

Reception of Louis Cha's Martial Arts Fiction in English and French Speaking Worlds: A Sentiment Analysis

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Abstract

Sentiment analysis, as one of the text-mining techniques, has been widely used in many research areas related to public opinions. The present work seeks to examine the reception of the translations of Louis Cha's martial arts novels in the English and French worlds through sentiment analyses of readers' online book reviews in popular book reviewing websites such as Amazon and Belio. The results show that the English and French versions of Louis Cha's martial arts novels are mostly well received by readers since both English and French readers had given the highest ratings to the narrative features, plots and characterization features of the translated novels. Furthermore, between the translations in English and French, the reception level of the Anna Holmwood's English version is higher than that of the French version by Jiann-yuh Wang. Overall, the findings of the study suggest that translations maintaining original Chinese cultural elements have been well-received in the Western community.

Keywords: Literary Translation; Reception; Sentiment Analysis; Martial Arts Fiction; Louis Cha

1. Introduction

Louis Cha (1924–2018), also known as Jin Yong, is a well-claimed martial arts novelist in the Chinese-speaking world. Born in Mainland China, he spent most of his life writing novels and editing newspapers in Hong Kong. His enormously popular martial arts novels, written between the late 1950s and 1972, have become modern classics and remain a must-read for readers interested in adventures and fantasies. Cha's martial arts novels, filled with tortuous plots, chivalric characters and rich historical backgrounds, present readers around the world the "martial spirits" and "chivalrous passions" of people in ancient China. Some of the shared themes of these novels are: 1) love stories between martial arts heroes and heroines; 2) patriotism of ancient Chinese martial arts heroes; 3) intricate interpersonal relationships between different martial arts heroes. They have presented readers a moving panorama of the life and cultures of ancient martial arts heroes and are the partial embodiment of Chinese folklore. They have made a profound contribution to traditional Chinese literature and cultures. In more recent years, under the influence of the governmental project "Overseas Dissemination of Chinese Literature and Culture", scholars of Chinese studies have carried out various studies on the overseas reception of Louis Cha's martial arts novels. These studies analyze the Cha's martial arts from such perspectives as translation strategies (Lu 2014, Hong 2019, etc.), cultural policies (Xiao 2013, Hao 2019, etc.), and promotion policies (Hong 2014, Xu & Zhang 2020, etc.). Findings in these studies have paved a way for the understanding of current reception of and further promotion of this kind of Chinese novels. However, most of these studies focused only on the English reception, and did not discuss the reception of Cha's fiction in French or other Western languages. Consequently, the reception of Cha's fiction across different Western languages is relatively under-explored and its current receptive status in the West has not been fully presented.

To make a possible difference, the present work examines the reception of Louis Cha's martial arts novels in the English and French worlds through sentiment analyses. It seeks to address this research question: what are possible similarities/differences in the reception of Cha's martial arts novels between English- and French-speaking readers? The study starts from the collection of online reviews from readers in English and French, building a corpus of *English and French Online Reviews of Louis Cha's Translated Martial Arts Fiction*. The aim is to show possible similarities and differences between the English and French reception of this type of novel, improving the current understanding of the reception of translated Chinese literature in the West.

Specifically, a study of the English and French reception of Louis Cha's martial arts novels has the following practical and theoretical significance when it is based on sentiment analyses: (1) Practically, it helps deepen the present understanding of potential similarities and differences in the reception of Louis

Cha's martial arts novels in the West; (2) Theoretically, it helps enlarge the present scope of literary reception research, providing new methodological perspectives for literary research in the era of "digital humanities".

