

A Comparative Study of Three English Translations of *Cha Jing* from the Perspective of Socio-Translation Studies

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Abstract

This paper examines the interrelationship between linguistic features and socio-historical motivations in three canonical English translations of *Cha Jing* (《茶经》), a foundational classical Chinese text on tea culture. Through a quantitative comparative analysis of lexical, syntactic, and textual dimensions, the study employs Bourdieu's field theory to decode the social logic underpinning translators' strategic choices. The analysis reveals distinct translational paradigms: Carpenter's rendition emphasizes accessibility through simplified discourse; the Jiangs' version constructs an academic paradigm prioritizing cultural authenticity and textual fidelity; Qiu's translation integrates interdisciplinary approaches with a mission-driven focus on cross-cultural transmission. By synthesizing these findings, the paper advances empirical understanding of linguistic patterns in classical Chinese translation, while contributing to theoretical discourse on translation as a socially situated practice. The study further offers actionable insights for future translation projects in globalized cultural contexts.

Keywords— English translation of *Cha Jing*, Socio-Translation studies, Corpus Linguistics

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, effectively disseminating China's cultural narratives and enhancing its international communication capabilities have become strategically significant objectives. As articulated in the Report of the 20th CPC National Congress, developing China's discourse and narrative systems is now a prioritized policy direction. Classical texts, as key repositories of China's traditional cultural heritage, play a pivotal role in shaping national identity and facilitating intercultural dialogue. Among these, Lu Yu's *Cha Jing*—the first systematic treatise on tea culture globally—not only established the foundational principles of Chinese tea traditions but also

synthesized Eastern philosophical concepts, aesthetic values, and lifestyle practices. Its English translations constitute a critical case study in cultural diplomacy, where translation strategies significantly impact the global reception of Chinese civilization.

While translations of *Cha Jing* have attracted considerable scholarly attention, existing studies have largely focused on textual analysis or the retrospective summarisation of translation strategies. In contrast to approaches that treat the text as a self-contained object, sociological approaches to translation foreground the dynamic interplay of economic, political, and cultural forces that shape translators' choices and the production, circulation, and reception of translated

works (Xu, 2022). In recent years, Pierre Bourdieu's field theory has received growing attention in translation studies. His core concepts, including field, capital, and habitus, offer a powerful analytical framework for understanding translation not as an act of transfer but as a socially situated practice embedded in relations of power and distinction.

This paper transcends textual determinism through a sociological lens, conducting a comparative analysis of three English translations (Carpenter 1974; Jiang & Jiang 2009; Qiu 2023). A mini-corpus quantifies linguistic divergences across lexical, syntactic, and textual dimensions and then translators' positionality within social fields, their capital endowments, and internalized translation habitus are analyzed to reveal the social genesis of stylistic variations. Crucially, corpus metrics are treated as quantifiable manifestations of translators' stylistic choices, while paratextual elements provide contextual evidence for habitus reconstruction.

Grounded in Bourdieu's field theory, this paper examines the English translation of *Cha Jing* to illuminate how the translation of classical Chinese tea texts functions as an agentive and socially situated practice. It critically unpacks the logic of practice that shapes successful renditions of agronomic canons and, on this basis, proposes a framework attuned to the dynamics of target-language fields for the global circulation of China's scientific and technical heritage. The analysis demonstrates that effective translation of such cultural legacies depends not on formal equivalence alone, but on strategic positioning within the symbolic and institutional dynamics of those fields.

II. CORPUS CONSTRUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

This study comprises a comparative corpus of three English translations of *Cha Jing*: Francis Ross Carpenter's 1974 rendition published by Little, Brown and Company; Xin Jiang and Yi Jiang's 2009 translation released by Hunan People's Publishing House; and Guixi Qiu's 2023 edition issued by Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press.

In this study, ABBYY FineReader 12 software was

used to perform OCR recognition on the texts of the three translations mentioned above. After proofreading and cleaning, the study obtained a relatively pure corpus, which was saved separately in plain text (.txt) format. The detailed sizes of the three sub-corpora thus created are shown in Table 1. The three sub-corpora constructed based on the translations by Francis Ross Carpenter, Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi, and Qiu Guixi are referred to respectively as the "Carpenter Translation," "The Jiang Translation," and the "Qiu Translation."

