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A Corpus-based Comparative Study of Translators' Styles of Four English Versions of Chinese Classic

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Abstract

This article examines the translation styles of the first chapter of Six Chapters of a Floating Life at three levels using a corpus approach: readability calculations, statistical parameters, and the translation of culture-specific lexis. The translation by Pratt and Jiang has the most annotations and is easiest for the typical English reader to read. With an emphasis on the original language, Sanders' translation demonstrates the translator's goal of translating Chinese culture while veering toward thick translation. Black's translation is particularly unique because the translator frequently adopts the author's tone to infuse the original language with cultural context. The distinct socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of the translators and the intended audience are the primary causes of the four translations' wildly divergent styles.

Keywords

Corpus-based Study, Chinese Classics, Six Chapters of a Floating Life, Comparative Analysis, Translators' Style

1. Introduction

Shen Fu, a literati of the Qing Dynasty, wrote a biographical essay known as the Six Chapters of a Floating Life (henceforth referred to as "Fu"). With Shen Fu and his wife's activities serving as the focal point, the essay documents their travels and domestic life in addition to discussing art criticism and the art of living. Feng Qiyong has referred to Fu as one of the most beautiful examples of classical Chinese prose because of its vivid, new style and heartfelt story (Wang, 2015). According to Xu (2015), Fu is one of the 55 literary works that are part of the Greater China Library, which is an effort by the

government to translate Chinese cultural literature. Lin Yutang translated Fu into English for the first time in the 1930s, and it has since gained "world-famous" status (Jin & Jin, 2000). Three other English translations of Fu exist in addition to Lin Yutang's translation (henceforth referred to as Lin's translation): Shirley Black's translation, which was published by Oxford University Press in 1960 (henceforth referred to as Black's translation); Leonard Pratt & Chiang Su-Hui's translation, which was published by Penguin Press in the 1980s (henceforth referred to as Pratt's translation); and Graham Sanders' translation, which was published by Hackett Publishing in 2011 (henceforth referred to as the Sanders' translation). While volume 1 is largely full, Black's translation left out the horticultural and botanical contents of volume 2, the temple and landscape incidents in book 4, and some of the literary information for the reader's interest. As a result, this study focuses on Volume 1 of Fu and its Four English translations, examining the linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects of each translation.

2. Literature Review

Translation studies first used corpus linguistic methodologies when Baker published "Corpus Linguistics and Translation Studies: Implications and Applications" in 1993. Her article "Towards a methodology for investigating the style of a literary translator" from 2000 marked the introduction of corpus analysis into the field of translator's style research. It highlighted the importance of analyzing the translator's unique language usage characteristics and subconscious language habits. Studies on translators' styles fall into two groups, according to Saldanha (2011): translators' styles and translation styles. The former is concerned with how well the translation mimics the language and style of the source material, while the latter is more focused on the translator's specific language usage patterns.

Charlotte Bosseaux (2001), for example, used a one-to-two English-French parallel corpus to search for and evaluate culturally distinctive phrases (food and architecture) in Virginia Woolf's The Waves, as well as to investigate discrepancies in translation tactics between the two translators. Studies like Dorothy Kenny's (2001) on lexical inventiveness in translation using self-constructed corpus and hapax legomena are also available. Promising progress has also been achieved by domestic academics using the corpus to investigate the manner of translators. A translator's style, according to Hu & Li (2021: 103) relates specifically to "the characteristics of the translator in terms of language use and translation strategies and applications, as well as the characteristics of the translator in other auxiliary texts such as translation selections, prefaces, postscripts, and annotations.Using the English translation of reporting verbs from Dream of the Red Chamber as an example, Liu and Yan (2010) investigated the various translator styles shown by the reporting verbs in the three translations of Dream of the Red Chamber using source language influence, translation influence, and explicitation hypothesis verification based on the "parallel corpus of Dream of the Red Chamber in Chinese and English." Huang and Zhu (2012) use a corpus to analyze the translator's style displayed in Howard Goldblatt's English translations of modern Chinese novels; comparable works include Hou, Liu, and Liu (2014) and Hou and Hu (2019). There are a lot of study pieces about The Fu and its English translation available at home, most of them

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are found in dissertations and journals. Wen and Deng (2012), for instance, categorized 218 articles on the study of the English translation of Fu into seven groups based on the research perspective, examined each group, and ultimately recommended that the pertinent research on Fu should expand more English translations of Fu for analysis and discussion, in addition to adopting scientific research methods "to strengthen statistical analysis." When the author searched the CNKI with the subject term "English translation of "Six Chapters of a Floating Life," she discovered that just two dissertations were based on the corpus and that only a small number of papers were published in "core journals" and "CSSCI journals."

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Materials and Research Questions

The corpus for this study comprises Volume 1 of Fu and its Four English translations, with specific details outlined in Table 1. Notably, Black's translation addressed the original text's convoluted chronological order by reorganizing it sequentially for clarity. However, to facilitate comparison, we restructured Black's translation to align with the original text's paragraph sequence.

