
RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Study of the Translators' Gender Awareness in To the Lighthouse from the Perspective of Corpus-assisted Critical Translation Study

Mengfang Zhang¹ and Chao Lu²✉

¹²*School of Foreign Studies, University of Science and Technology Beijing, China*

Corresponding Author: Chao Lu, **E-mail:** luchao@ustb.edu.cn

ABSTRACT

Critical translation study draws upon descriptive translation studies and critical discourse analysis. It tends to uncover the influence of the translator's ideology on the target text through selecting the source text, making comparison with the target text, and examining the translation methods. Meanwhile, the addition of corpus expands the methodology of critical translation study from qualitative study to the new trend fusing qualitative and quantitative studies. Thus, the examination of ideology embedded in the linguistic features of target texts can be statistically evidenced with different types of data with significant difference, including typical sentence patterns and micro-linguistic features. To this end, this study establishes a parallel corpus featuring one source text (i.e., *To the Lighthouse*) with multiple target texts (i.e., two Chinese translations). Notably, the source text is selected due to its representative status in the feminist study authored by Virginia Woolf, and its two Chinese translations are selected due to their popularity in China, translated by Qu Shijing and Ma Ainong, respectively. Moreover, the personalized translations of gendered language in the source text are examined from both the macro and micro linguistic levels, thereby exploring the gender consciousness and its fluidity constructed by male and female translators in the two translations.

KEYWORDS

Corpus-assisted critical translation studies, gender awareness, gendered language, *To the Lighthouse*

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 March 2025

PUBLISHED: 15 March 2025

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2025.8.3.25

1. Introduction

To the Lighthouse (1927) is representative of Virginia Woolf's works on androgyny of feminist thought, the core of which refers to the objective state of coexistence of masculinity and femininity. Most of existing studies on Chinese translations of the work adopts qualitative approach and are conducted from the perspectives of translation aesthetics, translation style, and translation strategies. Of few studies conducted from the gender perspective, a representative one is the study on the translation and reproduction of the idea of androgyny done by Ouyang Hengzhi (2014); another one conducted by Yu Bingxi (2013), which explores the different translation strategies adopted by Qu Shijing and Wang Shixiang from the gender perspective^[19]. Therefore, with the aid of the corpus, this paper compares and analyzes the translations offered by Qu Shijing and Ma Ainong from the perspective of critical translation by combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. To be specific, it describes and compares the linguistic features under the gender perspective of the two translations from the macro-linguistic level (e.g., average sentence length, number of sentences, passive sentences) and the micro-linguistic level (gendered indicatives, modal words), and discusses translators' gender awareness as well as their fluidity as shown in the Chinese translations.

2. Theoretical Framework of Corpus-assisted Critical Translation Studies and Gender Awareness

Under the framework of descriptive translation studies, corpus-assisted critical translation studies use the corpus and the analytical method of critical discourse analysis to describe the characteristics of translated texts and the ideology embedded in the translations from the micro level (Hu & Meng, 2017). Research in this field mainly consists of corpus-assisted gender and

translation studies, nation and translation studies, politics and translation studies, and translators' individual ideology (Hu & Meng, 2017). Among these four types of research, corpus-assisted gender and translation research mainly depicts the dissimilarities between different translators in terms of translated texts and translation methods from the micro-linguistic level, and explores the influence of gender factors on translations in terms of the historical and cultural contexts in which the translations are produced. At present, corpus-assisted translation research is mainly categorized into analogical research and parallel research (Huang, 2018). The latter is based on parallel corpus, namely multiple translations of the source text, as is done in this paper. Establishing an English-Chinese parallel corpus with the original *To the Lighthouse* and two most popular translations by Qu Shijing and Ma Ainong, this study compares the personalized translations of gendered language in the source text provided by the two translators.

Gender consciousness is influenced by both sex and gender, which together reshape gender identity and gender values (Liang, 2004). Feminist translators advocate the use of translation strategies like manipulation, rewriting and "hijacking" to highlight women's subjectivity. However, it often violates the principle of "faithfulness" of translation, and is often criticized for inviting the suspicion of reconstructing binary oppositions (Huang, 2018). Therefore, some translation scholars have proposed the fluidity of the translator's gender consciousness, advocating that translators can give full play to their subjectivity, not only examining gender issues of the translations from the gender perspective, but also maintaining his/her perspective at all times (Ma & Mu, 2010). Liu Junping emphasizes translators' awareness of "androgyny", that is, translators should possess a fluid gender awareness, taking the initiative to adjust gender perspective to interpret and translate source texts from a male or female perspective (Liu, 2004). Therefore, translators' gender awareness can help them interpret original texts from the perspective of the opposite gender, which not only takes the dimension neglected by traditional feminist translation into consideration, but also avoids making translation practice confined by gender essentialism (Mu, 2008).

