VISUALISED ANALYSES OF PROTAGONISTS' IMAGES: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF LEGENDS OF THE CONDOR HEROES[1]

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Abstract

This paper aims at studying the images of two main characters "Guo Jing" and "Huang Rong (Lotus)" in the target text, the first two English volumes of Legends of the Condor Heroes written by Jin Yong in Chinese and translated by Holmwood and Chang. With the help of LancsBox's "graphcoll", it analyses the collocates of the key words "Jing" and "Lotus" to see whether the choices of expressions in the target text influence the portraits of the hero and heroine. The study found that translators used different translation strategies to get close to the original text yet each translator has her own preferences, influenced by their own cultural background, which leads to a gap in presenting the protagonists. This study hopes to provide some thoughts to Chinese college students on translation studies and proper application of translation strategies to tell Chinese stories well.

Keywords: Corpus; Images of Protagonists; Translation Teaching

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Introduction

Legends of the Condor Heroes (LOTCH), a Wuxia novel with more than 1 million Chinese characters, was written by Jin Yong (Louis Cha) and first published as a serialized novel between 1957 and 1959 in *Hong Kong Commercial Daily*. It is so well-received in the Chinese society that it has been reprinted and modified for several times and made for a dozen of movies and TV series so far. The English translation of *LOTCH* can be traced back to decades ago on the internet, for example a fan-translation-based website Wuxia Society, and has gradually gained its popularity among English-speaking readers. There was no official publication until 2018, the English version of *LOTCH* Volume I translated by Anna Holmwood was released, and by 2022 the other three volumes of the series were finished by the joint work of Holmwood, Gigi Chang, and Shelly Bryant.

They harvest significant attention from the readers overseas while there are heated discussions on this translated version, including reviews on the researches to English translations of Jin Yong's Wuxia novels at home and abroad (Liang & Sun, 2022), discussions on whether Jin Yong's novels are suitable as a medium for Chinese culture to go global (Yue & Ma, 2021), studies on the translation strategy of a single volume (Song, 2021), text analyses based on corpora (Guo et al, 2019; Zhang et al, 2023), etc. However, there is still a gap in studying the portrayal of characters in the English translation with the help the corpora, nor the analyses on styles of the translators. Therefore, last year, a research on the male protagonist, Guo Jing, has been conducted (Fan & Zhang, 2023).

This paper continues the researches on protagonists study in the first two volumes, demonstrating a more detailed analysis on Guo Jing and also making an extension to the heroine Lotus Huang, since Volumes III and IV are jointly attributed to two translators respectively, it becomes challenging to distinguish their individual styles.

Data Collection and Research Results

The database of the study comes as follows: the source texts (ST) in Chinese were adopted the same one the translators used (Jin, 2002a; 2002b), and the target texts (TT) in English were from the works done by Anna Holmwood (2018) and Gigi Chang (2019). Volume I was translated from Chapter 1 to first half of Chapter 10 of the ST (Jin, 2002a), and Volume II from second half of Chapter 10 to Chapter 19 of the ST (Jin, 2002a; 2002b).

In order to see what expressions are closely connected with the two characters, the target texts were put into LancsBox, a free corpus tool developed by the team of Professor Vaclav Brezina (2021) from Lancaster University in the UK. As a cutting-edge software, it has made innovation in retrieval methods, statistical algorithms, data processing and information presentation, and supports intelligent retrieval, semantic annotation and data visualization (Wang et al, 2020). The paper uses the "graphcoll" in LancsBox, which is set as follows: the keywords are "Jing" and "Lotus", the span is set at 5 words before and after the keyword, setting MI (Mutual Information score) algorithm the standard, and the threshold at 5 times or more of their collocation frequency. Thus the final data and its visualised collocation graphs are generated, presented in the following paragraphs:

Graphs 1 and 2, the visualised collocates to the keyword "Jing" (Fan & Zhang, 2023, p390), done by the previous study were listed below to have a better view in discussion. Graph 3 and 4 are to "Lotus". The darker the color of the dot, the higher the frequency of the collocate; the closer the collocate is to the central keyword, indicating the higher degree of association; L and R respectively indicate that the word appears mostly on the left or right side of the keyword (ibid, p389).

Table 2 summaries the total number of collocates, meanwhile it calculates and lists the collocates related to martial arts and to facial expressions. It is noticeable that the collocates in Graph 1 and 3 appears a huge gap, due to the fact that Jing enters in Chapter 3 while Lotus comes in Chapter 7 in the ST, the first volume has less description to Lotus than the latter.