Prior to embarking on our analysis, we examined the versions of the original texts utilized in the various translations. All were presented in traditional Chinese characters, with the exception of Sanders' translation, which employed simplified characters. The current edition of "Fu," predominantly edited and punctuated by Yu Pingbo, draws from two primary sources: "Du Wu An Cong Chao" (1877) and "Yanlaihong Magazine" (1906). The 1924 Beijing edition from Shuangfeng Press represents a revised arrangement of these two earlier versions (Wang & Xie, 2005, p. 136), and Lin Yutang's translation similarly relies heavily on Yu Pingbo's edition. Sanders' translation, on the other hand, is based on the 2010 edition edited by Miao Huaiming and published by Zhonghua Book Company in Beijing.

Given that Shen Fu's original manuscript has been lost, the earliest known copy of the text, discovered by Yang Yinchuan in an antiquarian bookstore, was published by THE PRESS of Shanghai in 1877. A subsequent, purported complete six-chapter version of Fu published by Shanghai World Book in 1935 was later revealed to be a forgery. Although Pratt and Chiang (1983, p. 14) did not explicitly state their translation's source text, they did acknowledge and discuss these forgeries in two appendices, suggesting their version may have been influenced by or at least considered this falsified edition. As for Black's translation, the author notes using a recent edition from Wu Kuei T'ang Publishing Company in Hong Kong, excluding the spurious sections present in that edition (Black, 2012, pp. xii-xiii).

Upon examining the various source texts underlying the translations, we found no substantive differences among them. Consequently, the content analysis of the Four selected translations in this paper was not impacted by discrepancies in the original texts.

Table 1. Information on the corpus of Fu and the Four English Translations

Original work and author	Translator	Translation	Publisher
Six Chapters of a Floating Life	Li Yutang	Six Chapters of a Floating Life	Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (1999)
	Leonard Pratt & Chiang Su-Hui	Six Chapters of Floating Life	Penguin Group (1983)
	Shirley M. Black	Chapters from a Floating Life	Oxford University Press (1960)
	Graham Sanders	Six Records of a Life Adrift	Hackett Publishing Company (2011)

With the help of literature review and problem-solving, this study attempts to address the following questions: 1) what features can effectively reflect the translation style of a translation; 2) what are the differences in translation style presented in different translations, and the reasons for them.

3.2 Research Tools and Methods

The statistical tools employed in this study are WordSmith Tools 7.0 and AntConc 3.4.0. The research methodology focused on two key aspects: linguistic form parameters and the translation of culture-specific lexis. At the linguistic level, our analysis delved into lexical and syntactic dimensions, while for culture-specific lexis, we categorized occurrences in Volume 1 of Fu and leveraged AntConc 3.4.0 to search corresponding translations across Four versions. This approach allowed us to explore differences in translation strategies when tackling identical cultural phenomena and identify the underlying reasons.

4. Data Statistics And Analysis

Drawing inspiration from Li Yi's (2020) parametric design model for linguistic forms, we utilized WordSmith 7.0 to extract relevant lexical and syntactic data from the Four translations of Faust Volume 1 (Table 2). Types refer to the count of distinct words in the text, whereas tokens signify the total occurrences of words. The ratio of types to tokens serves as an indicator of vocabulary richness and diversity, with standardized TTR offering greater reliability when comparing texts of varying lengths (Baker, 1995, p. 236). As shown in Table 2, Sanders' translation exhibits the highest type count, signifying the greatest lexical diversity among the translations. The standardized TTR for the Translated English Corpus's Novel sub-corpus stands at 44.63 (Olohan, 2004, p. 63), while that of the British National Corpus (BNC) is 41.20 (Li & Zhu, 2012, p. 78). Notably, Lin's and Pratt's translations align closely with the standardized TTR of English source corpora, suggesting a closer adherence to native English narrative wording. Conversely, Sanders' (44.22) and Black's (45.83) translations mirror

the English translation corpus's word usage, indicative of their conformity to translated fiction norms.

The Mean word length serves as a metric for assessing text formality, with longer words typically found in more formal texts. In terms of average word length, Pratt's and Lin's translations are comparable (4.10), while Sanders' (4.13) and Black's (4.25) register higher values, with Black's translation nearing the 4.36 average of the Translated English Corpus (Olohan, 2004, p. 80). Generally, "common texts primarily consist of words with 2 to 6 letters" (Chen & Liu, 2013, p. 47). Our analysis of word length distributions across the Four translations revealed that Lin's and Pratt's translations employed a higher frequency of words with 1 to 6 letters, indicating a preference for simpler vocabulary. In contrast, Black's and Sanders' translations demonstrated a lower frequency of such words, pointing to a more complex lexical profile.

