slave killed him,’ Isa said cautiously. ‘Bilal was not the man to kill him’, replied …
fn000048 ‘He’s older than Father.’ He said with disinterest. ‘That’s life.’ When we returned to …
fn000048 ‘How was that?’ asked Isa. Shaikh Muhammad said dolefully. ‘He went where it was decreed …
fn000048 ‘That is not sandalwood perfume,’ he said disparagingly. ‘It is some obnoxious concoction …
fn000049 ‘We must go to Umm Ayub’s house, my boys.’ the father said decisively. ‘however tiresome it is, …
fn000049 … we finally reached the outskirts of Damascus. Father said gently to me, as if he was pleading …
fn000049 ‘A thousand congratulations, my son.’ he said affably. ‘I am very happy that this house, which …
fn000049 Father gave no answer to my questions. ‘I tell you.’ he said firmly. ‘Go at once before he gets …
fn000049 ‘It belongs to all of us: she said with a laugh. ‘We will not be paying for it, but Allah …
fn000050 … would extend to the Ghuta?’ ‘But,’ said Raghib provocatively. ‘It will fail, just as the Hama …
fn000050 he was level with Father. ‘I love this woman,’ he said defiantly. ‘What’s that got to do with you? …
fn000050 house is the day I leave it,’ she said in a way that did not invite challenge. ‘You know more …
fn000050 … without hurting her. ‘I’m running away,’ she said automatically. ‘with my hairdresser, Wanis,’ …
fn000050 Father turned to me. ‘I don’t want any dinner,’ he said drily. ‘Bring me a cup of tea and a piece …

This pattern is not so noticeable in Peter Bush’s translations. But perhaps what is noticeable, compared to Peter Clark, is a tendency to attribute opinions and thoughts to someone, or relate what is being said now to what was said by oneself or someone else on another occasion. This is most commonly expressed in the structure ‘as x said/says’:
As Albert Manent’s friend had said at the university, “without those Andalusian guards the …
As Ibn Hazm beautifully said, I was exchanging a green and pleasant land “for one he …
… few meters of land that, as Carlos Fuentes said, the Dutch reclaim patiently from the sea: …
… Marx, l’éternel voleur d’énergies! as Rimbaud would have said). Thus, I steeled myself for …
… do so stridently. As Titón has said, the film isn’t proselytising on behalf of homosexuality …
… This wasn’t what I should be doing, and, as I said, I didn’t know any writers. But then I met …
… to play the homosexual, I’m turning homosexual.’ As I said, there was a blackmarket sale of …
… people are very grateful that the film exists. As I said, people knew the story, they knew what …
… If you ever get an opportunity, send them to me. As I said, they’re Sèvres porcelain. But that’s …
… to eliminate them. As T. S. Eliot says in a quotation picked out from … José Angel Valente’s …
… European predecessors. As Vargas Llosa rightly says, exposing the terrible consequences of …
… of imagination and reason, as Malraux says of Goya, beneath the lying appearance of delirium.

There are also variations on this structure, as in the following example:

… the possibility of better things! Didn’t Ibn Arabi once say that, if it were not so, heaven would …

These structures are completely missing from Peter Clark’s texts.

Discussion

It seems reasonable to suggest that the patterns discussed above, and any patterns we might similarly identify as distinctive on the basis of examining a translator’s output, should next be compared directly with the source text in order to address the question of the potential influence of the source language and/or author style. I have no expertise in the source languages of Peter Bush’s translations, and I do not propose to carry out a full-scale comparison of Peter Clark’s translations against his source texts. My concern here is ultimately with developing a methodology, and for that purpose I can only tentatively propose, on the basis of a brief examination of selected passages, that some of the patterns identified above as distinctive in Peter Clark’s corpus may be largely carried over from his Arabic source texts. This is true in particular of the heavy use of modifiers with the reporting verb SAY (said angrily, defiantly, with a slight foreign accent, etc.), though even these are not carried over consistently in all cases, and some are occasionally added at points where they do not appear in the source text. The same is largely true of the preference for direct speech, but not so much the preference for using the past tense in narration. There seem to be quite a few examples in Peter Clark of changes of the following type:
Father became aware of an issue that should not have passed him by. He said severely to Mother, ‘This is your fault. Shouldn’t you have brought her a veil that covers her face, as I suggested, rather than that coat which you got from the tailor’s?’ ‘But, Father,’ broke in Sami, ‘Sabriya is still young. She’s only ten years old. It’s not her fault if she was made tall, is it?’ ‘Be quiet, you,’ Father snapped. ‘People who see her would suppose she was twelve or thirteen years old. Try and be like your elder brother, concerned with the honour and dignity of your sister.’ Sami held his tongue, but looked annoyed. ‘I’ll buy her a shawl,’ said Mother. ‘She can wear that over her coat and I’ll get her a black veil which she can wear over her face. That’s how young girls like her cover themselves up nowadays. The headscarf is no longer fashionable among girls of her age.’ ‘Whether it’s fashionable or not, the important thing is that Sabriya does not go out from now on with her face uncovered.’ ‘As you wish, Sir,’ said Mother with her customary submissiveness. Raghib gave a smile of triumph while I remained puzzled as I listened to things being said by my family that concerned me, but I didn’t dare say anything myself. (Sabriya, p. 55)