3. Corpus Construction and Corpus Concordancing Tools

3.1 Corpus Construction

The construction of the parallel corpus used in the current study consists of four major steps: corpus screening, file formats conversion, corpus denoising, corpus tagging and corpus alignment.

The first step is corpus screening. The parallel corpus consists of the source text *To the Lighthouse* and two Chinese translations, namely, Qu Shijing's translation by Shanghai Translation Publishing House (1988) and Ma Ainong's translation by People's Literature Publishing House (1997). The source text and the translations are all electronic versions obtained from the Internet, and their contents are identified to be complete and correct after a review of publication information. Among them, the source text and Qu's translation are epub files, while Ma's translation is pdf file. Thus the second step is converting documents between formats. In this study, ABBYY FineReader, with its function of OCR (Optical Character Recognition), is used to convert the e-books into plain text files or fully editable Word documents. It can also recognize multiple languages, including English and Chinese. The third step is corpus denoising, aiming at eliminating irrelevant and erroneous data in texts. Specifically, this step includes accurately correcting erroneous Chinese or English characters, punctuation marks, numbers and other characters recognized by OCR, and deleting redundant spaces, blank lines and other useless text information. Then EmEditor is used for finding all and batch replacing. After the initial corpus cleaning, manual verification is also required to ensure that the processed texts match the source text content completely, in order to maximize the objective accuracy of the corpus data. The fourth step is corpus tokenization and tagging. Text tokenization refers to breaking down texts into words, which is the prerequisite and requisite for part-of-speech tagging. POS tagging these texts is the process of specifying whether each word is a noun, verb, adjective, or other lexical category. TreeTagger 3.0 is used in this study to do POS tagging on the source text; CorpusWordParser, a Chinese tokenization software, is used. Then foreign words such as names of people and places in the translated texts is proofread manually in order to improve the accuracy of the tokenization. The fifth step is corpus alignment. Sentence-level alignment of the English-Chinese corpus is realized with the help of online platform Tmxmall and BFSC Aligner.

3.2 Corpus Query Tools

Parallel corpus search in this study is done by using the Bilingual Corpus developed by Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSC ParaConc) and the Bilingual Corpus developed by Communication University of China (CUC ParaConc). The former supports lemmatization, but doesn't support bilingual one-to-many corpus search. The latter boasts the feature of data searching in corpus consisting of multi-version translations and in multi-language corpus, but it doesn't support lemmatization in the case of one-to-many corpus search. When searching for a word such as "man" using CUC ParaConc, words containing the letters "man", such as "mankind", will also appear in the search results. Therefore, both parallel corpus search tools are used in this study as needed.

In addition, this study uses corpus analyzer AntConc to generate word lists and keyword lists; Wordsmith to generate average sentence lengths and sentence counts; and SPSS 25.0 to run Independent Samples T-tests on the parameters of the two translations. If the result of t-test on a parameter shows that the p-value is lower than 0.05, it can be determined that there is a statistically

significant difference between the two translations in that parameter. Based on such difference, the personalized linguistic characteristics of the two translators can be explored and interpreted in depth.

4. Comparison of Linguistic Descriptions from a Gender Perspective

Huang Libo (2018) summarizes four types of depictive parameters in order to reveal the regular features underlying the translated texts. The first category is formal parameters, which can be compared and analyzed based on corpus statistics, such as average sentence length, exclusive vocabulary and other specific parameters; the second category is linguistic parameters, which refers to translators' personalized choices at the vocabulary level, such as the frequency of translators' preferred culture-specific words, foreign words, conjunctions, personal pronouns, etc.; the third category, narrative parameters that reveal translators' conversion or reconstruction of the narrative perspective, refers to the unique techniques in dealing with narrative perspective and narrative discourse, such as the use of demonstrative pronouns, modal verbs, and transitive constructions; and the fourth category is comprehensive parameters including the readability of the translated texts. This type of parameters, such as average sentence length, high-frequency words, etc. (Huang, 2018), can be obtained with the help of corpus. The characteristics of the examined parameters are not completely governed by source texts. Instead, translators have a certain degree of freedom when translating. Thus, the linguistic parameters mentioned above can be adopted to distinguish the individualized translation methods of different translators. Therefore, this study not only counts such macro linguistic features as average sentence length and number of sentences, but also examines micro depictions including gender reference words and modals under the gender perspective, so as to probe more deeply into translators' personalized translation strategies and their gender awareness represented in translated texts.