Table 1. Subcorpus specifications

Subcorpus	Carpenter Translation	The Jiang Translation	Qiu Translation
Tokens	10,322	12,960	13,735

Tree Tagger³ was used to perform part-of-speech tagging on the above corpus, which provided basic coverage of common natural language parts of speech.

After establishing the corpus, the study proceeded with computation and retrieval, and then analyzed the results of these computations and retrievals. The details were shown in the following part.

III. CORPUS-BASED COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC FEATURES

To objectively and systematically compare the linguistic features of the three English translations of *Cha Jing*, this study, based on a self-built corpus, conducts quantitative analyses from three levels: lexicon, syntax, and discourse. These data form the linguistic foundation for subsequent sociotranslatological interpretations.

3.1 Lexical Level

3.1.1 Type/Token Ratio

A type refers to all distinct words in a corpus, while a token refers to every individual word form in the corpus. The type-token ratio, often abbreviated as TTR, is the ratio of types to tokens in a given corpus and is commonly used to measure the degree of lexical variation employed by an author in a particular corpus. Since the type-token ratio is often influenced by corpus size, translation studies typically rely on the standardized type-token ratio (STTR) to assess the degree of lexical variation used by authors or

translators in a specific corpus: the higher the STTR value, the greater the lexical variation employed by the author or translator, and the larger the number of distinct vocabulary items used; conversely, the lower the STTR value, the less lexical variation employed by the author or translator, and the smaller the number of distinct vocabulary items used.

This study uses WordSmith Tools 4 to calculate the standard type-token ratio for three corpora of English translations of the *Cha Jing*. Table 2 presents the specific numerical values obtained.

Table 2. Standard Type/ Token Ratio

Text	Token	Type	STTR/%
Carpenter's Translation	10322	2315	42.85%
Jiang's Translation	12960	3241	46.98%
Qiu's Translation	13735	2626	38.35%

In terms of lexical richness, the three translations show significant differences. The standard type-token ratio (STTR) of the Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi translation reaches 46.98%, the highest among the three translations, indicating that their vocabulary selection is the most diverse, with rich variation in word choice and a greater emphasis on stylistic flexibility and expressive richness. This feature aligns with their academic background—long-term engagement in research on translation aesthetics—and reflects their

pursuit of the “spiritual transmission” aspect within the principle of “conveying both spirit and meaning.” The Carpenter translation has an STTR of 42.85%, placing it at a moderate level, consistent with the relatively standardized yet slightly conservative characteristics of mid-20th-century written English. In contrast, the Qiu Guixi translation has an STTR of only 38.35%. Although it boasts the largest total word count, its growth in type tokens is slow, suggesting a higher rate of lexical repetition and a tendency toward more rigid and systematized terminology use, resulting in a style that is more stable and structured.

3.1.2 Lexical Density

Lexical density was first introduced by Ure. It is calculated by dividing the total number of content words (nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs) by the total word count in a text, expressed as a percentage. Vocabulary density is commonly used to measure the difficulty of a text; generally speaking, the higher the vocabulary density, the greater the text's difficulty and information content, and vice versa. According to Ullmann's calculation method, this paper uses AntConc software to statistically analyze nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs in three subcorpora (where nouns include NN, NNS, NP, and NPS; adjectives include J, JJR, and JJS; adverbs include RB, RBR, and RBS; and verbs include VB, VBD, VBG, VBN, VBP, and VBZ). Based on these statistics, we calculate the vocabulary densities of the four texts represented by the four subcorpora; the specific calculation results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Lexical Density

Translator	Token	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb	Cotent Word	Lexical Density
Carpenter	10323	2906	1749	669	407	5731	55.52%
Jiang	12960	4550	1939	1091	523	8103	62.52%
Qiu	13735	4890	1860	978	532	8260	60.14%

The contrast in lexical density is evident. The lexical density of Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi's translations reaches as high as 62.52%, while Qiu Guixi's translation comes in at 60.14%, and Carpenter's translation stands at only 55.52%. This difference indicates that the Jiang and Qiu versions carry far more information per unit of text than the Carpenter version, with a style that leans more toward academic rigor and explicative clarity.