In the Arabic original, the author uses the present tense to introduce each switch in argument and/or perspective among characters: all the highlighted elements above (and others in the same stretch which are not translated closely) are in the present tense in the original: ‘Father becomes aware . . . wishes to cover up his mistake in front of us, so he says severely to Mother . . .’; ‘Sami holds his tongue . . .’; ‘Mother says . . .’; ‘Raghib smiles a smile of triumph while I remain puzzled as I listen to things being said . . . without daring to utter a single word’ (literal back-translation of Arabic original, Dimashq, ya Basmat al-Huzn, pp. 92–93). The result is a heightened sense of immediacy in Arabic, and a more distanced portrayal of events in the English version.

All this needs to be examined more systematically, a task which is beyond the immediate scope of this study, especially given that building a computerised corpus of the Arabic originals to perform the same type of analysis automatically is currently not feasible, at least not without extensive investment in both scanning and analysis software. This problem does not apply to languages which use the Roman script, and scholars wishing to build corpora of, say, French or Spanish source texts to undertake analyses similar to those reported here would therefore be able to go much further in developing the proposed methodology than I am able to at this stage.

Going back to the question of methodology, one way in which we could
explore the issue further might be to examine patterns which are less likely to be consciously reproduced on the basis of the source texts. One such pattern concerns the use of optional *that* in reporting structures, and particularly with the verb SAY already selected for examination here.

Earlier studies by Burnett (1999) and Olohan and Baker (in press) suggest that, compared to original English, translated English tends to show a marked preference for the use of optional *that* with various reporting verbs, including SAY. Table 1 shows the absolute values (i.e. raw figures) and percentages for each form of SAY as reported in Olohan and Baker:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>say (BNC)</th>
<th>say (TEC)</th>
<th>said (BNC)</th>
<th>said (TEC)</th>
<th>says (BNC)</th>
<th>says (TEC)</th>
<th>saying (BNC)</th>
<th>saying (TEC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zero</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A close examination of this pattern in the two corpora which form the basis of the current study reveals a marked difference between the two translators in this respect, with Peter Bush being much closer to the patterning of ‘original’ English and Peter Clark very close to the ‘normal’ patterning of translated English. The figures are shown in Table 2. As with the studies reported in Burnett (1999) and Olohan and Baker (in press), only lines where the option of using or omitting *that* is available are counted. This means that lines such as the following, for instance, are discarded:9

*fn000049* very distressed, in spite of all the lovely things Father *said* about you. He was full of noble …
*fn000050* and went up to his room. Then Mother *said*, ‘After all that heavy burghul and lentils we had for …
*bb000002* e according to bets laid by people at the dinner, *said* the commentator, had just been eliminated …
*fn000028* She wasn’t surprised to see him turn up, she *said*. Their separation had been so abrupt! She sen …
*bb000004* had the idea of talking to Sartre: he alone, she *said*, was sufficiently intelligent to argue convin …

The figures in Table 2 suggest a marked overall preference for using a *zero*- rather than a *that*-connective in Peter Bush’s corpus, as opposed to Peter Clark. This is interesting given that the option of deleting the equivalent of *that* is equally unavailable in all the source languages involved (Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese), so there is no question of source language influence here as far as I can see. In short then, one way to proceed with the study of
style in translation is to look specifically at patterns which are less likely to be influenced by the source language and which are less amenable to conscious intervention on the part of the translator. This is in addition to, rather than instead of, looking for other patterns of the type discussed earlier in this study.