4.1 Macro-linguistic contrasts

Parameters on the macro-linguistic level compared in this study include average sentence length, sentence number, and special passive sentence structures. First, the collection of data including sentence length and sentence number is divided into two main steps: 1) Wordsmith 8.0 is used to count the average sentence length and number of sentences in the source text and the two translations; 2) SPSS 25.0 is used to conduct independent samples t-tests on the corpus to derive p-value that reveals the significant difference between the two translations in terms of sentence length and number of sentences (for details, see Table 1). Secondly, a total of 352 passive sentences are found in the source text by entering the regular expression "VBZ? * VVN" in Antconc.

Lian Shuneng points out that the average sentence length of original English literature is 20 words, which is consistent with that of the source text in this study ^[6]. Wang Kefei's analysis of the language in English-Chinese translation texts finds that the average sentence length of the original Chinese literary text/s is 15.12 characters, and that of Chinese translation of English literary texts is 15.86 characters (Wang & Qin, 2009). The average sentence length of Qu's and Ma's translations is significantly higher than the average, and the number of sentences and sentence length of Qu's version are higher than that of the source text (see Table 1 for details).

Table 1. Sentence length and number of sentences of *To the Lighthouse* and its two translations Provided by Qu and Ma and p-value

	Source Text (word)	Qu's Translation (character)	Ma's Translation (character)	P-value
Average Sentence Length	19.661	20.097	17.919	0.036
Sentence Number	3551	3874	3840	0.003

The long sentences in translated texts may be influenced by both the sentence length of source texts and translators' translation strategies. Theoretically speaking, translators can produce translation in line with the expression habits of Chinese sentences by adopting the translation method of sentence breaking, no matter how long the sentences in source texts are. However, in practical terms, frequent use of long sentences in the source language can influence translators, causing them to internalize its expressing habit and linguistic pattern during their prolonged learning of the source language. Consequently, they adopt the strategy of "translating long English sentences into long Chinese sentences," resulting in translations with an average sentence length that exceeds that of original Chinese texts. Furthermore, Xu Xin observes that translators often employ such translation techniques as adding modifiers and explanations when translating to make the implicit meanings in the original text explicit (Xu, 2010), which also increases the number of long sentences in the translated texts. Qu's translation and Ma's translation have more

sentences than the source text and the independent sample t-test shows that there is a significant difference in the number of sentences between these two versions. It can be concluded that both translators have adjusted the source text at the syntactic level.

Halliday argues that there are two main means by which discourse manipulates ideology: conversion and modality, and passive expression is a common form of conversion [1]. Critical discourse analysis emphasizes that passivity converts the addressee into a significantly marked initiator (Xin, 1996). Hu Xianyao believes that Chinese passive sentences with “被” (marking passiveness) tend to highlight negative semantics in literary translations (Xin, 1996). Therefore, when translating passive sentences in the source texts, translators should comprehend the implicit ideology of the source texts and choose whether to convert them based on their own stance. Liu Mingdong proposes five common methods of translating passive sentences into Chinese: 1) Translating them into Chinese passive sentences containing words such as “被”, “遭受”, “挨”, “受” (passive markers in Chinese), and so on; 2) into active sentences through adding a subject or changing the places of subject and object; 3) into sentences without subjects; 4) into judgment sentences containing the words “是……” (“be” in English); 5) into sentences beginning with “据说”(“It is said” in English, a common used translation method) (Liu, 2001). By manually tagging the 352 passive sentences in the source text, this study finds that the methods of translating English passive sentences adopted in the two translations are classified as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Data about the Classification of Translation Methods for Passive Sentences Adopted by Qu and Ma

Source Text	Translations	Active Sentence	Passive Sentence	Non-subject Sentence	Judgment Sentence	“据说” (It is said)
352	Qu's Version	189 / 53.8%	118 / 33.5%	36 / 10.2%	5 / 1.4%	4 / 1.1%
	Ma's Version	208 / 59.1%	102 / 29.0%	35 / 10.0%	3 / 0.8%	4 / 1.1%

The data indicates that both Qu and Ma exert their subjectivity by converting passive sentences in the source text into active sentences, passive sentences, sentences without subjects, declarative sentences, or sentences beginning with “据说” (i.e., *It is said*). Qu's translation features a rate of converting passive sentences into active sentences at 53.8%, which is lower than the 59.1% of Ma's translation. Based on this, it can be inferred that Ma is more proactive in eliminating negative semantics in his translation, as shown in Example 1.