Table 2. Linguistic Formal Parameters of the Four English Translations of Volume 1 of Fu

Items		Lin's version	Black's version	Sanders' version	Pratt's version
Lexical level	Types	2101	2684	2852	2354
	Tokens	10955	13253	14266	12912
	Mean word length	4.10	4.25	4.13	4.10
	1-6 letter words	9446(86.2%)	11057(83.4%)	12209(85.6%)	11190(86.7%)
	Std TTR	41.66	45.83	44.22	41.76
	7 or more Letter words	1509(13.8%)	2196(16.6%)	2057(14.4%)	1722(13.3%)
	Lexical density	44.3%	46.7%	47.3%	46.0%
Sentence level	Sentences	563	669	656	749
	Mean (in words)	19.46	19.81	21.75	17.24

Lexical density, defined as the proportion of content words to the total word count in a text, serves as a metric for assessing the information density of the text. Stubbs (1996, pp. 72-73) highlights that content words in English predominantly consist of nouns, main verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, whereas functional words encompass auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, pronouns, prepositions, determiners, and conjunctions. Notably, Baker (1995, pp. 237-238) discovered that the lexical density of translated English texts in the English Translation Corpus was significantly lower than that of native English corpora, suggesting that translators intentionally or inadvertently adopt strategies to enhance reader accessibility. Laviosa (1998, p. 562) corroborated Baker's findings, noting that the lexical density of translated narrative texts (52.87) was slightly lower than that of original English texts (54.95) in her

analysis of comparable corpora. In general, a higher lexical density signifies a heavier information load and, consequently, increased reading difficulty, and vice versa.

Table 2 reveals that none of the Four translations analyzed exceed a lexical density of 50%, with Sanders' translation topping the list at 47.6%, closely followed by Black's and Pratt's translations. This underscores the translated nature of these texts and implies that Sanders', Black's, and Pratt's versions carry more information, potentially making them more challenging to read.

The Mean (in words) serves as an indicator of text difficulty, with longer sentences typically correlating with greater complexity (Olohan, 2004, p. 81). Laviosa (1998, p. 564) found that translated narrative texts tend to be significantly longer than their original English counterparts. According to Table 2, Sanders' translation boasts the longest Mean (21.75 words), followed by Black's (19.81) and Lin's (19.46), while Pratt's translation registers the shortest at 17.25 words. Comparing these figures to Laviosa's benchmarks, Sanders' translation aligns more closely with translated English texts (Mean of 24.1 words), whereas Pratt's approximates the Mean of original narrative texts in the English comparable corpus (15.6 words).

Collectively, the Four translations exhibit three distinct styles. Sanders' and Black's translations feature rich vocabulary and complex syntax, mirroring the characteristics of translated texts and posing relatively greater reading challenges. Pratt's translation, while less vocabularily diverse than Sanders' and Black's, exhibits simpler phrasing and linguistic features akin to the original English text. Lin's translation, on the other hand, utilizes simpler vocabulary and linguistic patterns, resulting in a less arduous reading experience.

5. Translation Of Culture-Specific Lexis

As Hu and Li (2021, p. 112) assert, corpus-driven translation style research necessitates an analysis of words that underscore the translator's unique linguistic fingerprint, transcending mere linguistic form parameter examination. The profound disparities between Eastern and Western languages and cultures, shaped by distinct environments, religious beliefs, values, and aesthetic ideals, result in each possessing a unique vocabulary rich in cultural nuances. Yao (2010, p. 53) defines culture-specific lexis as terms that mirror cultural phenomena, embody cultural understandings, and reflect distinct lifestyles. Given their abundant cultural imagery, the adept translation of these lexis is paramount for disseminating source language cultures within the target context.

Upon scrutinizing the contents of Volume 1 of Fu, we systematically grouped and categorized the culture-specific lexis into four primary groups: historical and legendary characters, poetry, operas, and canonical texts; allusions; and festivals (Table 3). This allowed us to explore the disparities in strategies and techniques employed by diverse translations in tackling similar cultural phenomena, analyze their underlying motivations, and validate previous linguistic parameter-based findings.

According to Table 3, Volume 1 of Fu encompasses a total of 40 culture-specific lexis items, with historical and legendary characters comprising the majority (26), followed by poetry, operas, and

canonical texts (8), and allusions and festivals tied at 3 each. By consolidating and summarizing these culture-specific lexis, we utilized AntConc 3.4.0 to locate their corresponding translations and subsequently analyzed and discussed them based on the search results.

5.1 Historical and Legendary Characters

Among the 26 historical and legendary figures featured in Volume 1 of Fu, 24 are historical personalities, primarily cultural icons from China's rich history, who have evolved into emblematic symbols imbued with profound cultural significance. The remaining two are legendary characters, representing a unique cultural phenomenon rooted in China's distinct historical and cultural backdrop. Table 4 outlines the translation techniques utilized for these culture-specific lexis in Volume 1 of Fu.

Table 3. Words of Cultural Characteristics in Volume 1 of Fu

Culture-specific lexis	Examples	Number
Historical and legendary characters	LI bai, Du Fu, Tian Sun, Yue Lao etc.	26
Operas and canonical texts	*Guan Ju, Ch'u Tz'u, P'iP'a Player), Ci Liang*	8
Allusions	*Hong An XIang Zhuang* 、 *Jin Nang Jia Ju, Gong Ying Bei She*	3
Festivals	*Gui Jie, Qi Xi, Zhong Qiu*	3

As evident from Table 4, the Four translations of historical and legendary characters diverge significantly in their methodological approaches, encompassing literal translation, free translation, transliteration, as well as combinations of these methods with annotations, and ellipsis. Lin's translations demonstrate a remarkable consistency, relying primarily on transliteration throughout. Pratt's rendition aligns closely with Sanders', as both incorporate a substantial proportion of annotations (encompassing literal, transliteration, and free translation with annotations), with transliteration coupled with annotations being the most prevalent strategy. Black's translation, on the other hand, omits 17 words and annotates over half of the remaining 9 cultural terms, highlighting the importance of explanatory notes. While transliteration undoubtedly imparts a foreign language experience to readers, it inevitably complicates comprehension and perception of the translated work.