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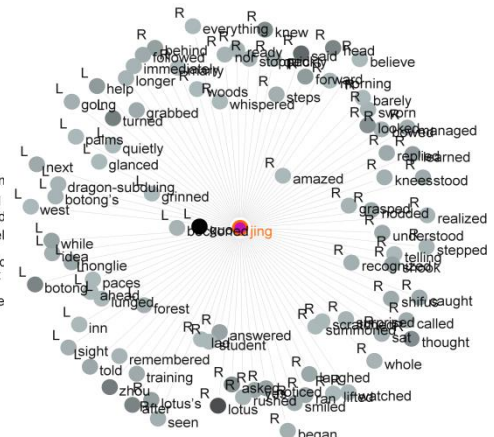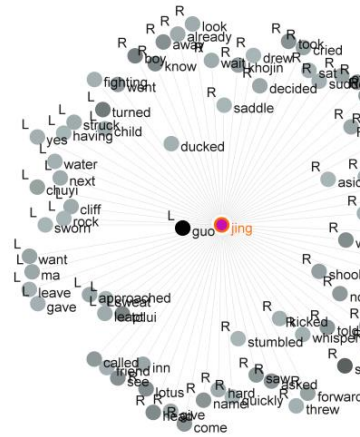
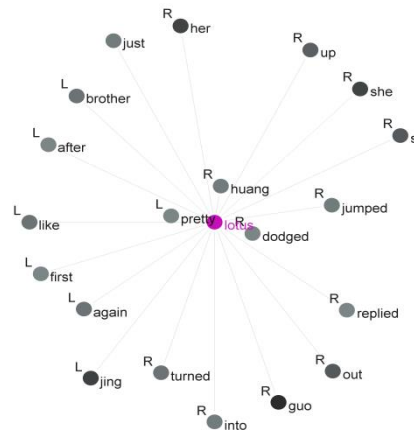**115**

Table 1

Key words/ Volume

	Volume 1 (Holmwood)	Volume 2 (Chang)
Jing	Graph 1	Graph 2
Lotus	Graph 3	Graph 4
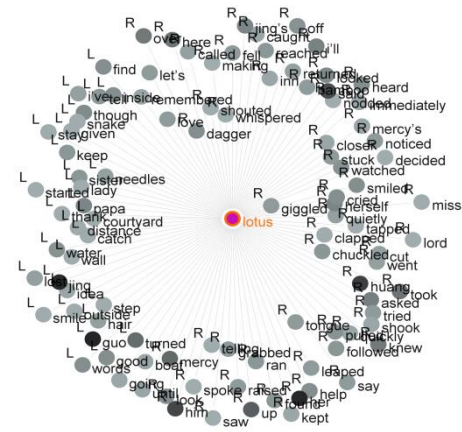
Table 2

	Holmwood's Translation		Chang's Translation	
character	Jing	Lotus	Jing	Lotus
number of collocates	77	20	91	102
number of verbs related to martial arts (ration)	12 (15.6%) (ibid)	3 (15%)	10 (11.0%)	9 (8.8%)
verbs related to martial arts	ducked, shook, kicked, stumbled, leapt, approached, turned, struck, grabbed, fighting, threw, jumped	dodged, jumped, turned	scratched, shook, lunged, grabbed, rushed, stopped, dragon-subduing, caught, lifted, grasped	tapped, pulled, grabbed, caught, returned, leaped, raised, shook, reached
number of words related to expression (ration)	1 (1.3%) (ibid)	0 (0%)	5 (5.5%) (ibid)	5 (4.9%)
words related to expression	cried	/	amazed, grinned, surprised, laughed, smiled	giggled, chuckled, cried, smiled, smile

The next two sections will do interlingual comparative analysis (between ST and TT) and intratextual comparative analysis (between two translators) based on the collocation, to see the portrayals of the two leading roles and differences of the translation styles.

Interlingual Comparative Analysis and Findings

Study on Martial Arts Moves

As a novel themed in martial arts, it is reasonable that a large percentage of the collocates are related to martial arts moves. Graph 1 and Graph 2 includes 12 and 10 verbs related to the martial art moves performed by Jing; Graph 3 and Graph 4 includes 3 and 9 verbs linked to the martial art moves performed by Lotus. The study chooses collocates with darker dots or the ones closer to the key words. The previous study looked at "ducked" and "leapt" in Graph 1 however did not present the detailed examples (Fan & Zhang, 2023), therefore in order to give a clear comparison, as well as

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examine three more collocates, "stumbled" in Graph 1 and "lunged","grasped" in Graph 2, all 11 cases listed in Table 3.