2. Literature Review

"Reception", derived from the theory of reception aesthetics, refers to readers' subjective expectations and evaluations of literary works (Jauss 1982). The reception theory values readers' reading experience and feedback, emphasizing readers' subjectivity in literary activities (Ma 2000). Since Jauss proposed that literary works should not be cut off from readers in 1967, a large number of studies on reception have emerged in both Chinese and international academia. In the field of literary translation, House (1997), Krause (2010), Liang (2015) and Liu (2017) have investigated the influence of translation fidelity on the reception of translations; Hu (2006) and Jiang (2014) have analyzed the relationship between a translator's motivation and translation reception. In the 2010s, with the rise of cognitive science, Brems (2013), Zhang (2017), Giovanni (2018), etc. have explored the reception of translations from the perspective of readers' cognition. Hence, it is clear that studies on literary reception have follow a developing pattern, which goes from shallow to deep; meanwhile the content of exploration has gone from texts to translators to cognition. However, like some reception studies of Cha's martial arts novels, analyses in those works are mostly based on a researcher's intuition and thus some conclusions are still questionable as they lack necessary empirical support. In the context of "digital humanities", the present work holds that text-mining techniques such as the sentiment analysis can be used to the investigate the reception of (translated) literary works, so as to enhance the reliability of research conclusions with quantitative support.

Sentiment analysis, also known as opinion mining, refers to the process of extracting subjective information from a corpus through text-mining, induction and reasoning. Through sentiment analyses, it is possible to "dig out" public opinion on a certain event or thing, which is one of the effective ways to understand people's views and attitudes. In the age of information sciences, scholars around the world have carried out a series of sentiment analyses based on various online information. For instance, Aarti et al. (2014), Singla (2017), etc. analyzed the evaluation of online shopping products; Nair et al. (2015), Chakraborty et al. (2019), etc. analyzed online film reviews; Jeong et al. al. (2019), Kumar et al. (2019), etc. explored social media interactions. For Chinese scholars, Wang (2017), Chen (2020), etc. excavated financial information; Huang (2019), Jing (2020), etc. analyzed course evaluations. Even though these research fields might be different, they have partly demonstrated the effectiveness and potential of sentiment analyses in mining various views and attitudes. However, most of these analyses appear to neglect literary reception, since they focus invariably on areas like business, media, education, etc. At the same time, for those very few studies (e.g. Zhang 2019) concentrating on literary works, the depth and breadth

of their investigations might be limited. The present work maintains that literary reviews are full of readers' opinions and attitudes, which can reflect the receptive status of a literary work and could be thus a potential field of application for sentiment analyses.

Therefore, this study investigates the reception of Louis Cha's martial arts novels in the English and French worlds through sentiment analyses. It is hoped that the research results might help understand current oversea reception of Chinese martial arts fiction, benefiting translators' choices as they translate this type of traditional Chinese literature into different languages in future.

3. Methodology

Analysis in the present research takes the following steps, including corpus building, corpus preprocessing, sentiment analyses and discussion of the results.

The first step is about building a corpus of readers' reviews, where the study will retrieve reviews of the four published English translations *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (by [Olivia Mok](#) in 1993), *The Deer and the Cauldron* (by [John Minford](#) in 1997), *The Book and The Sword* (by [Graham Earnshaw](#) in 2004) and *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* (by [Anna Holmwood](#) in 2018) from three book review sites in English, Amazon.com, Goodreads, Novelupdate; and those of the two published French translations *La Légende du héros chasseur d'aigles* (by [Jiann-yuh Wang](#) in 2004) and *Le Justicier et l'aigle mythique* (by [Weidong Xie](#) in 2013) from three book review websites in French Amazon.fr, Babelio, Booknode.

Secondly, the study will preprocess all the review data in the corpus. The *nlTK* program package is used to perform preprocessing regarding corpus cleaning, stop words removal, and lemmatization of both English and French words in the corpus. The purpose of corpus cleaning is to reduce the influence of such "noise" in the corpus as emojis and extra spaces on the analysis; meanwhile, removing stop words can reduce the impact of grammatical words on the analysis process, and lemmatization can minimize the influence (e.g. undesired repetition of content words) of inflectional changes of English and French on the analysis.

The third step involves sentiment analyses of the corpus, in which the research will download the *TextBlob* sentiment analyzer, and load 3 million English and 1 million French corpora of online product reviews prepared in advance with sentiment annotations to perform supervised machine training on the analyzer. After multiple rounds of training, the analyzer is used to analyze the sentiment of the readers' reviews in both English and French to obtain the overall reception of these translations. Finally, with the help of *AntConc*, the English and French reviews containing information regarding characters, plots, and narratives will be manually sorted and classified. Hence, with both sentiment analyses and supplemented semantic investigations, receptive details of these English and French translations could be uncovered.