Example 1

Source Text: Prue Ramsay, leaning on her father's arm, was given in marriage.

Qu's Translation: 在举行婚礼的教堂里，普鲁·拉姆齐倚着她父亲的胳膊，被带到等在圣坛前面的新郎身边，她出嫁了。

Ma's Translation: 普鲁·拉姆齐倚着父亲的肩膀入教堂出嫁了。

The passive expression in the source text “Ramsay was given in marriage” reflects patriarchal discourse. Qu's translation is faithful to the source text. While Ma's translation converts the passive sentence in the source text into active sentence in Chinese, thus making Ramsay reclaim her mastership to the wedding. This reflects Ma's active interpretation and adjustment of the patriarchal ideology embodied in the source text, which weakens the passive position of Ramsay (the bride) and strengthens her subjectivity in the picture of wedding painted in the discourse.

4.2 Micro-level Linguistic Comparison

Micro-level linguistic features primarily include gender-influenced referential expressions and modal words, through which translators' gender consciousness can be analyzed. Firstly, gender referential expressions include personal pronouns (i.e., *she, he, it, they, you*) and nouns (e.g., *man, woman*). The statistics on personal pronouns in the source text are presented in Table 3, while that on the translation of these pronouns by Qu and Ma are shown in Table 4. It is evident that the source text highlights a female perspective mainly by employing the third-person pronoun “she/her”, and there exist significant differences in the translation methods of personal pronouns between the two versions. Taking “she” as an example. It appears 3,294 times in the source text. Although Qu is male, his translation emphasizes female referential expressions, with “她” (i.e., *she*) appearing 3,315 times, which only appears 2,846 times in Ma's version. Thus, it can be concluded that Qu places greater emphasis on the “presence” of females in the text, as exemplified in Example 2.

Table 3. Statistics on Personal Pronouns in the Source Text

Order	Pronoun	Number	Frequency (%)
1	she /her	3294	4.71
2	he /him	2569	3.68
3	it	1133	1.62
4	they /them	933	1.34
5	you	161	0.23

Table 4. Statistics on Translation of Personal Pronouns in Qu's and Ma's Versions

Order	Pronoun	Qu's Version		Ma's Version		P Value
		Number	Frequency (%)	Number	Frequency (%)	
1	她 (she /her)	3315	4.11	2846	4.01	<0.001
2	他(he /him)	2498	3.10	2047	2.89	<0.001
3	他们(they /them)	761	0.94	655	0.92	<0.001
4	它(it)	431	0.53	227	0.32	<0.001
5	你(you)	237	0.29	154	0.21	<0.001
6	我(I)	157	0.19	152	0.21	0.010
7	它们(they/them)	138	0.17	113	0.15	0.001
8	我们(we/us)	69	0.08	77	0.10	0.004
9	她们(they/their)	64	0.07	50	0.07	0.003
10	您(you)	37	0.00	0	0.00	<0.001
11	你们(you)	16	0.02	14	0.02	0.001

Example 2

Source Text: Let it come, she thought, if it will come. For there are moments when one can neither think nor feel, she thought, where is one?

Qu's Translation: 让它来吧, 她想, 如果它要来的话。因为, 有时候你既不能思考, 也没有感觉。而如果你既不思考又无感觉, 她想, 那么你在哪儿呢?

Ma's Translation: 来吧, 她想, 让该来的都来吧。有的时候, 人既没有思想也没有感觉。当人既没有思想也没有感觉的时候, 人在哪里呢?

Example 2 portrays female character Lily's inner monologue on the value of life and the meaning of existence. The explicit gender pronoun "she" in the source text is translated into the explicit gender pronoun "她"(i.e., *she*) in Chinese in both translations. However, it is noteworthy that Ma opts for an implicit treatment of the second occurrence of "she". Additionally, Woolf, the author of the source text, frequently employs indefinite pronouns such as "one" and "it" to adopt a non-individual narrative perspective. When translating these gender-ambiguous pronouns, Qu and Ma adopts different methods. Firstly, Ma's translation is faithful to the source text by translating the gender-ambiguous pronouns into the third-person pronoun "人" (i.e., *people*) and omitting "she thought". In this way, Ma's translation fully reproduces Woolf's intention of non-gender-specific expression and emphasizes gender-neutral reflection. In contrast, Qu converts all gender-ambiguous pronouns "it" and "one" into the second-person pronoun "你" (i.e., *you*) and translates the second occurrence of "she" literally, thus obscuring the non-individual narrative perspective.