Specifically, the Jiang and Qiu versions make the greatest use of nouns. This suggests that both translated versions tend to employ more concrete nouns to precisely refer to culturally specific terms such as tea utensils, tea-related activities, and places of origin, thereby faithfully reproducing the original text's information and demonstrating academic rigor. By contrast, Carpenter's version features a higher

proportion of functional words, resulting in a smoother and more natural language that is better suited for general readers.

3.2 Sentence Level

At the sentence level, the differences among the three translations mainly lie in length and complexity. Tables 4 and 5 present the statistical results on the average sentence length for the three subcorpora, as generated by the BFSU Readability Analyzer 1.1.

Table 4. Average Sentence Length

Text	ASL
Carpenter's Translation	15.88
Jiang's Translation	20.03
Qiu's Translation	30.80

The Qiu Guixi translation has an average sentence length of 30.80 words, significantly higher than the other two versions and approaching or even exceeding the average for academic papers. This suggests that the Qiu Guixi translation tends to use complex sentences, coordinate structures, and multi-layered modifiers to enhance logical rigor and information density. The Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi translations have an average sentence length of 20.03 words, placing them at a moderately high level that strikes a balance between information content and readability. In contrast, the Carpenter translation has an average sentence length of only 15.88 words, which falls within the comfortable reading range for native English speakers (15–20 words). Its language is more concise and straightforward, making it highly readable.

Table 5. Syntactic Complexity

Text	C/T	CN/T
Carpenter's Translation	1.38	1.40
Jiang's Translation	1.22	2.06
Qiu's Translation	1.57	2.66

The analysis of sentence complexity further confirms this trend. In Qiu Guixi's translation, the number of subordinate clauses per T-unit (C/T) reaches as high as 1.57, and the number of complex noun phrases per T-unit (CN/T) amounts to 2.66—both figures rank highest among the three translations, indicating that Qiu excels at constructing multi-layered

logical relationships and employs a large number of complex noun phrases to precisely convey culturally specific terms, thereby demonstrating strong overall narrative ability. In the translations by Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi, the CN/T stands at 2.06, also relatively high, suggesting that they similarly strive for precision and completeness in syntax. By contrast, Carpenter's translation shows the lowest values, with a C/T of 1.38 and a CN/T of 1.40, reflecting a comparatively simpler syntactic structure.

3.3 Textual Level

At the discourse level, a comparison of textual readability and cohesion devices reveals the target audience and coherence strategies employed in the translation.

Text readability can intuitively reflect the acceptability of a translation and serves as an important reference for evaluating its quality. In this study, based on available data, we calculated two parameters for measuring readability: the Flesch Readability Score and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. The higher the Flesch Readability Score, the greater the text's readability; conversely, the lower the score, the less readable the text is. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level indicates the grade level at which a text is most appropriately suited for reading. The higher the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, the less readable the text is; conversely, the lower the grade level, the more readable the text becomes.

Table 6. Text Readability

Text	FRE	FKGL
Carpenter's Transaltion	63.52	12.11
Jiang's Transaltion	37.94	19.70
Qiu's Transaltion	7.17	32.03

The discourse readability analysis shows that the Flesch Readability Ease (FRE) score for Carpenter's translation is 63.52, placing it in the "standard difficulty" range (60–70), making it suitable for readers from high school through early college levels. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL) is 12.11, indicating the text's readability is the highest. The FRE score for the translation by Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi is 37.94, placing it already at the "difficult" level (30–50), while their FKGL

score is 19.70, approaching the level of upper-level university students. In contrast, the FRE score for the translation by Qiu Guixi is only 7.17, yet its FKGL score reaches as high as 32.03, indicating a highly specialized nature; its intended audience should be sinologists or tea culture experts.

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BASED ON SOCIO-TRANSLATION STUDIES

After completing an objective description of the corpus-based linguistic features, this section will introduce Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice and conduct a systematic comparative analysis of the translation practices of the three translators. Bourdieu argues that the social world is composed of multiple relatively autonomous "fields," within which actors compete based on the "capital" they possess and adopt strategies according to their internalized "habitus." (Bourdieu, 1992) Translation, as a form of social practice, likewise follows this logic.

4.1 Field

Bourdieu(1986) uses the term "field" to refer to the social space in which social actors are situated and which is governed by specific rules of operation. He argues that the field constitutes the most fundamental logical starting point for sociological research. Looking back at the field in which the translator was situated can help shed light on the underlying reasons behind the initiation of the three English translation projects and can also provide valuable insights into how other social factors within the field influence the translator's practical activities.