In the fourth step, the work will make a comparison between the English and French reception. Based on the results of sentiment analysis on English and French reviews, the numbers of positive and negative reviews of the English and French translations, together with their attached average sentiment scores, will be classified, respectively. With this classification, the study will compare the overall receptive similarities and differences between the English and French translations of Cha’s martial arts novels from the global perspective as well as from a more local perspective that measures such similarities/differences in terms of fictional features like “character”, “plot” and “narrative” and translatorial features like a translator’s translating choices.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Overall Reception in English and French

The overall receptive pictures of Cha’s martial arts fiction in the English and French speaking worlds share many similarities. The analysis found that the English and French translations of Louis Cha’s martial arts novels had 2,644 and 1,078 positive sentiment ratings, 12 and 5 neutral sentiment ratings, and 334 and 124 negative sentiment ratings. The average score of positive sentiment were 0.81 and 0.76, and that of negative sentiment were 0.13 and 0.16, respectively in English and French. Details are shown in Figure 1. It can be seen that Louis Cha’s martial arts novels are generally well received by the readers in English and French. The reviews are mainly positive, whereas negative reviews account only for 11.1% and 10.2% of the total reviews in English and French. By focusing on the reviews that ranked top 10% of the average (positive) sentiment scores in the two languages and contain 30 words or above, we found that more than two hundred readers in English and French mentioned the following points.

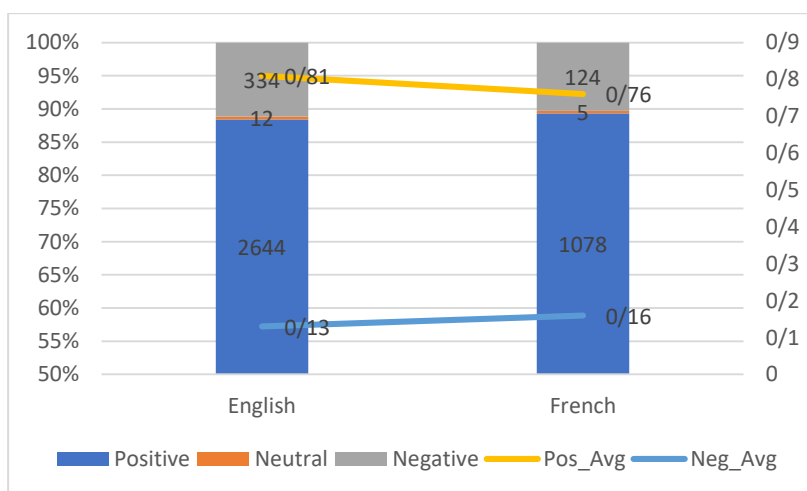


Figure 1. Numbers and average sentiment scores of reviews in English and French

The first is the readers' love for the overall conception of the novel. Most readers of English and French believe that Louis Cha's martial arts novels are works of humanities, history, heroes and knights. Various traditional Chinese cultural concepts and terminology frequently appear in the novels, making readers always in a state of "mind-bending". Furthermore, Cha seems to make readers coherently understand the culture and spirits of Chinese martial arts through his writing skills, presenting them a kaleidoscopic picture of Kungfu heroes and their cultures in ancient China. Also, it is worth stressing that despite Cha's fiction is often known as "hard martial arts", the martial arts elements (e.g. Kungfu fighting) in his stories are only their "shells", whereas explorations into the true meanings of those "Chinese knights", their "heroic culture" and even the entire human nature are their ultimate goals. Hence, the humanistic and philosophical depth reflected in the Cha's works could be thought-provoking. As one reader concluded, "Louis Cha's martial arts fiction is different from any heroic/chivalric novels I have read. It focuses more on the truth, goodness and beauty of human nature rather than fantasies about knights and heroes, more on histories rather than adventures, and more on sophisticated human nature than alienation of martial arts culture".