Table 3

eg	Jin's Source Text 1 (2002a)	Holmwood's Translation Volume 1 (2018)
1	郭靖见博尔忽势危，**纵身**过去，发掌往使单刀的大师兄背上拍去(p. 207)。	Guo Jing **leapt** to defend Bogurchi, striking his palm against the spine of one of the men (p. 249).
2	(郭靖)**跳**起身来，道："这……这……"脸上已现怒色 (p. 274)。	Guo Jing **leapt** to his feet. "But . . . but . . ." His cheeks burned (p. 331).
3	郭靖……又给他（小王爷）打中一拳，跟着连**摔**了两跤(p. 247)。	Guo Jing **stumbled** twice under the force of the Prince's attack (p. 299).
4	郭靖急**退**两步，王处一举起袍袖，挡在他身前(p. 259)。	Guo Jing **stumbled** back and Wang Chuyi stepped in front of the young man to shield him (p. 312).
5	郭靖恍在梦中，双足点地，跃上船去(p. 279)。	Guo Jing **stumbled** forward and tripped into the canoe (p. 328).
	Jin's Source Text 2 (2002b)	**Chang's Translation Volume 2 (2019)**
6	不待黄蓉回答, (郭靖)**纵身**上去呼呼两掌……(p. 499)	Guo Jing **lunged**, throwing two palm strikes at once (p. 249).
7	(郭靖) "还不快走，都想死在这里么?" **抢**上去拳打脚踢(p. 544).	"Are you still fighting?" Guo Jing cried as he **lunged**. Fists and feet flying(p. 314)...
8	这一招跃起半空, 居高下击, 威力奇大, 郭靖花了三天工夫, 方才**学会**(p. 416).	It was three days before Guo Jing **grasped** the essential technique of s springing up and using his own momentum to strike down (p. 138).
9	刚才欧阳克眼睁睁瞧着洪七公传授三记掌法, 郭靖尚未**领悟**一成, 他早已了然于胸(p. 533).	...he was also confident that Guo Jing had barely **grasped** one-tenth of the intricacy of these new techniques (p. 300).
10	郭靖对他的话不甚**明白**, 只是见他哭得凄凉, 也不禁戚然(p. 571).	Guo Jing had not quite **grasped** Zhou Botong's point, but his grief was infectious (p. 356).
11	周伯通甚是喜慰, 说道: "……这双手各成方圆的功夫哪能这般迅速**练成** (p. 588)?"	Pleased that Guo Jing had **grasped** the underlying theory of the technique so quickly, Zhou Botong said (p. 380)......

As to "Lotus", Table 4 demonstrates eleven examples of collocates "jumped" in Graph 3 and "leaped" "tapped" in Graph 4.

Table 4

eg	Jin's Source Text 1 (2002a)	Holmwood's Translation Volume 1 (2018)
12	黄蓉**翻身**上马(p. 228)...	Lotus **jumped** up into the saddle (p. 277)...
13	黄蓉**双手齐振, 头顶一昂**, 三只碗同时飞了起来(p. 300)……	Lotus **jumped** up and threw the three bowls of wine straight up above her (p. 363).……
14	黄蓉斜身左窜...已**闪**在一旁(p. 304).	This time Lotus turned left and suddenly **jumped** to the side (p. 368)...
15	语声竟是微微颤抖, 右臂振处, 黄蓉向后直**跃出了**七八步(p. 306).	He (Tiger Peng) cried out as a shiver shot through him and into his voice. Lotus **jumped** back several feet (p. 370).
	Jin's Source Text 1&2	**Chang's Translation Volume 2 (2019)**
16	哪里还来及闪避, 立即**窜起**,反向前冲……在两钹之间冲了过去(2002a, p. 319)。	Instead of ducking, Lotus **leaped** and dived straight at the airborne cymbals(p. 6).
17	黄蓉一笑**跃开**(2002b, p. 400)。	Lotus beamed and **leaped** away (p. 117).
18	黄蓉好奇心起，急忙跟出(2002b, p. 433)...	Lotus **leaped** out of bed and ran after Mercy, her curiosity reaching the boiling point (p. 160).
19	黄蓉...左足**一点**，跃起丈余(2002b, p. 345)	Lotus **tapped** her left foot and jumped high over the blind woman's head (p. 50).
20	黄蓉托地**跳**出圈子, 叫道: "你输啦，这不是臭蛇拳(2002b, p. 535)."	"That's not Flaccid Snake Fist! You've lost!" Lotus **tapped** the ground with one hand to propel herself away (p. 304).
21	黄蓉回身反手, 在短墙墙头上按落借力, 轻飘飘地**腾**空而起(2002b, p. 536)。	Lotus **tapped** a foot against the temple wall, flipped up, and landed quietly on the roof (p. 317).
22	黄蓉忽地顿足**跃**上竹亭(2002b, p. 636)...	At the same time, Lotus **tapped** her foot and leaped up onto the roof of the pavilion (p. 449).