Meanwhile, his version suggests that the source text is a direct dialogue and reflection of and unique to the “she” group, thereby achieving a transition from ambiguous to explicit pronouns. It is evident that when translating referential expressions, Qu adopts a method of conversion with his male perspective introduced, objectifying and othering the female group.

Regarding gender reference words, “man” is usually used for both males and females, while “woman” refers exclusively to females. As a result, English texts often exhibit an imbalanced distribution of reference words for males and females (Zhang, 2022). In this study, the author conducts a parallel corpus retrieval of gender reference words “man (men)” as well as “woman (women)” in the source text, and their translation in two versions. It is revealed that “man/men” appears 143 times in the source text. The frequencies it is translated into male reference words as well as neutral reference words, and omitted in Qu’s version are 69, 66, and 8, respectively, while the corresponding frequencies in Ma’s translation are 60, 75, and 8 (see Tables 5 and 6 for details). Furthermore, “woman/women” appears 90 times in the source text. Qu handles them as female reference words and neutral reference words, and omits them 86, 1, and 3 times, respectively, while Ma translates them all into female reference words. Obviously, Qu is more proactive in explicitly specifying male reference words, while Ma is more inclined to obscure gender by suggesting women’s participation and expressing a female stance through a neutral perspective, as exemplified in Example 3.

Table 5. Translation Methods for “man/men” in Qu’s Translation and Corresponding Statistics

Source Text		Qu’s Translation				
Gender Reference Words	Number	Translation	Number	Frequency	Classification	Translation Strategy
man (men)	143	小伙子 (young man)、男人 (man)、男子汉 (manly man)、男的 (male)、渔夫 (fisherman)、() 夫 (-man)、() 汉 (-man)	69	48.25%	Female References	Making Gender Explicit
		人 (people)、人物 (figure)、学子 (student)、学者 (scholar)、青年 (youth)、厨师 (chef)、守望者 (watchman)、工人 (worker)	66	51.75%	Neutral References	Making Gender Ambiguous
		Omission	8		/	

Table 6. Translation Methods for “man/men” in Ma’s Translation and Corresponding Statistics

Source Text		Ma’s Translation				
Gender Reference Words	Number	Translation	Number	Frequency	Classification	Translation Strategy
man (men)	143	小伙子 (young man)、男人 (man)、男子 (man)、男的 (male)、(老) 汉 (old man)	60	41.96%	Female References	Making Gender Explicit
		年轻人 (young man)、人 (people)、人物 (figure)、者 (-or/er)、人类 (human)、工人 (worker)、渔民 (fisherman)、守护人	75	58.04%	Neutral References	Making Gender Ambiguous

(caretaker)、厨子 (chef)			
Omission	8	/	

Example 3

Source Text: All the great men she had ever known, she thought, were like that, and it was good for young men (though the atmosphere of lecture-rooms was stuffy and depressing to her beyond endurance almost) simply to hear him, simply to look at him.

Qu's Translation: 她所认识的任何一个伟大的人物，她想，都是想他那个样子。只要听听他发表的高谈阔论，看看他的堂堂仪表，对小伙子们就大有裨益（虽然对她来说，讲堂里的气氛几乎沉闷压抑到难以忍受的地步）。

Ma's Translation: 她想，她认识的伟人们都是那样的，年轻人只要听他的谈话、看他的形象就会受益匪浅（尽管她觉得讲堂里的气氛沉闷、压抑，简直让人无法忍受）。