The second is about the appreciation of the Chinese heroic spirits depicted in the translated martial arts novels. Judging from the readers' reviews in both English and French, they obviously read the intertextuality of the works from the translation of Louis Cha's martial arts novels. Some readers believe that Cha's martial arts novels have both the complexity in the fantasies by the renowned writer J. R. R. Tolkien and the delicacy sometimes found in the works by the fantasy master C. S. Lewis. It appears that while those readers are reading Louis Cha's works, they are reminded of C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, R. E. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian*, G. R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* and so on. In this long list of Western heroic fantasies/chivalric romance, works by J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis are most frequently mentioned and compared to Cha's works by these readers. They tend to agree that Louis Cha's succinct, neat style, rich imagination and realistic depiction of heroes are very similar to J. R. R. Tolkien's style. As a result, they regard Louis Cha's martial arts works as the "Chinese Chivalry", which is similar to such "Heroic Fantasy" as Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Tolkien's *Lord of Rings*.

The third is about the readers' shared interest in ancient Chinese history, especially the history of martial arts as reflected in Cha's works. Many readers commented that as Britons/French, they rarely read literary works from foreign countries, especially translated literature from non-Western countries. Yet, these readers also noted that Louis Cha's martial arts works gave them a fresh narrative experience from an oriental perspective and from the eyes of a Chinese writer. Moreover, the readers may gain some partial understandings of the changes in Chinese society and history, which is something unexpected when reading Cha's martial arts novels.

Generally speaking, there are not many negative reviews of Louis Cha's martial arts novels from readers in English and French. Nevertheless, we found that readers' limited criticisms of Cha's novels are mainly concentrated on the following three aspects. The first is about their partial dissatisfaction with some characterization as well as plot arrangement in some of these translated novels. The second is the readers' criticism of the "desperate pessimism" in some novels. A reader commented that he has read a lot of hero-themed novels, where most of them have attempted to present readers human determination and perseverance. Yet, when it comes to Cha's martial arts works, sometimes a more pessimistic tone seems to prevail, which might be a kind of irrelevant doomsday. In addition, some readers simply commented that Louis Cha's martial arts works are sometimes too desperate, and some liberals may not like this tone. Finally, some criticism from those readers in both English and French appears to focus on the over-hyped marketing of Cha's martial arts series. Some readers tend to think that promotion of Cha's novels in some book markets was full of "beautiful words", which has raised the expectations of these readers. In fact, some of the English and French translations may not as "flawless" as they have advertised. This reminds us that proper promotion and advertisement for translated literature may sometimes be necessary when we are marketing them overseas. That means we should not over-hype, so as not to cause readers' dissatisfaction because of "over-promotion".

4.2 Reception based on Fictional and Translatorial Features

4.2.1 The Fictional Features

Through sentiment analyses, the number of the sentiment-related lines and their average sentiment scores regarding characters, narrative angles and plots in the English and French reviews of Cha's fiction are obtained. Details regarding their numbers and average sentiment scores are shown in Figure 2. It is not difficult to see that both readers in English and French are most satisfied with the "narrative angle" and "plots" among the three fictional features, since the proportions of positive reviews far outnumber those of negative and neutral reviews in the two languages.

