

Translation and Dissemination of Jin Yong's Novels in the English-speaking World

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Abstract: Jin Yong's novels are the representative of Chinese martial arts novels, presenting the charm and essence of Chinese culture. Meanwhile, the English translation version of Jin Yong's novels is an important platform to spread the traditional culture to the western world. In recent years, Western commercial publishing houses have successively released English versions of Jin Yong's novels, which have been widely circulated among foreign readers. This paper analyzes the English translation data of Jin Yong's novels on the Goodreads network platform and the case of translation criticism, exploring its readers' feedback and acceptance, so as to put forward more targeted translation strategies to improve the translation quality of Jin Yong's novels.

Preamble

Jin Yong's novels are endowed with the extensive and profound traditional culture of the Chinese nation. It is precisely because of the strong characteristics of the oriental culture that Jin Yong's novels carry that we are clear how to empower the cultural characteristics of the original text to the maximum extent, and at the same time, to make the readers in the English-speaking world to understand and accept the fact that it has become a big problem in translation. So far, only four of fifteen masterpieces have been translated into English, and each one is extremely time-consuming. They are *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*; *The Deer and the Cauldro*; *The Book and the Sword*; *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. *The Legends of the Condor Heroes is translated and published with four volumes: A Hero Born; A Bond Undone; A Snake Lies Waiting; A Heart Divided*.

The English translation of Jin Yong's novels has been rendered by the mass media in the English-speaking world as the Oriental Lord of the Rings story (Zhao Gang, Gou Yajun, 2019)[1]. However, its feedback among the general readership is not known from official media and expert opinions. In today's society, with the development of science and technology, online platforms are active with the feedback and opinions of many ordinary readers, which can directly reflect the reception of Jin Yong's novels in the English-speaking world. However, currently, there is little research on the feedback data of foreign readers on the English translation of Jin Yong's novels on foreign review websites (Tan Hua, 2018)[2]. Therefore, Goodreads, the world's largest online reading community, is selected in this paper. Reading websites similar to Douban in China can reflect the reception of books. This paper analyzes the feedback data and book reviews of Jin Yong's English translation in the English-speaking world, so as to put forward targeted translation strategies to improve the quality of translation.

1. Analysis of the Current Situation of Jin Yong's Online Translation Criticism

This paper selects Goodreads, the largest online reading community in the world, to sort out the number of reviewers, the number of reviewers and the weighted average score of the English versions of Jin Yong's four works in the English-speaking world so as to study and summarize the contents of readers' book reviews and analyze the characteristics of book reviews.

Table 1. The Publishing Year and Translator of Jin Yong's Novel

Jin Yong's Novel	Publishing Year	Translator
<i>Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain</i>	1993	City University of Hongkong Professor Mo Jinping
<i>The Deer and the Cauldron</i>	1997	British Sinologist John Minford
<i>The Book and the Sword</i>	2004	British Journalist, writer Graham Earnshaw
<i>Legends of the Condor Heroes</i>	2012	Sweden Hao Yuqing Hongkong Zhang Jing

1.1 Data Analysis of Translators

According to Goodreads (as of November 2021), the English version of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* is divided into four volumes: *A Hero Born*, *A Bond Undone*, *A Snake Lies Waiting*, *A Heart Divided with scores made* by 4,832 people. *The Deer and the Cauldron* is published in three volumes, ranked second with 1,288 marks. *The Book and the Sword* was scored by 617 people, ranking third. The fewest respondents went to *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain with ratings made by 543 people*.