Francis Ross Carpenter's 1974 English translation of *Cha Jing* emerged at a pivotal moment in the reconfiguration of U.S.–China relations. During the early 1950s, Sinological scholarship in the United States, particularly research centred on Chinese civilisation, was severely constrained by the political climate of McCarthyism, which subordinated the academic field to state-driven ideological imperatives (Cai, 2017). The rapprochement between the United States and China following the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué marked a significant turning point, loosening political restrictions and enabling the

Sinological field to regain a degree of institutional autonomy (Gong, 2017). This renewed autonomy facilitated the expansion of subfields within Sinology, including the translation of classical Chinese texts into English.

Supported by major funding bodies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), translation initiatives focused on canonical Chinese works gradually increased in number and scope throughout the 1970s (Gong, 2017). Within this context, *Cha Jing*, the world's earliest monograph on tea and a text rich in symbolic capital, emerged as an ideal candidate for translation, as its absence from the English-speaking canon coincided with growing institutional and public demand in the U.S. for accessible knowledge about Chinese culture. Carpenter, positioned at the intersection of scholarly interest and cross-cultural outreach, was thus called upon to fill this representational gap.

In the preface to his translation, Carpenter explicitly framed his work as a contribution to mutual understanding between East and West. He argued that the establishment of new diplomatic relations, particularly between the U.S. and China, must be grounded in friendship based on mutual respect, which in turn depends on mutual comprehension. Guided by this principle, his translation adopts a highly accessible style: lexical choices are deliberately simple, sentence structures are kept short, and syntactic complexity is minimised to enhance readability for non-specialist audiences. This strategic simplification reflects not merely personal preference but a situated response to the expectations of the U.S. academic and cultural fields of the time, where translation served both epistemic and diplomatic functions.

China's "Going Out" cultural policy, institutionalised in the early 2000s, has repositioned translation as a key mechanism for projecting cultural presence beyond national borders. Within this framework, the translation of classical Chinese texts is conceived not merely as linguistic transfer but as a strategic practice aimed at enabling China to articulate its civilisational narratives on global platforms (Huang,

2008). The English translations of *Cha Jing* and *Xu Cha Jing* (续茶经) by Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi exemplify how individual translator agency is shaped by multiple overlapping fields.

Both translators were raised in Guizhou province, a region historically associated with high-quality tea production and explicitly praised in Lu Yu's *Cha Jing*. This regional background endowed them with specific forms of embodied cultural capital that became relevant when, during their participation in a translation project led by their supervisor Wang Rongpei in 2003, they identified a striking absence of authoritative English versions of Chinese tea treatises. Their subsequent engagement with the state-sponsored Library of Chinese Classics series, China's first large-scale bilingual initiative to systematically disseminate canonical texts globally, illustrates what Bourdieu would describe as the structural alignment of academic labour with state-driven cultural agendas.

The Library of Chinese Classics positions translation as integral to both cultural self-representation and soft power projection (Yang, 2007). Operating at the intersection of three institutional fields, Jiang and Jiang's work reflects a complex mediation of competing demands. The state field prioritises communicative efficacy for international audiences without compromising scholarly authority. The transnational reception field exerts pressure toward discursive self-articulation—shifting from being interpreted by others to actively shaping one's own narrative. Meanwhile, the academic field transmits professional norms through habitus; in this case, Wang Rongpei's widely cited triad of “fidelity, fluency, and appropriateness” functions as an internalised standard guiding textual choices.

This multi-field positioning is reflected in the stylistic profile of their translations. They exhibit high lexical diversity, indicating terminological precision and attention to conceptual nuance, while maintaining moderate syntactic complexity to enhance readability. Such features do not emerge from aesthetic preference alone but from a sustained negotiation among

institutional expectations, disciplinary conventions, and cross-cultural legibility—a negotiation that reveals translation as a socially situated practice deeply embedded in the politics of knowledge circulation.