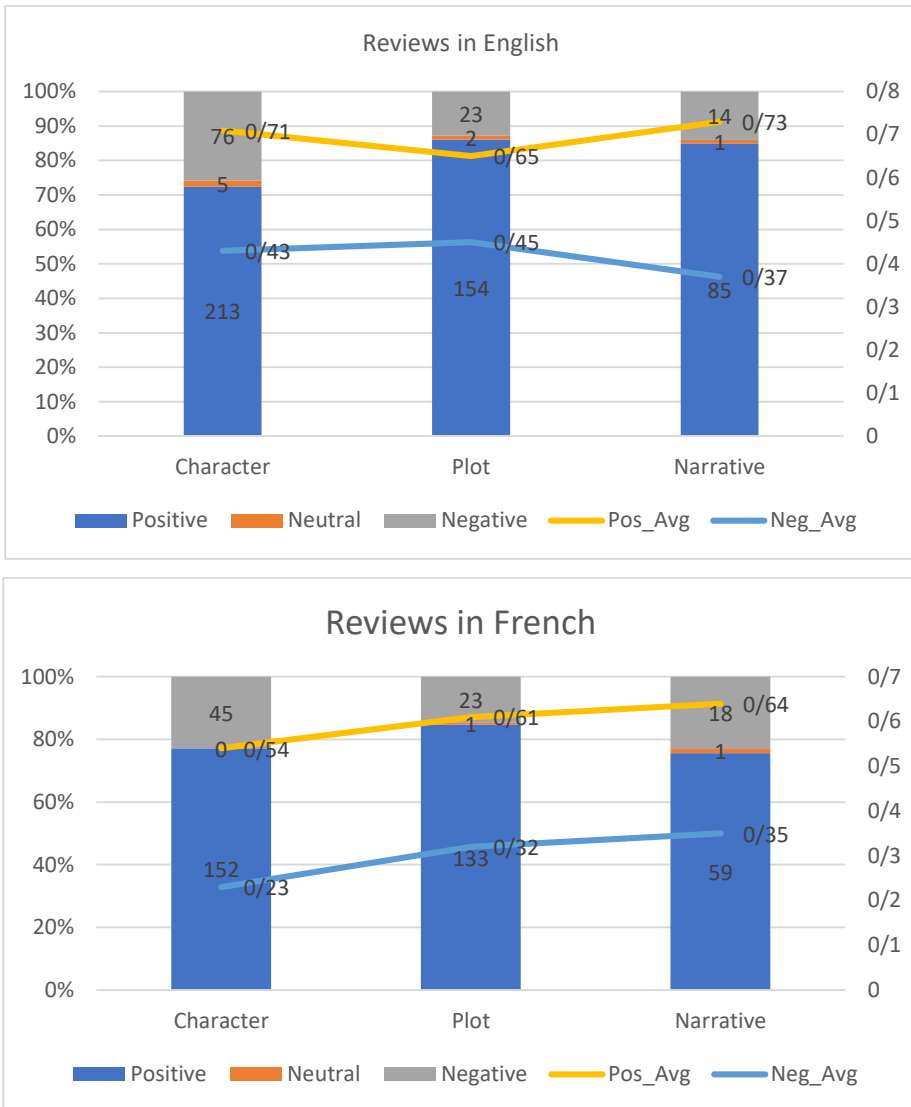


Figure 2. Numbers and average sentiment scores of reviews regarding fictional features in English and French

When it comes to “Characters”, readers in the two languages seem to divide. In the case of English reviews, with the average sentiment score for positive reviews being 0.71, the “character” feature in the translation can be deemed as positively evaluated. In the case of French reviews, however, despite the same score for positive reviews is 0.54, it is almost close to being neutral (0.5). Hence, the same feature in the French translation can be partly regarded as negative. With the word “character/personnages” as the nodes, we search in the English and French reviews through *AntiConc*, respectively. In the case of English reviews,

collocates five words left and right (L5:R5) to the node are mostly adjectives such as “valor”, “heroic”, “brave”, etc., which are likely to give readers an impression that these Chinese martial arts men are heroes with “strength and honor”. When it comes to the French views, collocates at the same span (L5:R5) are mostly adjectives like “dimanche”, “morne”, “déloyal”, etc. Looking more closely at some specific reviews in the two languages, readers in English tend to agree that those martial arts heroes in Cha’s fiction are mostly characters filled with life and courage. By contrast, a more concentrated opinion from those readers in French is that apart from the story protagonists, most of the story characters are under-developed, as many of them seem to appear only for the need of a certain plot. For example, some readers in French argue that the translated versions use many different concepts to explain the original Kungfu and weapons in order to facilitate plot development, yet such efforts are rarely spared when it comes to depictions of story characters, in which their inner thoughts and mental activities are hardly described. Consequently, it might be difficult if not altogether impossible for those readers in French to establish a proper connection with the story characters through reading. Furthermore, opposite to the general satisfaction from the readers in English, many readers in French tend to hold that the French versions of Cha’s fiction are more plot-driven rather than character-driven novels. Therefore, for readers who love rich character descriptions, these French versions might not be their best “cups of coffee”. In addition, both readers in English and French expressed their concerns for the fictional representation of female characters in Cha’s novels. One reader in English commented that “from the perspective of a Western reader, it seems that all the female characters in the novel are submissive, dependent and weak, which is really embarrassing”. Another reader in French argued that “some female roles in the fiction sound ‘clumsy’ and are a bit ‘lifeless’”. To this end, the study holds that the appearance of these female characters that lacking initiatives may be partly due to the translators’ insufficient abilities to portray the original female characters in depth or simply that the original author (Cha) carries a tendency to discriminate against female roles in his stories.