Table 4. Translation Methods of Historical and Legendary Characters in Volume 1 of Fu

Versions	Translation Method								
	Literal Translation	Free Translation	Transliteration +annotation	Literal translation +annotation	Transliteration annotation	Free translation	Transliteration amplification	Free translation + amplification	Ellipsis
Pratts' version	1	0	1	0	22	0	0	0	2
Sanders'	0	0	0	1	22	1	0	0	2
Black's	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	1	17
Lin's	1	0	22	1	2	0	0	0	0

On the other hand, the strategy of annotations and amplification can obviously expand the capacity of the text and make the hidden information of the original text clear. Let us try to take an example for comparative analysis (to save space, we will partially omit the annotations in the translation below):

(1) "Yun she xiang zhu gua guo, tong bai tian sun yu wo qu xuan zhong." (Shen, 2000, p. 43)

Lin's: Yün prepared incense, candles and some melons and other fruits, so that we might worship the Grandson and Heaven1 in the Hall called " After My Heart." (1. The seventh day.... is ...heavenly lovers, the Cowherd ("Grandson of Heaven")) and the Spinster .... (Lin, 1999, p. 27)

Pratt's: Yün lit candles and set out fruit on the altar by the Pavilion of My Desire, and we worshiped Tien Sun20 together. (20. The Weaver's Star. The legend tells the weaver and the cowherd... in search of a husband.) (Pratt & Chiang, 1983, pp. 33-151)

Sanders': Yun set up a small altar with incense sticks and pieces of melon and fruit in My Choice Hall, where we made our obeisance to the Weaving Girl star.23 (23. Legend has it that the Weaving Girl star (Vega) fell in love with the Herd Boy star (Altair) ....) (Sanders, 2011, p. 12)

Black's: Yuen arranged some candles, incense and fruit on a table at the pavilion called 'My Choice', so that she and I could pay our The story goes that the Weaver-girl .... (Black, 2012, pp. 15-16)

As noted by Jin and Jin (2013, p. 42), "Tian Sun" refers to the star Vega, with ancient folklore positing that the Weaver-girl was descended from the Emperor of Heaven. Both in ancient and contemporary China, the timeless love story of the Cowherd and the Weaving Maiden remains a beloved tale, embodying humanity's yearning for pure and enduring romance.

Among the Four translations, Lin's rendition employs literal translation complemented by 39 annotations, effectively supplementing the cultural context of the original text. However, the translation of "Niu Lang" as "Tian Sun" is inaccurate. Furthermore, the annotation sequence could be optimized, with "Grandson of Heaven" following "Spinster" to maintain clarity. Notably, the term "Spinster" had a literal meaning prior to the 17th century, evolving into a legal term for an unmarried woman and later

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acquiring the connotation of an "old maid." Lin's translation is not necessarily flawed, as the word was introduced to America by the Puritans, preserving its original "spinner" meaning.

Pratt's translation adopts a meticulous approach, combining transliteration with extensive annotations, allowing readers to savor the original linguistic nuances and appreciate the unique cultural richness of the text. Nevertheless, the narrative of the Cowherd and the Weaving Maiden's love story, though evocative, misrepresents the reason for their separation—their differing mortal and immortal statuses.

In Sanders' version, "Tian sun" is translated as "Weaving Girl star," accompanied by a 103-word footnote, providing richer and more precise cultural insights than Pratt's translation. By leveraging familiar constellations like Vega and Altair, Sanders adeptly explains the original text.

Black's translation stands out for its initial rendering of "Tian sun" as "Heavenly Suns," followed by a comprehensive 113-word annotation detailing the Cowherd and Weaving Maiden legend in a separate paragraph. This approach aligns with Appiah's (2000) concept of "thick translation," where the translator endeavors to reconstruct the text within a deep linguistic and cultural context, integrating extensive interpretative materials such as notes, footnotes, and explanations. Martha Cheung (2006) similarly emphasizes annotations and commentary as standard practices in academic translation, fostering thick translation. In this light, both Pratt's and Sanders' translations exhibit a pronounced tendency towards achieving thick translation.

5.2 Poetry, Opera, and Classics

There are eight poems, operas, and canonical texts in Volume 1 of the Fu, including famous Guan Ju, Tang poetry——Pipa Xing, ancient Chinese literary texts like Zhang guo ce etc, and opera plays like Xi xiang ji. Table 5 collates the translations of the eight poems, operas, and canonical texts covered in Volume I of Fu.