Table 2: Distribution of zero/that in Translations by Peter Bush and Peter Clark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>say (Bush)</th>
<th>say (Clark)</th>
<th>said (Bush)</th>
<th>said (Clark)</th>
<th>says (Bush)</th>
<th>says (Clark)</th>
<th>saying (Bush)</th>
<th>saying (Clark)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zero</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the Question of Motivation

Identifying linguistic habits and stylistic patterns is not an end in itself: it is only worthwhile if it tells us something about the cultural and ideological positioning of the translator, or of translators in general, or about the cognitive processes and mechanisms that contribute to shaping our translational behaviour. We need then to think of the potential motivation for the stylistic patterns that might emerge from this type of study, in addition to establishing a methodology for deciding what is attributable to the individual translator and what is simply carried over from the source text (whether what is carried over is a feature of the source language in general, the poetics of a particular social group, or the style of the author). The two objectives are clearly interdependent; we cannot explain stylistic patterns without knowing who or what to attribute them to: the source language, the author, a given sociolect, or the translator. This is what makes the stylistic analysis of translated text particularly problematic: there are, in a sense, two ‘authors’, two languages and two sociolects involved, and the analyst must find a way to disentangle these variables.

At any rate, whatever we manage to establish as attributable to the translator’s own linguistic choices must be placed in the context of what we know about the translator in question and about the relevant positioning of the source and target cultures he or she has chosen to work with. Some of this information is readily accessible from the header files described above and of which we have a sample in the Appendix. Other information has to be sought
outside the corpus, perhaps by contacting the translators in question, as I have done in this instance.

Peter Bush and Peter Clark are both experienced professional translators and native speakers of English. They are both highly articulate and extremely well-educated: neither is likely to have only a narrow range of vocabulary or syntactic structures at his disposal, for instance. So why the apparent variation in the range and use of vocabulary and syntactic structures, assuming the variation is not a direct reflection of the relevant source texts? Let us assume, for the purposes of this initial exploration of methodology, that the variation is indeed attributable to the translators rather than the source language or author, given that no meaningful comparison between type/token ratio in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic can be carried out, and that such a comparison cannot be made between English and Arabic in relation to average sentence length either.

Consider, for a start, that Peter Bush has always lived in Britain, whereas Peter Clark has worked most of his life for the British Council and spent most of his working (and translating) life in the Middle East, immersed in his source culture and language. The actual physical location of each translator and whether this might have any implications, not for their access to varieties or levels of language as such but for their subconscious use of certain linguistic patterns or modes of interpretation, is an important issue here. The kind of environment that any language user is immersed in is known to have considerable impact on his or her linguistic habits. For instance, people who are used to working with non-native speakers develop certain linguistic strategies which respond to the need to accommodate listeners and readers with a different level of competence in the language, a phenomenon sometimes known as ‘accommodation’. There is no reason to assume that translators are immune to social and cognitive processes of this type. We have to recognize that they too respond to their physical and linguistic environment in similar ways. Hence, perhaps, the tendency for Peter Clark’s translations to be less challenging linguistically.

Consider also that Peter Bush is translating from Spanish and Portuguese, introducing into the English-speaking world the works of cultures with which the average reader of English has considerably more affinity than with Arab culture. Peter Clark arguably has a much tougher task in trying to promote a literature and culture widely viewed as more ‘alien’ and associated with all kinds of negative stereotypes in the world of his English-speaking readers (terrorism, fanaticism, etc.). Indeed, relatively little Arabic literature manages
to reach the English-speaking world via translation (see Said 1990), and this both reflects and reinforces the gap between the two cultures. The two translators’ positioning towards their implied reader then is very different indeed.

Another potentially important point to bear in mind is the nature of the texts that each translator has chosen to work with. At least some of the texts that Peter Bush has chosen to translate are, for lack of a better word, ‘difficult’: they assume an educated, sometimes highly educated, reader. Quarantine is probably the best example. All three texts translated by Peter Clark, on the other hand, are pretty accessible to a lay reader (I refer here to the source reader in both cases). The Arabic texts are fairly ordinary narratives with a social message, fairly light on allusions and not philosophical in the way that Quarantine is for instance.