Regarding the “plot”, most readers gave positive evaluations, thinking that the plot was “thrilling”, “interesting” and “fascinating”. The most-praised aspect is the realistic description of various martial arts elements such as weaponry and Kungfu skills. For example, in the English version, a common fighting description “拔刃夾擊” (to attack with swords) in the ST was described more vividly in the TT by using two verb phrases, i.e. “drew their swords” and “joined the fray”. Other similar examples include the translation of “不顧義氣” (ingratitude) as “escaping”, “上陣交鋒” (to join the fight) as “led his cavalry into battle” and “摔將下來” as “threw their riders to the ground”. In the French versions, the way a martial hero dashes on his horse “風馳電掣” is rendered as “dash comme un vent et un éclair”; a scene of Kungfu fighting “飛簷走壁” as “Survoler le mur”. Many readers in both languages view such plot descriptions

as a creative way to render the original descriptions. Some readers commented “Cha has done a very good job describing these martial heroes as those in the Chinese Kungfu fighting movies. However, some readers in English feel that part of the plot arrangement is unreasonable. The most mentioned is the “lengthy description” of some historical backgrounds in the *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*. They think that the subplot is “too long” and has no direct connections to the development of the story.

The “narrative angle” is the one with the highest sentiment scores among the three fictional features in both the English and French reviews. This may partly indicate that readers in the two languages have the highest degree of reception in this regard. We use “perspective/ perspective” as the node words to search for English and French reviews in *AntConc*, and the top five (L5:R5) adjectives according to their frequencies are “Chinese”, “different”, “cultural”, “interesting” and “unique” in English; “intéressant”, “Bien-organisé”, “extraordinaire”, “nouveau” and “Chinois” in French. Focusing on the reviews by these readers, you will find that almost all of them are positive comments, where it is clear that the narrative perspectives of “Chinese/Chinois” and “cultural/ nouveau” are not only unaffected by the potential cultural differences between China and the West, but are regarded as “interesting/ intéressant” by readers in both English and French. When it comes to “unique” and “extraordinaire”, many readers noted that Cha’s works are special partly because it adopts a new perspective. The form of heroic/chivalric fantasies in Cha’s fiction may be similar to that of the Western, but the culture and the way of looking at the world are Eastern. They got a glimpse of China’s history, traditional worldview, outlook on life, etc. and felt the beauty of an Eastern culture that is different from the Western ones.

4.2.2 The Translatorial Features

In more than 2,000 English and 1,000 French reviews, there are altogether 735 reviews are about the translators and/or translations. Therefore, it can be seen that both readers in English and French are concerned about the translation quality. Since the translators for the English and French versions of Cha’s martial arts fiction are different, we analyze and classify the translators according to different languages, so as to better distinguish these reviews. The translators for the four English translations are Olivia Mok, John Minford, Graham Earnshaw, Anna Holmwood, and the translators of the two French version are Jiann-yuh Wang and Weidong Xie. Through preliminary investigations, the study finds that the readers’ reviews are more concentrated in the discussion of the translations by Holmwood and Wang. Besides, the two versions share the same source text in Chinese “射雕英雄傳”. Hence, the following analysis will only focus on the two translators’ versions. Figure 3 shows the numbers and average sentiment scores of reviews about the two translators’ translations. It seems that compared with Wang’s version, the translation by Holmwood is more welcomed by her target readers, since the proportion of positive reviews in her English version is higher than that

in Wang’s French version.