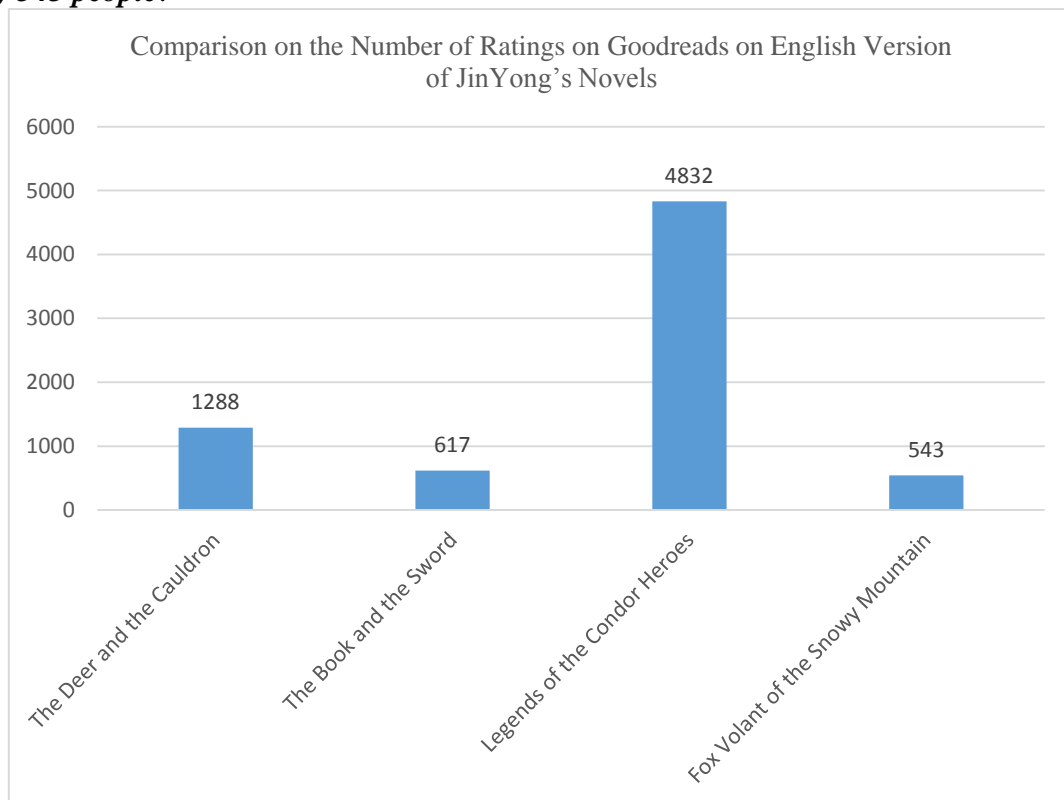


Figure 1. Comparison on the Number of Ratings on Goodreads on English Version of Jin Yong's Novels

In terms of the number of book reviewers, a total of 899 people commented on "*The Legend of the Condor Heroes*", which received the highest feedback from readers. A total of 72 people made comments on the three volumes of *The Deer and the Cauldron*, ranking second. A total of 55 people commented on the book. A total of 37 people submitted book reviews on *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*.