The collocates selected are the ones with higher frequency or stronger collocation. In comparison, the source text shows richer expressions of describing actions: the verb "leapt/leaped" corresponds with "纵身", "跳", "跃"(Fan & Zhang, 2023, p390) and "窜" in Example 1, 2, 16-18; the verb "stumbled" in Example 3-5 is contrast to three expressions in the ST; the verb "jump" was translated from "翻身" and "闪" in Example 12-15; when refering to Jing's learning, there are at least four expressions in Chinese while the TT translated them into "grasped" (Example 8-11); the verb

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"tapped" tightly close to Lotus is contrast to five different Chinese expressions in the ST (Example 19-22).

As the first volumes of the series, reducing or simplifying a certain amount of martial arts moves is absolutely a smart strategy to open the door, as a lot of positive book reviews regard the translation as "fluid and consumable" (Eduardo R., 2022). For instance, Example 13 shows the word "jumped" replaces "双手齐振，头顶一昂 (both hands used strength and raised her head)" in the source text; in Example 19-22 "tapped" usually associated with *qinggong(轻功)*, a common kungfu started with tapping on the ground to gather their initial force to fly or run in the mid-air. Throughout the book, Lotus was not competent with hand-to-hand combat, however, she was excellent at *qinggong*, performed which she could run fast and hide from others. The idea of *qinggong* might be strange to the target readers, therefore sticking to one translation may increase acceptance. Except simplification, Chang in Volume 2 chose to make amplification in order to increase the coherence, like Example 18, in order to link to the scene where Lotus pretended asleep and monitored Mercy Mu, Chang added "leapt out of bed" before Lotus ran out to tail after Mercy.

Findings of Study on Martial Arts Moves

The study further proves that the TT shows less changes of expressions than the ST. The reduction of the variety of expression is adopting domestication strategy, in attempt to introduce the Chinese martial arts as well as Wuxia spirit to the English-speaking countries in a more acceptable way, without a dazzling amount of martial arts moves to cause confusion. An one-star book review on Amazon wrote that (the story) includes too many tedious descriptions of fights (T. Russel, 2018), which shows one of the major problems in introducing one culture to the others: how to attract the target readers from different cultural background with little even zero knowledge of Chinese martial art.

Moreover, simplifying a certain amount of martial arts moves or making amplification when necessary were both adopted by the translator in order to increase coherence of the text and fluency for the reading experience among the target readers.

Besides, Example 15 remains to be further discussed. When Holmwood chose "jump back", it indicates an initiative in Lotus's action, yet in the ST, Lotus was losing Tiger Peng and nearly fell out. The change did not show

any significant necessity neither in the plot consistency nor cultural explanation, therefore it is more like an error.

Study on Expression Description

Despite a large portion of the collocates related to martial art moves, another prominent collocation is to depict expressions of the two main characters. Under the keyword "Jing", the paper will analyse further at "grinned" and "laughed", cases all listed in Table 5 below. Under "Lotus", the the paper adopted "giggled" and "chuckled" seeing Table 6. Table 7 listed strong collocates related to different kinds of "laugh" in Volume 2, and how many times they appeared closely with each two protagonists.