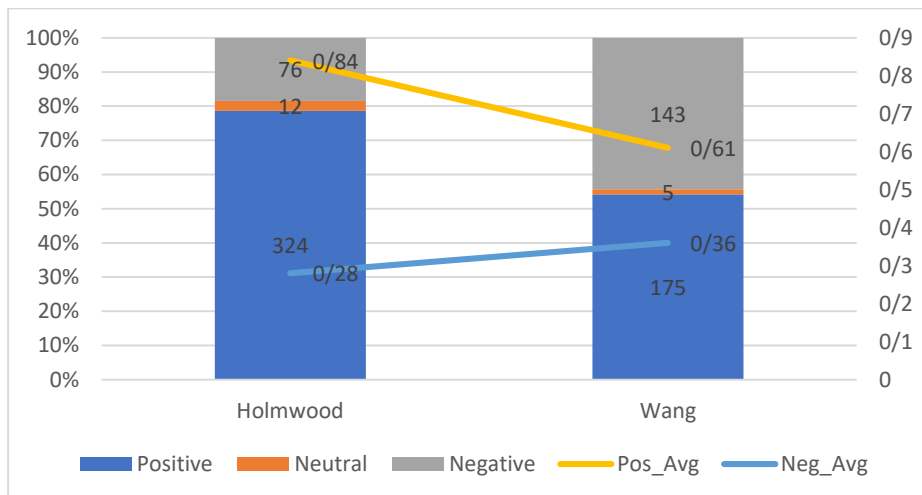


Figure 3. Numbers and average sentiment scores of reviews regarding the two translators

Close readings of readers’ reviews of Holmwood’s translation *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* show that the positive comments are concentrated in the following two aspects. The first is about the fluency of the translation. Many readers think that it is this simple and graceful English lyric prose of the translator that partly conveys the ancient Chinese worldviews and martial arts concepts of the original text. The coherence of the speech flow and the accuracy of the choice of words are incredibly excellent. Many readers commented that this is the most fluent translation of martial arts/fantasy literature they’ve read in recent years. The second is the faithfulness of the translation. There are many English-Chinese bilingual readers, who have stated in the reviews that they like Holmwood’s version very much. After reading both the source text and the English translation, some readers tend to agree that the translation has faithfully conveyed the original work. Some American readers commented that they know that the novel is translated from a language very different from their native language, so they take it for granted that these works are different from American novels in terms of wording and narrative structures. Yet, contrary to their expectations, the translated version is fresh and interesting to read, full of charm. In addition, the faithfulness of the translation is also reflected in Holmwood’s retention of cultural elements characteristic of the Chinese. For instance, there are only 25 cultural annotations in the source text, but there are as many as 34 in Holmwood’s translation. These footnotes may give readers detailed background information from the perspective of Chinese history and culture. Similarly, in the translation of character names, Holmwood first adopted the method of literal translation and then provided some contextual information in the form of footnotes for cultural interpretation. Although some readers think that too many footnotes will break the fluency of

reading, it is the opinions of the majority readers to appreciate this kind of cultural annotations. Some argued that these footnotes are helpful for Western readers to understand the story characters and the plot development, so that they can appreciate the charm of the traditional Chinese martial arts cultures. Besides cultural annotations, Holmwood has also annotated some untranslatable elements in Chinese like puns and idioms. From the feedback, most readers are satisfied with this form of translating strategies.

For the negative reviews, a few readers commented that the translation by Holmwood is a bit “choppy”, “stilted” and “clunky”. For example, when translating the character’s dialogue, the board is slightly stiff. At the same time, we also found that readers who gave negative comments about the translation also held a negative attitude towards the original. Therefore, it is difficult to judge whether the reader is dissatisfied with the translation or whether the readers disregard the translation simply because of their disappointment with the original. But on the whole, most readers in English gave positive reviews on Holmwood’s translation, which is a more recent effort on the translation of Chinese martial arts classics.