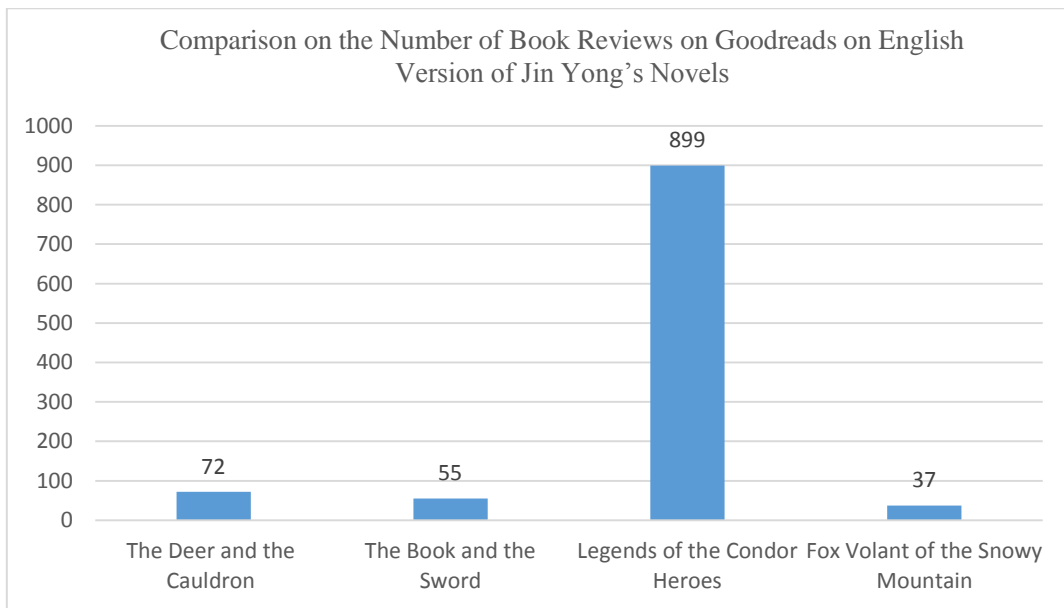


Figure 2. Comparison on the Number of Book Reviews on Goodreads on English Version of Jin Yong's Novels

In light of the ratings of books, *The Deer and the Cauldron* was published in three volumes, with a total of 1288 people scoring the book. The average score of the book was 4.28, the highest score. The English version of *The Condor Heroes* is divided into four volumes, which are scored by 4,832 people, with an average score of 4.16. A total of 543 people rated the film, with an average score of 3.38. The book was scored by 617 people, with an average score of 3.89.

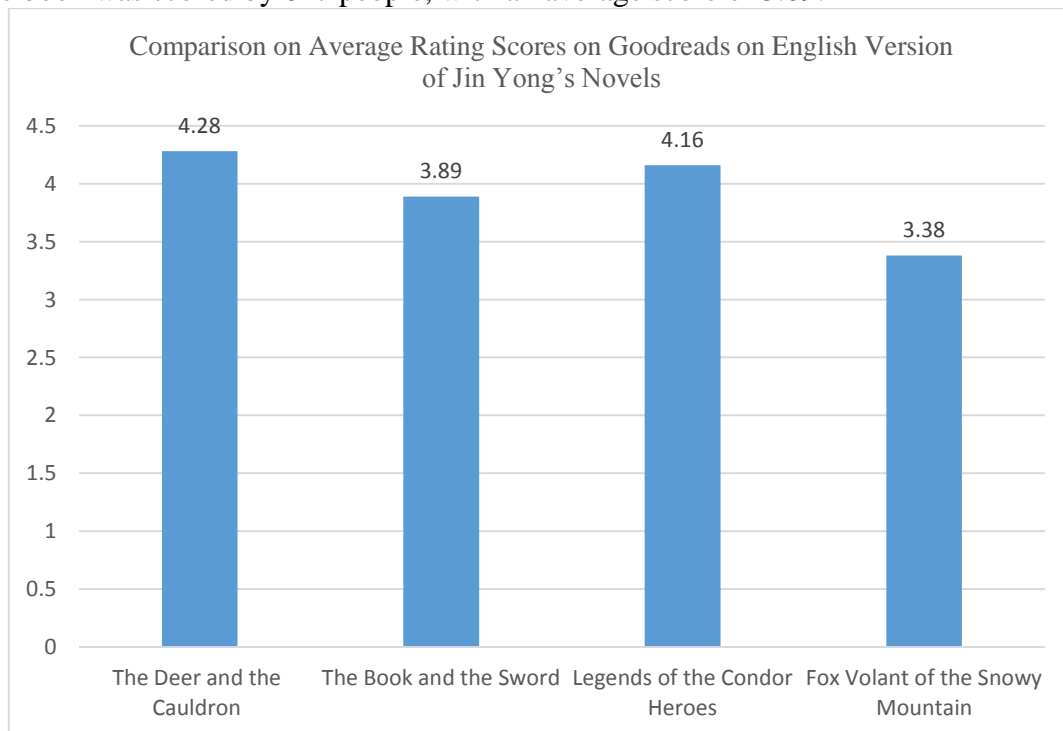


Figure 3. Comparison on Average Rating Scores on Goodreads on English Version of Jin Yong's Novels