Qiu Guixi's translation practice exemplifies the strategic positioning of academic professionals within institutional frameworks of contemporary China. Jiangxi province, with its centuries-old tea production history, emerged as a nationally significant tea-growing region during the Tang Dynasty. Historical records in Lu Yu's *Cha Jing* document tea cultivation in Yuanzhou and Jizhou, as well as in the valleys of Wuyuan, underscoring the region's enduring agricultural heritage. As a local scholar deeply engaged with Jiangxi's tea cultural traditions, Qiu's translation is institutionally situated within university academic environments, where translation practices intersect with pedagogical activities and broader cultural exchange initiatives.

The strategic importance of tea culture in contemporary international engagement has been recognized in policy discourse. Zhu (2015) identifies the Belt and Road Initiative as a catalytic framework for revitalizing Chinese tea traditions and strengthening economic ties with participating regions. This perspective aligns with broader policy orientations toward cultural diplomacy, as evidenced by official communications emphasizing tea's role in facilitating intercultural dialogue. The institutional promotion of tea culture is further demonstrated through events such as the China International Tea Expo, which has been strategically positioned as a platform for international cooperation in the tea sector. Corresponding official statements highlight the significance of such initiatives in fostering global industry development. This institutional promotion is further reinforced by global initiatives like the United Nations-designated International Tea Day (observed annually on May 21), which underscores tea's role as a cross-cultural bridge and aligns with contemporary efforts to enhance international dialogue through cultural heritage.

Against this backdrop of cultural policy implementation, Qiu's translation methodology

achieves a balance between academic precision and communicative functionality through innovative annotation techniques. Quantitative analysis reveals that these translations exhibit greater syntactic complexity and extended average sentence length compared to previous versions, reflecting a deliberate approach to preserving the source text's cultural specificity while promoting traditional Chinese cultural values. This translation strategy not only constitutes a professionalization mechanism for academic practitioners within institutional evaluation systems but also exemplifies the process by which scholarly expertise is transformed into cultural capital through translation-mediated practices.

4.2 Capital

Capital is a form of "accumulated labor," referring to the total sum of intellectual, material, and social resources accumulated by an individual over a lifetime (Bourdieu, 1986). In Bourdieu's sociology, the concept of capital encompasses four basic forms: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital.

The expansion of the Sinological field in the United States created favourable institutional conditions for the translation of classical Chinese texts, yet the production of a full English version of *Cha Jing* ultimately depended on Francis Ross Carpenter's accumulation and strategic deployment of multiple forms of capital. His cultural capital derived from formal training in Chinese philosophy and language at Stanford University and the University of London, as well as from sustained scholarly engagement with Chinese society. These resources provided the academic foundation for his translational work.

His social capital, meanwhile, stemmed from his long-standing involvement in U.S. government roles related to China affairs and, subsequently, his position as Associate Director of the Museum of American-Chinese Trade. These affiliations granted him access to an elite network of diplomats, academics, and subject-matter specialists. During the translation process, Carpenter actively mobilised this network. He consulted East Asia curators and scholars affiliated with major libraries and learned societies,

commissioned illustrations from a renowned artist, and enlisted botanists to verify the Latin nomenclature of tea-related flora. This orchestration of expert input transformed what might have been a solitary act of translation into a collaborative knowledge-production enterprise, significantly enhancing the perceived authority and reliability of the published text.

Through this concerted investment of cultural and social capital, Carpenter sought to accrue symbolic capital, specifically, recognition as the authoritative English translator of *Cha Jing*. To consolidate this position, he adopted a domesticating strategy, prioritising target readers' expectations of fluency and cultural intelligibility. Consequently, his translation exhibits a highly fluent English prose style: culture-specific terms are frequently explained, substituted, or omitted, and syntactic structures closely conform to target-language norms. This textual configuration reflects the dual imperatives of readability and scholarly accessibility embedded within the Anglophone Sinological field, revealing how linguistic choices function as a direct manifestation of the translator's capital seeking legitimacy in the target field.

Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi's engagement with *Cha Jing* exemplifies how long-term institutional anchoring enables the strategic orchestration of cultural, social, and symbolic capital in state-supported translation projects. Over two decades, their work has been sustained by two grants from China's National Social Science Fund and consistent institutional backing, yielding a cohesive research programme: more than 80 peer-reviewed publications on tea culture and translation, alongside numerous student theses focused on the transmission of Chinese tea heritage. This continuity reflects not individual initiative alone but a systematised academic enterprise.