Example 3 describes Mrs. Ramsay's inner monologue as she watches her husband, Mr. Ramsay, deliver a speech with vitality on stage. He is a philosopher with rational thinking and logical mind, but also selfish and demanding, representing the absolute objectivity and authoritative status under the capitalist patriarchal system of the early 20th century. Mrs. Ramsay, adept at socializing and serving both her husband and children, suppresses herself and admires her husband. The influence of patriarchal mindset not only places women to a passive position and confines them to such labels as family and ignorance, but also constrains men, making them fully accept socially expected male roles and labels. The psychological depiction in Example 3, ostensibly emphasizing Mrs. Ramsay's admiration and worship for Mr. Ramsay (e.g., *the great men, good*), but actually hints at her inner discomfort and pressure (e.g., *stuffy, depressing beyond endurance*). When handling this seemingly praising but actually derogatory psychological description, both Qu and Ma adopt literal translation to deal with gender pronouns (e.g., *she, her, him*) in the source text. However, they employ different translation strategies when handling gender-ambiguous references (e.g., *men*). Firstly, Ma's translation remains faithful to the source text, with Ma rendering the second occurrence of "men" as "年轻人" (i.e., *young people*), maintaining the ambiguity of gender reference words. In contrast, Qu adopts the translation method of making gender explicit to translate "men" into "年轻人" (i.e., *young lads*), indicating that Mr. Ramsay serves as a role model for males and aligns with society's preset roles and images for men, while excluding women from philosophy and academic fields. Secondly, the two translators also adopt different methods when translating the detailed descriptions of Mr. Ramsay ("simply to hear him", "simply to look at him"). Ma's translation remains faithful to the source text, while Qu's translation adds a tone of irony. It can be concluded that as a male translator and academic researcher, Qu actively engages his gender consciousness and makes his gender consciousness and cognition explicit by using the translation method of addition when rendering descriptions about Mr. Ramsay, demonstrating the fluidity of the translators' gender consciousness.

Halliday points out that modal words can reveal unequal power relations among interlocutors in discourse and categorizes modal verbs as three values: the high, the medium, and the low (1994). He believes that the values of modality can reflect the degree of compulsion of the speaker and show a negative relation with the negotiation between interlocutors (Halliday, 1994). Therefore, individuals with lower social status tend to use modal verbs with low values, while those with higher status tend to use modal verbs with high values or even absolute expressions to demonstrate their authoritative consciousness or status (Zheng, 2009). In feminist literature, authors often use modal words to challenge or break traditional and stereotypical gender roles, shape diversified images, and highlight women's independence and subjectivity (Zhang, 2022). Therefore, modal verbs serve as a crucial medium for translators to interpret the viewpoints of the source text and project their attitudes towards it, playing a vital role in language resource allocation in reconstructing the context. Translators' personalized choices of modal verbs can be represented by the distribution pattern and preference of modality value in the translated texts (Zheng, 2009). This study explores the translators' gender consciousness by selecting and conducting comparative analysis of modal values in the source text and its two versions. According to Halliday's classification of values of modality, the usage of modal verbs in the source text are presented in Table 7; based on Xu Ying's classification and valuation table of modal words in Chinese (Zhao & Fan, 2023), the usage and distribution of modal verbs in Qu's and Ma's translations are presented in Table 8.

Table 7. Statistics on Modal Verbs in Source Text

Value	Modal Verbs	Number	Frequency
High	must, ought to, need, has/had/have to	200	16.33%
Medium	will, would, shall, should	605	49.39%
Low	can, may, might, could	420	34.28%

Total	1225	100%
-------	------	------

Table 8. Translation Methods for Modal Verbs Adopted by Qu and Ma and Corresponding Statistics

Value	Translation of Modal Verbs	Ma's Translation		Qu's Translation	
		Number	Frequency	Number	Frequency
High	一定 (must)、必须 (must)、务必 (has/had/have to)、注定 (must)、禁止 (mustn't).....	248	15.69%	263	14.90%
Medium	应该 (should/shall)、需要 (need)、得 (should/shall)、能够 (would)、能 (will)、要 (should).....	1092	69.07%	1181	66.91%
Low	可以 (can/could)、也许 (ma/might)、可能 (may/might)、万一 (might).....	241	15.24%	321	18.19%
Total		1581	100%	1765	100%

The data indicates that the two translations are relatively consistent with the source text in the frequency of modal verbs with high value. The adjustments made by two versions to the modal verbs in the source text are mainly reflected in the conversion of modal verbs with low and median values, as exemplified in Example 4.

Example 4

Source Text: He liked that men should labor and sweat on the windy beach at night, pitting muscle and brain against the waves and the wind; he liked men to work like that, and women to keep house, and sit beside sleeping children indoors, while men were drowned, out there in a storm.