Comprehensively, based on the above data, *Legends of the Condor Heroes* enjoys a higher popularity in the English-speaking world and enjoys the highest feedback from readers. *The Deer and the Cauldron* scored 0.12 points higher in the English-speaking world than that of *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*. *The Book and The Sword* came third in terms of circulation and feedback, while *Fox Volant of The Snowy Mountain* came last in terms of circulation and feedback in the

English-speaking world.

1.2 Analysis of Book Reviews in Translation

Readers' comments collected on Goodreads in November 2021 will not only introduce the plot of the novel and their favorite characters in the book review, but also make comments based on their reading experience, mainly putting forward the parts they cannot understand and their opinions on the translation of the English version of the book. These book reviews are very valuable for studying the translation and dissemination of Jin Yong's novels in the English world. It is found that the review of Jin Yong's English translation on Goodreads can be divided into the following three categories.

1.2.1 Obscure Translation of Characters' Names

Taking the *Legend of the Condor Heroes*, which has the highest number of book reviews, as an example, through sorting out and studying the book reviews with the highest number of likes on Goodreads, it is found that readers repeatedly mention their objections to the translation of characters' names in the novel. Taking Pertrik's book reviews with 173 likes as the example: "As for what didn't work, it lies mostly in the translations that seems to translate every single word and names literally. Instead of sticking with the original Chinese names, the translator translated the names literally. For example, Duan Tiande became Justice Bao; Huang Rong became Lotus Huang; Li Ping became Lily Li (Just try saying this translated name warning Lllllllll). It seems that many readers find translations that cater to the taste of English readers to be awkward and inflexible, not as good as those who use Chinese phonetic transliterations. In addition, it is not consistent with the names of other Mongolian characters in the novel, such as Guo Jing and Yang Kang.

1.2.2 The Insipid Tone of the Characters

From the study of readers' book reviews, the second problem lies in that the translation of the characters' language tone is relatively bland, which fails to reflect the characters' personality characteristics, thus losing the pleasure of reading. Taking Linda's comment, which received 20 likes as an example that "The dialogue is no longer as flat and lifeless as in the first book. This translator definitely does a much better job of conveying the character's tones and attitudes. It's a marked improvement and makes the English version more fun and enjoyable." The reason why many readers think that the second part of *A Bond Undone* translated by Zhang Jing is of higher quality and more wonderful than the first *Hero Born* translated by Hao Yu-ching is that the second part of the translation came out with different tones of the characters, which made the characters fuller and the reading experience better.

1.2.3 Missing and Changing Storyline

The third major online translation comment focused on the lack of a storyline in the English translation. Jin Yong's novels contain the extensive and profound traditional culture of the Chinese nation. For example, there are detailed descriptions of various kinds of kung fu in the novels, including many four-character phrases and ancient poems. In the process of translation, these contents with strong Oriental cultural colors are often deleted in order to consider the understanding and acceptance of English-speaking readers, so as to avoid the situation that readers cannot understand the translation (Zhang Mi, 2020)[3]. However, these cuts are one of the best parts of Jin Yong's novel. For example, John Lloyd, who received 37 likes, wrote in his book review: "His loss of translation extends to the fight scenes and explanation of moves which are less jarring in the original text. I think as a novel, it's sometimes hard to describe or visualize these moves. It's easier to portray moves like this in a film. And it bothers me a lot when the translator would add or change the things that didn't match to the original." The lack of a description of Kung fu or the explanation of a particular move in the English translation will make the text less fluent. Many readers who have seen Jin Yong's TV and film versions of his novels say the lack of kung fu in the English translation makes the novel less impressive, and that some of the plots in the translation are different from those in the original.