Table 5. Translation Methods of Poems and Songs, Operas and Canonical Texts in Volume 1 of Fu

Versions	Translation Method						
	Literal translation	Free translation	Transliteration	Literal translation+annotations	Transliteration+annotations	Free translation+annotations	Ellipsis
Pratt's	1	1	2	2	1	1	0
Sanders'	0	0	0	7	1	0	0
Black's	1	3	2	0	0	0	2
Lin's	2	1	5	0	0	0	0

As illustrated in Table 5, the translations of poetry, operas, and canonical texts featured in Volume 1 of Fu exhibit diverse approaches, utilizing seven distinct translation methods: literal translation, free translation, transliteration, literal or free translation with annotations, and ellipsis. Pratt's translations alone employ six of these methods for the eight culture-specific lexical items, half of which incorporate

annotations. In contrast, Sanders' translation demonstrates the least variation, resorting primarily to literal and transliteration with annotations. Black's version omits two terms while translating the remaining six through a combination of literal, free translation, and transliteration. Lin's translation adheres to a consistent pattern, prioritizing transliteration with supplemental literal and free translations. Among the Four, Sanders' translation stands out as the most comprehensive in conveying the cultural nuances of the poetry, operas, and canonical texts in Volume 1 of Fu, followed closely by Pratt's renditions. Conversely, Black's and Lin's translations exhibit the least augmentation of the original text's culture-specific lexical items. To illustrate these differences, let's delve into a specific example.

(2)"Yun mang hui shou qi li yue: "...xi xiang zhi ming wen zhi shu yi...". (2000, p. 39)

Lin's: Quickly Yün.... I have heard of the name of Western Chamber for a long time,... (Lin, 1999, p.13) (Lin, 1999, p. 13)

Pratt's: Yun turned... The Romance of the Western Chamber8. (8. A famous Yuan Dynasty play by Wang Shih-fu and Kuan Han-ch'ing...and Yun must have intended her casual reading of the book to be provocative.))) (Pratt & Chiang, 1983, pp. 28-149) (Pratt's version added 65 words in the annotation.)

Sanders': Yun quickly... I've heard about Romance of the Western Chamber many times.... .7 (Xixiang ji) was an extremely popular Yuan dynasty play ... I've heard about Romance of the Western Chamber many times ... .7 (Xixiang ji) was an extremely popular Yuan dynasty play... by Yuan Zhen (pp. 779-831) (Sanders 2011: 5) (Sanders' translation added 85 words to the annotation)

Black's: Quickly raising... I have been hearing about The West Chamber... (Black, 2012, p.9)

In the original text, when Chen Yun mentions "Xi Xiang," he is alluding to "Xi Xiang Ji", more fully titled "Cui Yingying Dai Yue Xi Xiang Ji" , a classic Chinese opera penned by the Yuan Dynasty scholar Wang Shifu. This work revolves around the romantic tale of Zhang Sheng and Cui Yingying. In China, "The Western Chamber" has become synonymous with the timeless love story between a man and a woman, imbued with rich cultural symbolism.

Among the Four translations examined, Lin's and Black's versions opt for a literal translation approach, with Lin highlighting the term "Western Chamber" to alert readers of its special significance. This choice likely stems from the fact that "The Western Chamber" is among the most well-known ancient Chinese plays translated into English, with Arthur David Waley's rendition dating back to 1919. His comprehensive collection of translations includes multiple versions or excerpts of "Ying Ying Zhuan", further solidifying its familiarity among English-speaking audiences. As such, these three translations directly convey the title without delving into the opera's content.

In contrast, Pratt's and Sanders' translations render "Xi Xiang Ji" as "Romance of the Western Chamber" accompanied by annotations, adopting a hybrid strategy that blends domestication and foreignization. Romance, in English-speaking cultures, evokes images of legendary and romantic narratives, aligning well with readers' expectations and fostering better acceptance among target audiences. However, while Pratt's translation focuses on the linguistic nuances and narrative content, speculating on Chen Yun's nocturnal reading habits, Sanders' version aims to illuminate the story's

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historical backdrop and controversies within Chinese literary circles, offering heightened academic value for researchers.

5.3 Allusions and Festivals

Volume 1 of Fu contains mere six allusions and festivals, each imbued with rich cultural significance. Allusions typically refer to ancient narratives or phrases with traceable origins, familiar to the masses, while festivals encompass holidays and special occasions. The translations of these six culture-specific lexical items across Four different versions are summarized in Table

Examining Table 6, it becomes evident that Pratt's translations of allusions and festivals deviate from the annotation strategy observed in previous culture-specific lexical categories. Only two out of three allusions were translated literally, with "Hong an xiang zhuang" being omitted. Among the three festivals, "Qi xi" and "Zhong qiu" were translated literally, while "Gui jie" was rendered as "All Souls' Day." Sanders' translation, on the other hand, employed literal translation with annotations for "Jin nang jia ju" and "Gui jie," but similarly omitted "Hong an xiang zhuang." Of the remaining three terms, two were translated literally, while one resorted to free translation.

Black's translation stands out for its diverse approach, utilizing three distinct translation methods to convey the nuances of these six culture-specific lexical items. To illustrate this further, let's delve into two specific examples for analysis.