Qu's Translation: 他就喜欢那样：在夜晚，男子汉应该在大风呼啸的海滩上奋斗流汗，用他们的血肉之躯与聪明才智去和狂风暴雨、惊涛骇浪对抗；他喜欢男子汉像那样工作，让妇女们管理家务，在屋里守着熟睡的孩子，而男子汉就在外面的风暴中葬身海底。

Ma's Translation: 他欣赏男人们在夜间起风的海滩上吃苦卖命，大汗淋漓，利用智慧和臂力与狂风巨浪搏斗；他欣赏男人那样干活，女人操持家务，当男人在暴风雨中葬身海底时，她们在屋里守着熟睡的孩子。

Example 4 is a psychological description of Mr. Ramsay, presenting the ideal marriage influenced by patriarchy from a male perspective: men strive in the public domain conforming to societal expectations, while women assist their husbands, bring up children, and do housework, with both parties being clearly in the active and passive position respectively. When translating the modal verb with medium value "should" in the source text, Ma chooses to omit it and renders "like", used twice in Example 4, as "欣赏" (i.e., *appreciate*), thereby reducing the pressure stemming from societal expectations. Furthermore, Ma translates "men" and "women" in the source text into "男人" (i.e., *men*) and "女人" (i.e., *women*), respectively by adopting literal translation method, highlighting the faithfulness to the feminist thought of the original text's author. But Qu literally translates "should" as "应该", and renders "men" and "women" as "男子汉" (i.e., *being masculine*) and "妇女们" (i.e., *homely woman*) — the former emphasizing the sociality and subjectivity of men, while the latter underscores the objectivity of women and their attribute of putting marriage and family first. Additionally, the use of the word "让" (i.e., *allow*) in Qu's translation reinforces the subordinate and passive status of women.

5. Discussion

Being performative and fluid, gender consciousness is constantly constructed, negotiated, and even challenged through discourse (Zhang, 2022). Translation practice is not only a reproduction of translators' gender consciousness, but also an indispensable part of constructing social gender consciousness in discourse. Qu Shijing and Ma Ainong choose to translate the same feminist literary work, with their gender consciousness being continuously exhibited and constructed through the macro-linguistic and gendered micro-linguistic features of their translations. Firstly, at the macro-linguistic level, the male translator Qu Shijing more actively employs translation methods such as adding modifiers and subjective interpretations, explicitly manifesting his gender consciousness. As a result, the sentence length of Qu's translation is longer than that of Ma's translation. Additionally, both translations tend to convert passive sentences in the source language into active sentences in the target language, enhancing the gender stance of their translations. Ma is more inclined to convert passive sentences into active sentences, especially when female characters are the recipients, thus weakening the passive and dependent status of female characters and highlighting their

initiative and subjectivity. This reflects a more prominent feminist consciousness of Ma as a female translator. Conversely, Qu's translation tends to convey the patriarchal consciousness of the source text and the gender identities influenced by it.

Secondly, at the micro-linguistic level, Qu tends to retain or add gender reference words to emphasize the subjectivity of characters in the novel and the directness of perspective shifts, thereby setting off the inner monologue and consciousness flow of the characters. Besides, Qu's translation contains discourse representations of male perception. For example, he translates "women" as "妇女"(i.e., *homely women*) and "odious woman" as "可恶的婆娘"(i.e., *hateful bitch*). Such gender discourse representations obviously associate women with dependency and family-oriented characteristics. Ma, on the other hand, tends to convert or omit gender reference words. For example, she translates gender-ambiguous references like "man/men" into neutral reference expression "人/人们"(i.e., *person/people*), thus broadening the project object of the discourse in her translation, encouraging feminist consciousness, and advocating for people to engage in dialogue as equal individuals without gender differences.

In conveying the "androgynous" feminist consciousness of the source text, the two personalized versions exhibit differences, which can be attributed to the following two factors: 1) the gender of the two translators and the influence of Confucian culture on gender identity; 2) the impact of the sociocultural trends of the time on the translators' gender consciousness. Qu's translation was published in 1988, while Ma's was published in 1977, with a nine-year gap between them. During this period, the reform and opening-up continued to advance, and feminist thought flooded into China, bringing new concepts such as "female independence" and "female empowerment", providing new perspectives and understandings of gender consciousness and gender identity. Ma's translation, published nine years later than Qu's, more prominently highlights the concepts of gender identity and gender consciousness. The differences between the two versions have also become a vivid discourse imprint left by reform and opening-up and ideological emancipation.