Table 5

eg	Jin's Source Text 2 (2002b)	Chang's Translation Volume 2 (2019)
23	......叹道: "靖儿, 你怎不教她把聪明伶俐分一点儿给你?" 郭靖道: "聪明伶俐? 分不来的(p. 425)."	Count Seven sighed. "You really should get her to give you a little of her wit." "I'm not sure that's possible." Guo Jing **grinned sheepishly**(p. 149).
24	洪七公呵呵大笑, 说道: "这路'逍遥游', 你是不能学的, ...笨手笨脚的, 变成了'苦恼爬'. "郭靖**笑道**: "可不是吗(p. 409)?"	The beggar chuckled. "This kung fu wouldn't suit you, it's true. ... when put together, they would better resemble the Distress Crawl. All bogged down and lumbering." Guo Jing **laughed** in agreement (pp. 127-128).
25	朱聪笑道......(韩宝驹)也不禁笑了出来. 郭靖见众师父对黄蓉不再心存芥蒂, 甚是**喜慰**(p. 518)...	Guo Jing **laughed** along with the rest of the Freaks, pleased that his *shifus* had come around to Lotus (p. 276).
26	想到此处, 不禁**自觉**愚蠢(p. 557)	Guo Jing **laughed inwardly at** his stupidity (p. 336)...
27	(周伯通)说着哈哈大笑. 郭靖听了也**觉有趣**, 这位把兄竟在这种事上也跟人斗劲(p. 584).	Zhou Botong chuckled and Guo Jing also **laughed**, **yet was secretly astonished** that a martial master could bring a quarrel down to such a base level (p. 373).

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Table 6

eg	Jin's Source Text 2 (2002b)	Chang's Translation Volume 2 (2019)
28	黄蓉**格格笑道**: "我爹爹当然是在桃花岛. 你问来干吗? 想去桃花岛给他老人家请安吗(p. 363)?"	"On Peach Blossom Island, of course!" Lotus **giggled**. "Why do you ask? Are you planning to visit him (p. 68)?"
29	黄蓉**抿嘴轻笑**. 郭靖心想(p. 399)...	Lotus **giggled,** but Guo Jing was merely confused (p. 115).
30	黄蓉**嬉皮笑脸的道**: "爹, 你不是说我吧?" 黄药师...道: "你也有份(p. 506)."	"You aren't talking about me, Pa, are you?" Lotus **giggled**. "You have played your part," Apothecary Huang replied (p. 260)...
31	黄蓉**笑道**: "姊姊别慌, 我送你见心上人去(p. 434)."	"Don't be scared, sister." Lotus **chuckled**. "I'm sending you to your beloved (p. 162)."

Table 7

Key words	Collocate 1	Times	Collocate 2	Times	Collocate 3	Times
Jing	laughed	7	smiled	6	grinned	2
Lotus	giggled	8	smiled/smile	11/5	chuckled	8

In Table 6, Jing had 15 times of "laugh" (including laughed, smiled and grinned) and Lotus 32 times (including giggled, smiled, smile, chuckled). Evidently Guo Jing showed much less his happiness openly. Compared with "giggle" and "chuckle", "laugh" is the one with neutral meaning and one of the most commonly applied expression. In the ST, Guo Jing appears as a boy who was sometimes too ingenious to tell the difference between a joke and a statement. Also, as in Example 8-11 "grasped", the writer described constantly at his slow but hard-working learning process, to show Jing's personality. Therefore, using "laugh" to describe Jing is a way maintaining the image of Jing, as he sometimes "laughed" with others without knowing if it is proper time to laugh or did not fully understand the jokes, see in Example 25-27 (Fan & Zhang, 2023). Except it, the translators had two other different methods to achieving the goal. The second one is to add adverbs when necessary to enhance his portrait, presented in Example 23 and 26. In contrast, Lotus, the same to other characters like Zhou Botong and Hong Qigong (ibid), was described with "giggle" or "chuckle" to get close to her personalities: she is outgoing, full

of wicked ideas, and loving telling jokes (Example 28 and 31). The writer Jin Yong put a lot of efforts on presenting her laugh. Thus in the translation, comparing to Jing, Chang uses "giggled" to differentiate the laugh of Jing, presenting a witty girl to the target readers. The variation of "laugh" shows the diversity of the two protagonists, echoing the same image to the ST. However, the shortcoming still is the less choices of adjectives.

The third way to maintain their images is to use free translation, like Example 25 and 27 the translation put "喜慰 (happy with comfort)" into "(Jing) laughed along with the rest of the Freaks", and "觉有趣 (felt interesting)" into "laughed, yet was secretly astonished". Also, in Example 5, the translation used "stumbled" and "tripped" to show Jing's astonishment, rather than translate "恍在梦中(as if in a dream)" directly.

Findings of Study on Expression Description

There are totally three means to maintain or even enhance the images of the two main characters. The first one is each character has their own share of specialised expressions; the next strategy is to add adverbs enhance their portrait; the last method is to take the task of explanation for the readers. However, the last way reduces the room for imagination and increasing the times that Jing laughed as mentioned above, hence it may influence the image of Jing in the target text.