I would personally want to subsume under the notion of style the translator’s choice of themes and literary genres to start with (see note 5), and in this particular case I have ascertained (by speaking to Peter Bush and Peter Clark) that all but one text (Turbulence, translated by Peter Bush) were chosen by the translators, not the publishers. Sometimes the translator had to approach several publishers before he could secure a contract to translate his chosen book. However, whether we decide to treat the translator’s choice of themes and literary genres as an aspect of his or her ‘style’ or not, the nature of the material that is translated and the kind of implied target reader are undoubtedly an important factor to bear in mind when we are trying to find a motivation for the patterns we identify. Hence Peter Clark’s extensive use of direct speech, clearly marked as such, and Peter Bush’s heavier use of structures more typical of ‘learned’ discourse, for example the ‘as x said’ pattern, can be partly explained in terms of the material chosen for translation.

**Conclusion**

This small-scale, exploratory study suggests that, however methodologically difficult, it is possible in principle to identify patterns of choice which together form a particular thumb-print or style of an individual literary translator. It is also possible to use the description which emerges from a study of this type to elaborate the kind of world that each translator has chosen to recreate. Peter Clark’s world is one in which ordinary, everyday people interact with each
other directly, and quite elaborately in terms of telling each other exactly what they heard others saying, as well as describing how they said it, focusing very much on emotions. It is a highly vivid and passionate world within its own boundaries, but the reader is invited to watch it from a distance, a distance that perhaps reflects that felt to exist between the source and target cultures. The world Peter Bush recreates, on the other hand, is one where more learned, more intellectually sophisticated characters speak largely through the narrator, but where the boundaries between the narrator’s and the individual characters’ discourses are much less clear-cut, reflecting a more cultivated, self-reflexive milieu. It is a world in which people are not quite so preoccupied with the details of their daily existence: they have the time and luxury to reflect and make connections with events and characters outside the immediate context of narration. There is more emphasis on interpreting what is being said now in terms of what someone else said at another time and in another context (hence the use of structures such as ‘as x said’). Peter Bush is able to create a sense of immediacy, capitalizing on options offered by the English language (such as the more extensive use of the present tense of verbs like SAY), perhaps because he is conscious of the affinity that exists between his readers and the source culture with which he is inviting them to engage. He can confidently count on his readers to suspend disbelief and allow themselves to enter into the world he is recreating for them, for it is after all a rather familiar world from the point of view of the English reader.

This type of study might therefore also help us to relate a description of linguistic habits to the social and cultural positioning of the translator, including his or her view of the relationship between the relevant cultures and his or her view of the implied reader. This in itself is valuable and worth pursuing in future studies. But we need to think more carefully about issues of methodology. How can we best distinguish stylistic elements which are attributable only to the translator from those which simply reflect the source author’s style, general source language preferences, or the poetics and preferences of a particular subset of translators? Should we try to? And if we decide that it is important to distinguish between these elements, should we be looking at different data altogether? Instead of analyzing several translations by the same translator, should we perhaps be comparing different translations of the same source text into the same target language, by different translators, thus keeping the variables of author and source language constant? This is clearly one option, but it is beset with difficulties. Very few texts are translated more than
once into the same target language and during the same period. Some texts are retranslated over a longer stretch of time, but then we could argue that the stylistic elements we identify may be explained in terms of the evolution of the target language or the poetics of a socially and historically defined group of translators. However much we try, it seems unlikely that we will ever be able to ‘fix’ all the variables in order to tease out a set of features that can be totally and unambiguously attributed to the translator, and to the translator alone. Perhaps we should not even try, but the question does warrant more careful consideration. This study is no more than an attempt to raise questions of this type and to demonstrate that investigating the style of individual literary translators is in principle both feasible and interesting. Indeed, if theorists of translation wish to argue convincingly that translation is a creative and not only a reproductive activity, it is imperative that we begin to explore the issue of style, at least in literary translation, from the point of view of the translator rather than the author. If translation is a creative activity, as I believe it is, then translators cannot simply be ‘reproducing’ what they find in the source text — somewhere along the line each translator must be leaving a personal imprint on the new text. Difficult as it may seem, it is the task of the analyst to develop a coherent methodology for capturing this imprint.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Peter Bush and Peter Clark for allowing me to use their translations as a testing ground for elaborating the methodology outlined in this paper, and to ‘speculate’ about possible motivations for the apparent differences in their linguistic behaviour. Both translators read an earlier draft of this text before it was submitted for publication.