On the other hand, Wang’s French translation *La Légende du héros chasseur d’aigles* is also well-received on the whole. Most readers in French believe that Wang’s translation is smooth and natural, and the paratext in the translation helpful to understand the martial arts elements in the source text. However, compared with Holmwood’s English translation, some readers seem to think that Wang’s translation is more colloquial, while some translations for dialogs are a bit casual. Many readers in French who have previously read the English translations pointed out in their reviews that there are many differences in the styles of the English and the French translations of Cha’s fiction, and it will take some time for them to adapt. This is especially evident when it comes to the issue of cultural adaptation when translating the original Chinese into French. In this regard, Wang seems to make less effort than Holmwood does in the translation. This might be the partial reason why Wang’s translation has a lower positive sentiment score on average than Holmwood’s translation. For instance, when translating the names of some story characters such as “Guo Jing” and “Yang Kang”, Wang directly translated them into “Guo Jing” and “Yang Kang” as they appear in the source text. By Contrast, in Holmwood’s version, she translates the same names of these characters into “Skyfury Guo” and “Ironheart Yang”. One of the shared feedbacks from those readers in French is about the problem to use Chinese “pinyin” (i.e. the Romanized phonetic system for Chinese characters) in the rendition of character names. Some readers commented that when reading French translations of Russian or Japanese literature, they will also come across translations of character names that are long and a bit “strange”, but in many cases they can guess such information as the gender or title affiliated to the characters. Yet, in the case of Wang’s French translation, the use of “pinyin” is a bit “lifeless”, where it is hard for common readers to gain key information related to the story

characters. Furthermore, “you need to keep turning back to the place where the character originally appeared to remember the relationship between the corresponding characters”. As a consequence, some characters recreated in the French translation might be less vivid than their counterparts in the original Chinese version. This may also partly explain why some readers in French may hold that the characters are relatively “clumsy” and “lifeless”. Overall, this way of translation may pose a challenge for readers in French who are not familiar with Chinese. Yet, on the bright side, this also brings some reflections for the further work of Chinese literary translation in future: in addition to transliteration by “pinyin”, whether it is possible to translate names by free translation or other creative translating methods? Meanwhile, when rendering complicated character relationships, would it be much better if a brief introduction to the main characters is attached before the main text?

5. Conclusion

Sentiment analyses of online literary reviews could be an emerging field in text-mining. At present, sentiment analysis has become a heated research direction not only in computer science, but in digital humanities as well. The use of text-mining technology in the present research to examine the overseas reception of translated martial arts fiction by Louis Cha is therefore a fresh attempt in this regard. This study has partly demonstrated that the potential of sentiment analyses in literary translation studies by establishing a close link between overseas reception of translated Chinese literature and text-mining techniques.

In the present case, although English and French translations of Louis Cha’s martial arts novels have received some negative comments regarding the translators’ varied translating choices (e.g. translation of characters’ names), they are on the whole welcomed by overseas literary markets in recent years. The present study believes that the general success of Louis Cha’s martial arts novels in the English and French reading market is mainly due to two aspects. First, apart from the traditional Chinese elements they carry, most of the Louis Cha’s martial arts novels have a deep reflection on humanity. They often start from some “hard martial arts elements” about Kungfu and heroic/chivalric spirits, and then delve into a reflection on history and human nature. Hence, by placing humanity’s love and beauty, ugliness and goodness and other philosophical propositions at the height of wider humanity, it expresses some deep concerns about the propositions of mankind. Such narratives of the shared destiny of mankind in Cha’s fiction might be rare if not non-exist in traditional Chinese literary works. This could partly help win widespread resonance among readers in English and French around the world. Second, judging from the reader’s reviews, Louis Cha’s martial arts novels contain the stylistic “thumbprints” of many Western writers of chivalric and/or fantasy fiction. This kind of mutual acknowledgement of literature between West and East not only gives Cha’s martial arts novels the

quality of world literature, but makes them easier to be accepted by some Western readers.

Finally, it is worth stressing that the success of Louis Cha's martial arts fiction in the English and French worlds may shed light on the further promotion of translated Chinese literature overseas: only by retaining the original Chinese cultural element while incorporating some narrative features (e.g. those of chivalric and/or fantasy fiction in the case of martial arts novels) familiar to the Western readers, can Chinese literature be truly accepted and welcomed by readers around the globe.

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