Another noticeable point is, all the collocates about expressions were picked from Volume 2. As it shows in Table 2, Holmwood seldom used strong collocates related to expressions, but Chang did the opposite. The conclusion would be drawn that even though translators tried to maintain the same style (Zhang, 2019), the two translators had their own preference in their translation, and the paper will give a further discussion on the next part.

Intra-textual Comparative Analysis and Findings

To start with, it is obvious in the graphs that the number of collocates of Chang's is much higher than that of Holmwood. The increase of collocates can also be interpreted as the weakening of the frequency of each collocate. When it is reflected in the target text, translation is not refined enough. According to the data of WordSmith8.0 extracted from the two English volumes (Zhang & Fan, 2023), the previous study found Chang's expressions were more complex than Holmwood's, therefore it can be

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presumed that Chang's translation style prefer to get close to the original text, also known as foreignization. Holmwood however tried to maintain the fluency and consistency in the reading experience rather than get confused by foreign culture elements. She lowered the threshold of Chinese martial art, balanced foreignization and domestication strategies in order to keep the interest in reading, and encouraged readers to explore more when they grasp a certain concepts (Carol's Adventures in Translation, 2018). Such differences are related to the translator's cultural background, translation habits, and language level (Zhang & Fan, 2023).

Furthermore, according to the data presented in Table 1, it is evident that Holmwood utilizes a higher proportion of verbs related to movements in the collocates, while employing fewer terms to depict facial expressions. On the other hand, Chang demonstrates an opposite trend, displaying a greater focus on describing character expressions and personalities (see in Table 2, 5, 6). Here is a further proof provided in Table 8. It can be seen "amazed" is one of the collocates that is closest to "Jing." Throughout the Volume, three out of five of the verb "amazed" attributed to "Jing" were the additional descriptions added by the translator to highlight Guo Jing's facial expressions and character traits (Fan & Zhang, 2023).

Table 8

eg	Jin's Source Text 2 (2002b)	Chang's Translation Volume 2 (2019)
24	周伯通哭了一阵，忽然抬头道："……怎么你也不劝我别哭？"郭靖笑道(p. 571)...	Suddenly, the Hoary Urchin stopped crying and looked up. "...Why didn't you stop me crying?" Guo Jing was **amazed** by how quickly his brother's moods could flip. He answered, with a smile (p. 356)...
25	郭靖点点头, 心想: "这道理说来很浅,只是我从未想到过.(p. 586)"	Guo Jing shook his head again, **amazed** how he had never noticed such a simple and obvious truth(p. 377).
26	周伯通道: "...现下咱们先玩三个人相打." 当下双手分作两人, 和郭靖拆招比拳. (p. 588).	...Let's try a three-way brawl first!" Zhou Botong launched two different kung fu moves, one with each hand. Guo Jing was **amazed**. (pp. 379-380)?

Conclusion

After studying the strong collocates, especially the verbs related to Chinese martial arts and adjectives of expression, the paper compared the images of protagonists between ST and TT. The paper further proves that Chang preferred a high proportion of describing the main characters' expressions while Holmwood stuck on the martial arts moves. The personalities decides the fates of the characters, and the martial arts are the interesting and exotic parts of the book. Both of them play vital roles in the depicting images of one person, and the main characters are the major drive in the development of the plots. Thus the translation strategy significantly influences the presentation of the story, and here is the summary:

Overall, both translators adopted simplification and amplification, which are commonly seen in introducing one culture to the other in order to minimize reading obstacles caused by cultural differences and improve the acceptance of the target readers. The deficits of simplification and amplification are reducing the diversity of vocabulary and influencing the shaping of the character. Lexical diversity is not a essential criterion in evaluation of a translation. The conservation in translating martial arts (Song, 2021, p.7) not only ease the burden for the readers but even avoid potential misunderstanding in a large extent. Moreover, foreignization or domestication can be affected by translator's cultural background. A source-language-speaking translator may prioritize preserving cultural elements since he or she is familiar with certain terms; while target culture translators are much easily share the same perspective of English readers, trying to reduce possible confusion. This study hopes to inspire contemporary college students that when undertaking a translation task, it is necessary to be fully aware of the target market and thus to choose the appropriate translation methods and balanced the pros and cons they bring, with which the translation can be a bridge to tell Chinese stories well and spread Chinese culture.

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