Notes

1. Cf. Gleason’s (1965) distinctions between oratorical, deliberative, consultative, casual, and intimate key.
2. Enkvist (1964) remains one of the most thorough attempts at defining style from a variety of perspectives. See also Wales (1989).

3. I am grateful to one of the anonymous referees of this paper for drawing my attention to the importance of pursuing this line of investigation.

4. Gullin attempts to “demonstrate in what ways it is possible to discern the translator’s voice” (1998: 261), but I only have access to the short summary in English at the end of this Swedish book and therefore cannot comment on the details of this particular study.

5. The degree of choice (of material to translate) varies a great deal among individual translators and types of translation. Most non-literary translators do not have the luxury of choosing what to translate, though many do make a conscious choice of at least what not to translate, often for ethical reasons: many will not translate for the arms industry as a matter of principle, for instance. In literary and book translation generally, by contrast, it is possible and fairly common for translators to propose books to publishers, often because they feel they have a particular affinity with the writer. If we accept that the themes that a particular writer such as Virginia Woolf or Mark Twain chooses to write about constitute part of his or her ‘style’, then the same principle must be applied to the study of style in translation. A translator may consistently choose authors who deal with themes such as alienation, or carnal desire, and this choice will be reflected in the style of the translation, just as it will have had an impact on the style of the original. Although the definition of style as ‘choice’ is now widely accepted, the idea of this choice extending to themes is not explicitly acknowledged in the literature. It is, however, an extension of the definition that seems plausible to me.

6. This is true of corpus linguists working with English specifically. In languages such as Finnish or Norwegian, where translations account for a very large percentage of all published material, it is simply not feasible to exclude translations.

7. The software and the site are developed and maintained by Saturnino Luz (luzs@acm.org). The concordancing software does not work properly on all browsers. Users may receive a message to the effect that the server may be down, in which case they can download a separate piece of software, also available on the site, to ensure direct access to the concordancing software irrespective of the type of browser used. At the moment, it is not advisable to search for high frequency words online, partly because the web technology is slow. We are in the process of rewriting the concordancing software to improve speed of access. Users who require concordances of high frequency words such as say or tell should contact the author directly (mona.baker@umist.ac.uk).

8. Leech and Short (1981: 323) discuss James Joyce’s tendency to run speech and narrative together by omitting the inverted quotes which signal direct speech. They suggest that “[b]y constantly removing the distinction between speech and narrative report, Joyce creates the impression that they are inseparable and relatively indistinguishable aspects of one state” (ibid).

9. For a detailed discussion of the criteria for discarding irrelevant concordance lines, see Olohan and Baker (in press).

10. One could argue, nevertheless, that the decision to carry over or modify stylistic features of the source language/text/author is itself part of what constitutes the ‘style’ of an individual literary translator.
11. Any direct comparison of the type/token ratio of texts in different languages, especially languages as structurally diverse as English and Arabic, would clearly be meaningless, for obvious reasons. Zanettin (2000) proposes an ingenious method for overcoming this difficulty, but applying it requires access to large reference corpora of original texts in both languages.

12. English and Arabic have very different conventions of punctuation, and it is not uncommon for a whole paragraph in Arabic to consist of one long ‘sentence’, if we follow the traditional definition of a sentence as ending in a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark. Even more problematic in the present context is the fact that it is very difficult and costly at the moment to scan and analyze Arabic texts automatically, for a variety of technical reasons, which means that no corpus-based exploration of the Arabic originals can be undertaken, and a manual analysis would require a considerable amount of time to perform.

References


investigating the style of a literary translator


Appendix

Sample Header as Displayed on Concordance Screen

TITLE
Filename: bb000002.txt
Subcorpus: biography
Collection: Forbidden Territory

TRANSLATOR
Name: Peter Bush
Gender: male
Nationality: British
Employment: Lecturer

TRANSLATION
Mode: written
Extent: 85539
Publisher: Quartet Books
Place: UK
Date: 1989
Copyright: Quartet; North Point Press

TRANSLATION PROCESS
Direction: into mother tongue
Mode: written from written ST
Type: full

AUTHOR
Name: Juan Goytisolo
Gender: male
Nationality: Spanish

SOURCE TEXT
Language: Spanish
Mode: written
Status: original
Publisher: Seixbarral
Place: Barcelona, Spain
Date: 1985