(3)"Hong an xiang zhuang er shi you san niang." (Shen, 2000, p. 43)

Lin's: And so we remained courteous to each other for twenty-three years of our married life like Liang Hung and Meng Kuang [of the East Han Dynasty]. (Lin, 1999, p. 25)

Pratt's: We lived together with the greatest mutual respect for three and twenty years. (Pratt & Chiang, 1983, p. 33)

Sanders': We were to live together as a devoted husband and wife for three and twenty years. (Sanders 2011, p. 12)

Black's: We lived the years of our short married life with a courtesy and harmony worthy of Liang Hung and Meng Kuang, whose story is told in the Records of the Han Dynasty. Here is the tale as I remember it....Or so the story goes. (Black, 2012, pp. 15-16)

The allusion "Hong An Xiang Zhuang" hails from the Book of the Later Han, narrating the enchanting love tale of Liang Hong and Meng Guang. Over time, this phrase has become synonymous with the harmony and mutual respect that exists between spouses. Shen Fu ingeniously employed this expression to underscore the profound reverence he held for his wife. Amongst the Four translations analyzed, Lin's and Black's versions resonate closely, with Lin's rendition enhancing the allusion by appending a succinct annotation, "of the East Han Dynasty," to contextualize "Hong An Xiang Zhuang." It is noteworthy that both Pratt's and Sanders' translations omit the translation of this allusion, a deficiency perhaps rooted in the story-centric nature of the allusion. This is particularly evident in Sanders' work, which heavily references Pratt's and Lin's translations, opting to augment the text with academic precision rather than retaining the original allusion. For instance, Sanders' version appends an

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extensive 87-word annotation to the allusion "Jin Nang Jia Ju" . Conversely, Black's translation excels in its nuanced approach, weaving the tale of Liang Hong and Meng Guang into a captivating narrative spanning two paragraphs and 197 words. This storytelling technique not only piques readers' curiosity but also fulfills the dual purpose of cultural exchange and engagement.

Table 6. Translation Methods of Allusions and Festivals in Volume 1 of Fu

Versions	Translation Methods					
	Literal translation	Free translation	Amplification	Literal translation+annotation	Transliteration+annotation	Ellipsis
Pratt's	5	1	0	0	0	1
Sanders'	2	1	0	2	0	1
Black's	2	2	2	0	0	0
Lin's	3	1	0	0	1	1

(4) Qi yue wang, su cheng gui jie. (Shen, 2000, p. 44)

Lin's version: The fifteenth of the seventh moon was All Souls' Day. (Lin, 1999, p. 29)

Pratt's version: The 15th day of the seventh month, when the moon is full, is the day called the Ghost Festival. (Pratt & Chiang, 1983, p. 34)

Sanders' version: On August 14, 1780, was the full moon in the middle of the month, known as the Ghost Festival24. (24. During the Ghost Festival.... . the gates of the underworld were opened to allow the souls of the deceased to return home ....) (Sanders, 2011, p. 13)

Black's version: For the Festival of Hungry Ghosts, on the fifteenth night of the seventh month. (Yuen prepared a little feast in honour of those poor, unhappy spirits who have no living descendants to burn incense before their spirit-tablets.) (Black, 2012, p. 20)

The Ghost Festival, also known as Zhong Yuan Jie in China, holds a unique place among the nation's festivities. Similarly, the Western world observes All Souls' Day, a religious holiday that, in some denominations, spans multiple days. Ideally, finding equivalent expressions across languages and cultures for such celebrations is paramount. Among the Four translations examined, Lin opted for "All Souls' Day," a choice that resonates well with target readers but falls short in transmitting the cultural nuances of the original. Pratt's translation, on the other hand, employs a literal approach, preserving the original's linguistic characteristics but potentially overlooking the embedded cultural significance. Sanders' translation innovatively combines literal translation with extensive annotations (44 words), effectively conveying both the linguistic features and cultural context of the source language, thereby fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Notably, Sanders also integrates Western calendar dates with the Chinese lunar calendar for historical references, a strategy that harmoniously blends domestication and foreignization, enhancing readability and intrigue.

In translating the phrase "Yun bei xiao zhuo, ni yao yue chang yin" (Yun prepared a small feast, intending to drink under the moonlight), Black introduces a creative twist by framing it as a meal hosted by Chen Yun for spirits without descendants. This augmentation, though not explicitly stated in the original, flows seamlessly within the narrative, posing no additional burden on readers.

In summary, the Four translations of culture-specific lexis in Volume 1 of Fu exhibit remarkable diversity. Lin's translation exhibits consistency, blending transliteration and literal translation, with the former aiding in preserving the mystery and exoticism of Chinese culture (Xiong, 2014). Over 60% of the culture-specific terms in Pratt's and Sanders' translations are annotated, enriching readers' comprehension of the source language and culture, and serving as valuable research resources for scholars of Chinese studies. Black's translation stands out for incorporating the translator's insights and explanatory notes, as well as narrative development in the author's voice. While not strictly faithful to the original, Black's strategy of augmenting the text with story-driven content significantly boosts reader engagement, ultimately fulfilling the communicative goals of translation and broadening the reach of the source language's cultural narratives among target audiences.

6. Readability Test

When assessing the readability of a text, two key factors are paramount: sentence length and vocabulary complexity. To quantify these aspects, readability formulas offer invaluable tools for analysis. Among the most prominent are the Flesh Reading Ease Readability Formula, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Formula, and the Gunning Fog Index. These formulas respectively evaluate the readability index, the difficulty level, and the Fog index of a text.