6. Conclusion

This study conducts a comparative analysis of the feminist novel *To the Lighthouse* and its two translations by Qu Shijing and Ma Ainong from the perspective of critical translation studies. By describing the gendered language representations at both macro and micro levels in the translations, it interprets and elucidates the presentation of gender consciousness of the two translators in their versions and explores different translation methods adopted by them and the reasons that result in the differences. The study finds that the gender consciousness manifested in the two translations is fluid and influenced by both gender essentialism and constructivism. Besides, the feminist thought is implanted in the translations, and the traditional patriarchal consciousness is weakened and the translators' gender consciousness and gender identity are reconstructed and exhibited due to the employment of translation methods such as addition, conversion, and omission.

Funding: Authors receive financial support for the research from the Graduate Education Reform Program of the University of Science and Technology Beijing (2023JGC020)

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

- [1] Halliday, M. A. K. (1994) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [2] Hu, K. B., & Li, X. Q. (2015). Hu, K., & Li, X. (2015). Corpus-based Critical Translation Studies: Connotations and Implications. *Foreign Languages in Chinese*, 12(1), 90-100.
- [3] Hu, K. B., & Meng, L. Z. (2017). Critical Translation Studies: New Development in Translation Studies. *Journal of Foreign Languages*, 40(6), 57-68.
- [4] Hu, X. Y., & Zeng, J. (2010). The Frequency, Structure, and Semantic Prosody of "Bei" Passives in Chinese Translated Fiction. *Journal of Foreign Languages*, 33(3), 73-79.
- [5] Huang, L. B. (2018). A Reflection on Corpus-based Translator Style Studies. *Foreign Language Education*, 39(1), 77-81.
- [6] Lian, S. N. (1993). *Contrastive Studies of English and Chinese*. Beijing: Higher Education Press.
- [7] Liao Y. Q. (2008). Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender: An Overview. *Foreign Language Education*, 29(5), 23-27.
- [8] Liang, Q. N. (2004). *Gender Consciousness and Female Image*. Beijing: China Minzu University Press. p. 21.
- [9] Liu, J. P. (2004). Towards An East-West Discourse on Feminist Translation Studies. *Chinese Translators Journal*, (4), 5-11.
- [10] Liu, M. D. (2001). Pragmatic Analysis and Translation of English Passives. *Chinese Science & Technology Translators Journal*, (1), 1-4.
- [11] Ma, Y., & Mu, L. (2010). Fluidity of Translator's Gender Identity: A New Perspective on Feminist Translation Studies. *Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages*, 33(6), 66-70.
- [12] Mu, L. (2008). *Gender Perspectives in Translation Studies*. Wuhan: Wuhan University Press.
- [13] Ouyang, H. Z. (2014). Different Presentations of Androgyny of *To the Lighthouse* in Two Translations: A Case Study of Qu Shijing's and Ma Ainong's Translations. *Journal of Lanzhou Institute of Education*, 30(7), 140-141, 143.
- [14] Wang, K. F., & Qin, H. W. (2009). A Parallel Corpus-based Study of General Features of Translated Chinese. *Foreign Language Research*, (1), 102-105.

- [15] Xin, B. (1996). Language, Power, and Ideology: Critical Linguistics. *Modern Foreign Languages*, (1), 21-27.
- [16] Xu, M. W., & Nie, W. (2021). A Corpus-Based Study on the Recontextualization in the English Translation of Zizhi Tongjian via Modal Verbs—Based on the Versions of Achilles Fang and Rafe de Crespigny. *Technology Enhanced Foreign Languages*, (5), 34-40, 54.
- [17] Xu, X. (2010). Corpus-based Version Analysis—A Contrastive Analysis of Three Chinese Versions of *Pride and Prejudice*. *Journal of Foreign Languages*, 33(2), 53-59.
- [18] Xu, Y. (2018). Trans-editing of Modality and Transformation of Ideology in the Institutional Translation of News Texts. *Foreign Language Education*, 39(3), 93-97.
- [19] Yu, B. X. (2013). The Differences and Causes of Two Translation Versions of *To the Lighthouse* from the Perspective of Gender Identity of Translators. *Journal of Hubei Radio & Television University*, 33(1), 85-86.
- [20] Zheng, Y. H. (2009). *Cross-cultural Construction of Interpersonal Meaning in Translation*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
- [21] Zhao, Q. R., & Fan, S. Q. (2023). A Study on the Explication and Implication of Personal Pronouns in Subtitle Translation from a Multi-Analytical Perspective. *Foreign Language and Translation*, 30(2), 17-23, 98.
- [22] Zhang, L. L. (2022). Speech Representation in Chinese Translations of English Stream of Consciousness Novels: A Case Study of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. *Journal of Beijing International Studies University*, 44(5), 44-55.