2. Translation Strategies

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1993:91)[4], a famous German translator and philosopher, pointed out that there are only two translation strategies. One is that the translator does not alert the author as much as possible and allows readers to get close to him. The other is to let the translator approach the reader as little as possible. As two translation strategies, domestication and foreignization are opposites and complement each other. Absolute domestication and absolute foreignization do not exist. (Li-ling liu, 2021)[5]. Jin Yong's novels bear extensive Chinese culture, so they should not only convey the charm and essence of Oriental culture to English readers, but also make readers accept and understand the plot content of the novels. It is necessary to flexibly grasp the switch between domestication and foreignization (Liu Yi, 2021)[6]. Specifically, the following translation methods are used to improve the translation quality of novels and let western readers experience the reading pleasure of Jin Yong's novels

2.1 Transliteration of Characters' Names

According to reader feedback on Goodreads, *Legends of the Condor Heroes* was depicted with the use of a literal translation of character names (Target Language Version 1), and from readers' point of view, such English names are not more acceptable in the Culture of the English-speaking world, instead, the translation of the names is stiff and inconsistent with the usage of the target language. Besides, it is inconsistent with other Mongolian people who adopt transliteration in the novel, and it is not systematic. Therefore, according to the acceptance of English readers and the consistency of the translation of characters' names in the novel, it is suggested to adopt the transliteration method to translate characters' names (as shown in the table Target Language Version 2).

Table 2. Translation of Characters' Names

Source Language	Huang Rong	Mei Chaofeng	Bao Xiruo	Li Ping
Target Language(version 1)	Lotus Huang	Cyclone Mei	Charity Bao	Lily Li
Target Language(version 2)	Huang Rong	Mei Chaofeng	Bao Xiruo	Li Ping

2.2 Reduction of the Use of Emission

Among the reviews on the English translation of Jin Yong's novels on Goodreads, quite a few of them point out that the translation of the characters' language tone is rather insipid and the characters' images are not full enough, thus losing some of the fun of reading. The fullness of the characters in Jin Yong's novels is realized through the expression of characters' language, tone and emotions (Han Xiang, 2020)[7]. To retain vigorous characters in the process of translation, the translation method of emission cannot be adopted. The details of the original part, the bedding, the close-up images of martial, art moves, the background, as well as the tone of voice to each character utterances and swearing should be translated. Emission should not be adopted simply due to considering the English readers may not understand this part of contents. (Zhang Yunyan, 2020)[8], which will cause readers to fail to appreciate the full elegance of Jin Yong's novels. For example, the following excerpt is from *The Book of the Deer and the Cauldron*. When translating characters' language, it is suggested to adopt Version 2 translation to make the characters more vivid.

Table 3. Translation Comparison from *The Deer and the Cauldron*

Source Language	The salt-peddlers came back, and I could not recover my strength, but I had to avoid them...Get the hell out of my way. (Jin Yong, 1998) [9]
Target Language(Version 1)	They'll be back any moment. I've no strength left. I must get away from them. (Minford, 1997)[10]
Target Language(Version 2)	They'll be back any moment. I've no strength left. Damn it. I must get away from them.

3. Conclusion

As the representative of Chinese martial arts novels, Jin Yong's novels are empowered extensive and profound Chinese culture. In order to translate Jin Yong's novels into English and spread them to the English world, we should give top priority to the reading experience of the English translation in the English world. Based on the data of readers' feedback on the English translation of Jin Yong's novels on Goodreads, it was found in this paper that *The Deer and the Cauldron* and *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* are the most widely spread and most accepted in the English world. However, in the reading experience of English world readers, the translation of characters' names is insipid. The character image is not dimensional enough. The excessive omissions in the plots of novels proves to be the problem. Therefore, according to readers' feedback, this paper puts forward corresponding translation strategies, which adopt transliteration method for characters' names and reduce the use of provincial translation method, so that English readers can feel the characters' images on the paper and appreciate the charm and elegance of Jin Yong's novels.

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