The Flesh Reading Ease Readability Formula (RE) stands as one of the oldest and most trusted metrics for assessing readability. Widely employed beyond educational circles, this formula considers a reading ease index ranging from 60 to 70 as indicating "standard difficulty" (Yang, 2004). The formula is as follows:

$$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times ASL) - (84.6 \times ASW)$$

Here, ASL stands for Average Sentence Length, while ASW represents the Average number of syllables per word. The readability index, RE, ranges from 0 to 100, with higher scores signifying greater ease of reading. Scores of 90-100 indicate a text that is very easy to read, comparable to the difficulty level of a fifth-grade native English reader. Scores of 80-89 suggest easy readability, while 70-79 denotes fairly easy reading. A score of 60-69 reflects standard readability, akin to that of eighth to ninth-grade native English readers. Scores of 50-59 indicate moderate difficulty, while 30-49 signify significant difficulty. Scores of 0-29 point to considerable confusion, comparable to the reading challenges faced by college students.

The Flesch Grade Level Readability Formula builds upon the Flesch Reading Ease Readability Formula, specifically tailored to gauge the grade level appropriate for American school students. Its formula is:

FKRA = (0.39 × ASL) + (11.8 × ASW) - 15.99

The results of this formula offer a straightforward interpretation, with a score of 5.0, for instance, indicating suitability for fifth-grade students (approximately 10 years old), and a score of 9.3 appropriate for ninth-grade students.

The Gunning Fog Index (FOG) Readability Formula is a tool used to quantify the complexity of a text's readability. A higher FOG index indicates a more challenging text, whereas a lower index suggests easier comprehension. In essence, shorter sentences crafted in straightforward English tend to score lower on the FOG scale, making them more accessible to readers. The formula is defined as follows:

FOG Index = 0.4 × (ASL + PHW)

Here, ASL represents the Average Sentence Length, and PHW denotes the Average number of words with three or more syllables per hundred words. The FOG Index serves as an indicator of the educational level required to comprehend a text effectively. An ideal FOG score ranges between 7 and 8, whereas a score exceeding 12 suggests a text that may be too difficult for the average reader, often necessitating a college-level education for comprehension.

Other readability metrics, such as the SMOG Index, Coleman-Liau Index, Linsear Write Formula, and Automated Reader's Index, are also available for assessing text readability and can be explored on websites like https://readabilityformulas.com/gunning-fog-readability-formula.php. For this particular study, we have chosen to employ three widely recognized readability formulas: the Flesh Reading Ease Readability Formula, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Formula, and the Gunning Fog Index, to evaluate the readability of Four distinct translations of Fu's work (refer to Table 7 for details).

Analyzing the data presented in Table 7, we observe that Pratt's translation achieves the highest Flesh Reading Ease Readability score of 80, coupled with the lowest Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level and Gunning Fog scores (8.8). This indicates that Pratt's translation is the most accessible, suitable for sixth-grade readers proficient in English. This accessibility can be attributed to the abundance of annotations within the translation. Conversely, Sanders' translation scores the lowest on Flesh Reading Ease Readability and the highest on both Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level and Gunning Fog, suggesting it poses the greatest challenge to readers. With a Gunning Fog Index of 12.4, Sanders' translation is better suited for readers with advanced educational backgrounds. Among the remaining translations, Black's version, though slightly easier than Sanders', still registers higher reading difficulty than the others. Lin's translation, on the other hand, proves slightly more challenging than Pratt's due to the extensive use of transliteration for culture-specific vocabulary and the lack of annotations. These findings align with our previous statistical analysis, reinforcing the conclusions drawn from our research.

Table 7. The Readability Calculation of the Four Translations in Volume 1 of Fu

Versions	Flesh Reading Ease Readability Formula	Flesh-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Formula	Gunning FOG Formula

Pratt's	80	6.3	8.8
Sanders'	66.5	10	12.4
Black's	70.2	8.9	11.4
Lin's	73.7	8.4	10.9

7. Analysis Of The Causes Of Translation Style

Translation, as a unique social activity, is inevitably shaped by the societal ideologies of a specific historical era, as well as by the individual ideologies of the translator. These differences are not only influenced by the translator's socio-cultural background but also by factors such as the translation's purpose and the target readers' focal points.

Leveraging corpus software to analyze corpus data parameters, compare translations of culture-specific lexis, and conduct readability tests, we have observed that the Four translations roughly exhibit three distinct styles. Considering the translators' backgrounds, these Four translations span over 70 years, with Lin's translation being the earliest, dating back to the 1930s. For English translations of Chinese literature, the first thirty years of the twentieth century can be regarded as the pioneering era of introducing Chinese classical literature to the European and American world. During this time, "the Western world was far from paying much attention to Chinese affairs" (Wang, 2007, p. 100). China was a distant land to them, and Chinese culture was shrouded in mystery. Consequently, Lin's translation tends to employ simple vocabulary, and the culture-specific lexis in the original text were primarily translated phonetically, without compromising the translator's understanding of the original content. For cultural phenomena common to both the Chinese and English-speaking worlds, Lin used their English equivalents, which not only satisfied the readers' curiosity but also facilitated their understanding and acceptance. Since it was merely a dissertation, and the translator endeavored to meet her degree requirements, the translation borrowed heavily from Lin's work.