Their cultural capital stems from their positions as established scholars, their deep expertise in both tea culture and translation aesthetics, and their persistent efforts to render cultural nuance and aesthetic form in classical texts. Simultaneously, they have cultivated extensive social capital by assembling a transdisciplinary network—encompassing canonical

translation theorist Wang Rongpei, tea studies scholars Yu Yue and Wang He, international collaborator Judith Jadron, and internal university colleagues. This collective infrastructure transcends the solitary model of translation, reconfiguring their work as a collaborative scholarly project. The completion of their translations coincided with the 2008 Beijing Olympics, a moment of heightened global interest in Chinese culture. This temporal alignment amplified their symbolic resonance, as their translations were positioned not merely as scholarly texts but as vehicles of cultural representation, thereby accruing symbolic capital that extended beyond their textual function.

Stylistically, Jiang and Jiang adopt a mediating approach, balancing readability for target audiences with the preservation of core cultural imagery. This balance reflects an academic habitus shaped by institutional mandates, disciplinary conventions, and the demands of cross-cultural reception. Their practice thus reveals translation as a dynamic site where different forms of capital are converted and where intersecting fields negotiate cultural legitimacy.

Qiu Guixi's work on *Cha Jing*, by contrast, demonstrates how an individual translator can actively mobilise diverse forms of capital to generate symbolic value at critical cultural junctures. Rather than relying solely on institutional support, Qiu drew upon his formal training in linguistics, systematic research on tea culture, and a decade of international experience to inform his translational decisions. A pivotal moment occurred in May 2019 during the "Famous Teas in Prestigious Universities" event, when he produced a bilingual rendering of Lu Tong's *Seven Bowls of Tea*. By precisely capturing the poem's lyrical essence, he rendered his accumulated cultural capital into a publicly legible textual form. This act was soon validated by Shangguan News, which prominently featured his translation, thereby converting cultural investment into institutionalised symbolic recognition.

This media recognition exemplifies what Bourdieu (1991) describes as the mechanism of misrecognition—the process through which accumulated capital is perceived not as the product of strategic positioning but as an inherent personal

quality. It is precisely this misrecognition that endows symbolic capital with its social efficacy. Leveraging this initial symbolic gain, Qiu activated his social capital by drawing on professional networks to identify a market gap for a full English translation of *Cha Jing* and launched the project in early 2020 (Xu, 2024). Throughout its development, he further mobilised cross-domain authority by securing a preface from Academician Liu Zhonghua, commissioning calligraphy from renowned artists, and collaborating with a scholar from the University of Oxford. These strategic interventions generated new layers of symbolic capital, including the inaugural "Lu Yu Award". Qiu's trajectory underscores a broader dynamic in contemporary classical translation: the reinvestment of accumulated capital into new struggles within the cultural field to secure legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1991). Far from a solitary act, his practice reveals how individual agency, when strategically aligned with institutional and media logics, can catalyse the transformation of translation into a recognised cultural enterprise.

Consequently, Qiu's translation departs markedly from the streamlined readability typical of pedagogical translations. Instead, it cultivates a deliberately complex discursive structure that reflects its role as a site of cultural distinction. The English rendering frequently employs extended syntactic structures, such as embedded clauses, appositives, and participial phrases. These constructions mirror the intricate rhetorical cadence of classical Chinese while embedding scholarly commentary within the main narrative flow. In Bourdieu's terms, the text's very difficulty functions as a mechanism of exclusion and consecration. It ensures the work's symbolic value is preserved precisely because it resists facile consumption.

4.3 Habitus

In Bourdieu's terms, habitus refers to the system of durable, transposable dispositions that translators internalise through prolonged engagement with specific social and professional fields. As a generative structure, habitus is simultaneously shaped by the constraints and affordances of the field and actively informs agents' practical choices, often in ways

that appear natural or self-evident.