Black's translation was published in Britain in the 1960s, during the Cold War confrontation between the Eastern and Western worlds, which limited Western readers' interest in Chinese culture. Therefore, the translator explicitly stated in the translator's introduction that one of his translation strategies was to present the translation in a manner that reflects the author's expression (Black, 2012, p. xiii), aiming for seamless integration between the translation and the original text, and minimizing the cultural otherness in the original text.

Pratt's translation was produced in the 1980s, a period when China was in the early stages of reform and opening up, and the Western world was eager to learn about China. Hence, in the introduction, the translators discussed the culture of courtesans, the issue of marriage, and the issue of education in ancient China, etc. The translation is enriched with vocabulary, featuring numerous transliterations of culture-specific lexis and extensive annotations, which serve to disseminate the source language's culture. Furthermore, this version was translated by a native Chinese translator and a native English speaker, resulting in simpler and more accessible language, and the extensive annotations greatly

enhanced the translation's readability.

Sanders' translation was published in 2011, a time when China's economic strength and cultural soft power were unparalleled, and cultural exchange between East and West had entered a new phase. Sanders' translation begins with a translator's foreword (Sanders, 2011, p. viii), stating that the main objective of his translation was to provide background information and that he had effectively utilized a research-style approach and commentary on the original text's content.

Regarding the target audience, as mentioned in the translator's introduction, Lin's translation primarily aims to introduce the story to the world (Lin, 1999. p. 17) and is geared towards a general readership. The exceptional quality of Lin's translation has led to its inclusion as one of the Chinese literature textbooks used in English classes for American high school students (Harry, 1943, p. 23). According to Birch (1961: 527), Lin's version tends towards domestication when translating culture-loaded words, although the annotations are somewhat sparse. Kwong (2011, p. 191), however, regards Lin's translation of the title of the original text as the most accurate and labor-saving. Black's translation, on the other hand, omits overly specialized linguistic and cultural information from the original text. Nonetheless, recognizing that human beings share a "mythological complex" (Zhang, 1992, p. 202) across both Eastern and Western cultures, Black's translation presents the stories, myths, and legends in the original text in an augmented and more naturalized form, easily recognizable by English readers. Birch (1961: 527) comments that Black's translation is accurate, natural, beautiful, and dynamic. To address the shortcomings of Lin's translation, Pratt's translation offers readers a most faithful, accurate, and complete rendition of the original text in modern English (Pratt, 1983, p. 14). Unlike previous translations aimed at general readers, Pratt's target audience includes professional readers or researchers. Heiter (2001) observes that, "While the beauty of Shen Fu's words truly merits the effort required to read them in the original Chinese, lacking that ability, his English-speaking readers will undoubtedly experience the next best thing with this (Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-Hui) skillful translation." Akin to Pratt's translations, Sanders' translation often employs a blend of domestication and foreignization when translating Chinese cultural characteristics. With rich wording and a tendency towards thick translation, this version provides a comprehensive and exhaustive approach to the original text, holding high research value for Chinese language and literature researchers. Among the Four translations, Sanders' translation has received the most accolades. Hill (2012, p. 621) believes that Sanders' translation corrects many errors in previous versions and serves as a reference for studying late Qing or modern Chinese literature, history, and culture, describing it as a "new authoritative translation." Sample (2012: 118) praises Sanders' translation as the richest and most comprehensive compared to previous translations of Fu's work.

8. Conclusion

This study employs corpus tools to conduct a comparative analysis of the translation styles exhibited in Volume 1 of Fu and its Four English translations. The results uncover notable disparities among these

translations, revealing three distinct approaches to translation. Lin's translation is notable for its simplified wording, high accuracy, readability, and acceptability. Its primary aim is to facilitate Western readers' comprehension of traditional Chinese literary works and to amplify the influence of Chinese literature in the West. The culture-specific lexis in the original text is predominantly rendered phonetically, without compromising the translator's comprehension of the original content. While a literal translation strategy may present obstacles to the target language readers' understanding, the translator employs a free translation strategy to adjust unfamiliar elements from the original text. Pratt's and Sanders' translations are oriented towards the source language, adhering faithfully to its unique features. They embody the translator's mission to disseminate Chinese culture, particularly by compensating for cultural information from the original language across various dimensions. In comparison, Pratt's translations exhibit the highest readability, rendering them most suitable for general readers to comprehend. Conversely, Sanders' translation has the lowest readability and is the most challenging to understand, displaying a more pronounced inclination towards thick translation. Black's translation is distinctive in that the translator effectively harnesses their role in the translation process, enhancing and embellishing the information from the original language with the aid of their own cultural understanding. As a result, Black's version appears refined and eloquent, as the translator also mimics the author's tone to incorporate implicit cultural information from the original language, thereby bridging the gap between the author and the readers. The vastly different translation styles observed in the Four translations can be primarily attributed to the variations in the translators' backgrounds and target audiences.

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