Carpenter's translational habitus is characterised by a strong orientation toward mediation and readability. His English prose exhibits marked fluency. With an average sentence length of 15.88 words and a Flesch Reading Ease score of 63.52, well above the threshold typically associated with academic writing, his text clearly targets non-specialist Anglophone readers. This strategic prioritisation of accessibility aims to lower cultural and cognitive barriers to reception. Complementing this stylistic choice, Carpenter employs a thick translation approach, relegating extensive contextual and historical information to the introduction and endnotes so as not to disrupt the narrative flow of the main text. This architecture reflects a reader-centred ethos that privileges seamless engagement over scholarly density. Significantly, this habitus is not only empirically observable but also explicitly articulated. In his preface, Carpenter states his intention to bring pleasure to the general reader, thereby establishing a rare instance of intertextual alignment between textual practice and authorial self-positioning.

By contrast, Jiang Xin and Jiang Yi's habitus emerges from their dual identity as academic scholars and cultural custodians. Their translation registers a lexical density of 62.52 percent and makes frequent use of complex nominal phrases, underscoring a commitment to terminological precision and informational completeness, a hallmark of disciplinary rigour. Simultaneously, they attend meticulously to the aesthetic dimensions of *Cha Jing*, striving to reproduce its rhythmic cadence, cultural imagery, and poetic resonance through careful deployment of rhetorical devices and evocative diction. This dual emphasis on scholarly fidelity and literary elegance is not incidental. It is the product of a habitus forged through decades of institutional socialisation within Chinese academia, where classical texts are approached both as objects of philological inquiry and as vessels of cultural heritage.

Qiu Guixi's habitus, meanwhile, is distinctly oriented toward cultural authenticity and historical fidelity. His rendition adopts a highly formal register, with an average sentence length of 30.80 words and a

Flesch Reading Ease score of just 7.17, placing it firmly within the domain of specialised academic discourse. The syntax is densely layered, presupposing a reader equipped with prior knowledge of both classical Chinese culture and translation theory. In handling culture-specific elements, Qiu consistently opts for foreignising strategies. Tang-era measurement units, for instance, are retained in their original form, accompanied only by parenthetical annotations and explanatory footnotes, thereby preserving historical specificity at the expense of immediate intelligibility. This choice reflects not merely a methodological preference but a deeply held ethical stance, one that positions the translator as a guardian of cultural integrity rather than a facilitator of cross-cultural ease.

Notably, however, a tension arises between this scholarly disposition and the paratextual framing of Qiu's work. The publisher's marketing description presents the translation as accessible to general readers, a claim starkly at odds with its actual linguistic complexity. The dense syntactic structures, specialised terminology, and minimal glossing render the text challenging even for advanced non-specialists. This disjunction reveals a structural contradiction within Qiu's work. While his habitus drives him toward academic consecration through textual difficulty, the marketing logic of the contemporary cultural field demands broad appeal. The resulting mismatch underscores how habitus, though powerful, may encounter limits when confronted with competing logics of the field, particularly in an era where symbolic capital increasingly depends on both elite recognition and public visibility.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper systematically elucidates the diachronic evolution of English translations of classical Chinese texts through a dual analysis of linguistic features and socio-historical motivations across three English renditions of *Cha Jing*. Notably, although none of the three translators were professional linguists, they were all scholars or cultural practitioners with interdisciplinary expertise and proficient English competence, whose academic backgrounds spanned tea

science and literature. This composite knowledge structure empowered them to integrate disciplinary methodologies into the translation process, thereby facilitating the precise deconstruction and reconstruction of terminological systems, cultural imagery, and historical contexts embedded in the source text. This phenomenon underscores that high-quality translation of classical Chinese texts increasingly hinges on translators' academic scholarship and cross-cultural research capabilities, rather than merely on their linguistic conversion skills.

Such translational practices find theoretical resonance in Bourdieu's field theory. Translation activities operate within the constraints of historical institutions and the specific rules of the translation field; meanwhile, through the accumulation of translational outputs, they reshape the cognitive frameworks and research paradigms of international academia regarding Chinese culture.

Looking forward, the translation of classical Chinese texts must establish clear criteria across two interdependent dimensions: first, maintaining the dialectical unity of scholarly rigor and communicative efficacy by ensuring both academic depth and cultural authenticity while adapting to the cognitive patterns of target readers; second, achieving effective transformation between cultural specificity and shared human values by preserving the textual uniqueness of the source text while distilling universally resonant philosophical insights. Only through such balanced innovation can the translation of classical Chinese texts enhance textual quality while substantially boosting international communication efficacy, thereby facilitating the substantive integration of the core concepts of Chinese civilization into the global knowledge system.

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