

Discourse Reconstruction in the English Translation of *Sunzi's The Art of War*: A Grammatical Cohesion Perspective

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Abstract—This study investigates discourse reconstruction in translating *Sunzi's The Art of War* from classical Chinese into English, focusing on how translators adapt grammatical cohesion devices to enhance readability and contribute to discourse reconstruction in the target text. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining corpus analysis (via AntConc 3.5.7) with manual linguistic examination to analyze a dataset comprising the original text and its two translations, comparing the original with translations by Lin Wusun and Lionel Giles to examine shifts in reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Findings reveal that both translations rely more on reference and conjunction devices, while substitution and ellipsis are more frequent in the original. These shifts reflect translators' strategies to clarify relationships and provide context for English readers, balancing fidelity to the source text with readability. This study contributes to discourse reconstruction by examining grammatical cohesion in classical Chinese-English translation, offering insights into how meaning is reorganized across languages and proposing a framework for further investigation into cross-cultural discourse reconstruction.

Index Terms—discourse reconstruction, grammatical cohesion, *Sunzi's The Art of War*, Chinese-English translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Cohesion, a fundamental property of text (Hoey, 2000), refers to the semantic relations that bind a text together, ensuring its coherence and comprehensibility (Halliday & Hasan, 2014). While cohesion is often objectively identifiable, its manifestation varies significantly across languages, causing challenges in translation. This is particularly evident in the translation of classical Chinese texts, where implicit grammatical structures and cultural nuances complicate the transfer of meaning into English. Grammatical cohesion plays a key role in bridging the linguistic and cultural gaps, making it a central concern in discourse reconstruction.

Sunzi's The Art of War, a cornerstone of ancient Chinese military philosophy, has been translated into English over 130 times, reflecting its enduring global impact. However, the linguistic and structural differences between classical Chinese and English often result in significant shifts in grammatical cohesion during discourse reconstruction. These shifts, while necessary, raise questions on how translators balance faithfulness to the source text with the need for expressiveness and elegance in the target language.

Despite the abundance of English translations of *Sunzi's The Art of War*, few studies have systematically examined the role of grammatical cohesion in the process. Previous research has explored various aspects of the text, such as its philosophical and strategic dimensions, but the specific challenges posed by cohesive shifts remain under-explored (Sun & Hua, 2024). This study addresses this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of grammatical cohesion in the

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original Chinese text and two English versions by Lin Wusun and Lionel Giles. Using a mixed method that combines corpus analysis (via AntConc 3.5.7) with manual linguistic examination, the study identifies and analyzes shifts in grammatical cohesive devices, focusing on how translators adapt these devices to address the linguistic and cultural complexities of the source text. By analyzing these shifts, it emphasizes the importance of cohesive strategies to reconstruct discourse in achieving faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance, offering a framework for future research on cross-cultural communication and discourse reconstruction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cohesion and coherence remain critical in linguistics and discourse studies, with contemporary research focusing on diverse applications and challenges. Scholars investigate the shifts in cohesion in translating poetry (Mohamed, 2023), novels (Vula, 2022), political speeches (Al-Kharabsheh & Hamadeh, 2017) and teaching materials, exploring the impact on meaning preservation and textual integrity. These areas illustrate the profound focus on understanding and enhancing cohesion and coherence in both theoretical and practical contexts.

While contemporary research on cohesion and coherence spans various genres and contexts, there is limited research into the unique challenges of translating classical Chinese texts into English. Current studies predominantly emphasize either general translation issues or the use of cohesive devices in isolated texts, often neglecting the systematic analysis of shifts in grammatical cohesion across multiple categories, especially that of discourse reconstruction between classical Chinese and English. This study tries to offer a structured framework to explore how grammatical cohesive devices are adapted in discourse reconstruction, which will not only advance the understanding of grammatical cohesion shifts in classical Chinese-to-English translations but also provide practical insights for translators, addressing a critical gap in discourse reconstruction practice.

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Cohesion in Discourse Reconstruction

Cohesion, as a semantic concept, refers to the linguistic mechanisms that bind a text together, enabling it to function as a unified whole (Halliday & Hasan, 2014). These mechanisms create networks of meaning within a text, allowing readers to interpret elements in relation to one another. In cross-cultural discourse reconstruction, cohesion plays a vital role in ensuring that the target text maintains the coherence and readability of the source text, particularly when dealing with linguistically and culturally distinct languages such as classical Chinese and English. Figure 1 shows Halliday and Hasan's catalogue of textual cohesion.

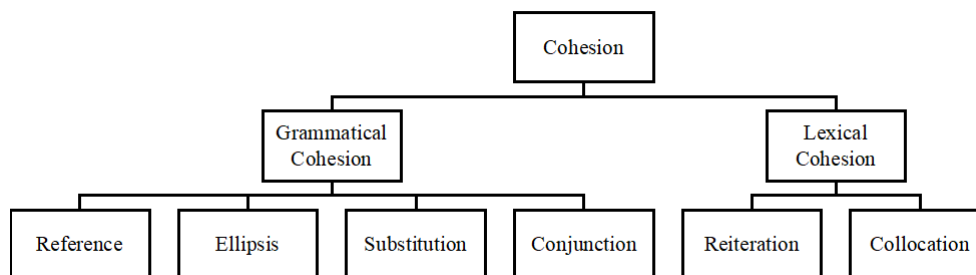


Figure 1. Catalogue of Textual Cohesion (Adapted From Halliday & Hasan, 2014)

Grammatical cohesion operates through the grammatical systems of a language, while lexical cohesion relies on the semantic relationships between words. For translators, understanding these cohesive devices is essential, as they must navigate the inherent differences between languages to preserve the text's coherence. The challenges of maintaining cohesion in translation are particularly pronounced in classical Chinese texts, where the linguistic and cultural gaps between the source and target languages are significant. As Baker (2018) notes, cohesive ties in a text are not merely linguistic features but also cultural and contextual markers that require careful adaptation during translation. This adaptation often results in cohesive shifts, where translators adjust or replace cohesive devices to bridge these gaps. Such shifts are not merely linguistic adjustments but also strategic decisions that reflect the translator's interpretation of the source text and their efforts to make it accessible to the target audience.

B. Grammatical Cohesion and Its Relevance to Discourse Reconstruction

Grammatical cohesion is particularly important in cross-cultural discourse reconstruction due to its role in structuring and clarifying textual relationships. Halliday and Hasan (2014) identify four primary devices of grammatical cohesion: reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction (see Figure 2). Each of these devices serves a distinct function in creating coherence, but their application varies significantly across languages.

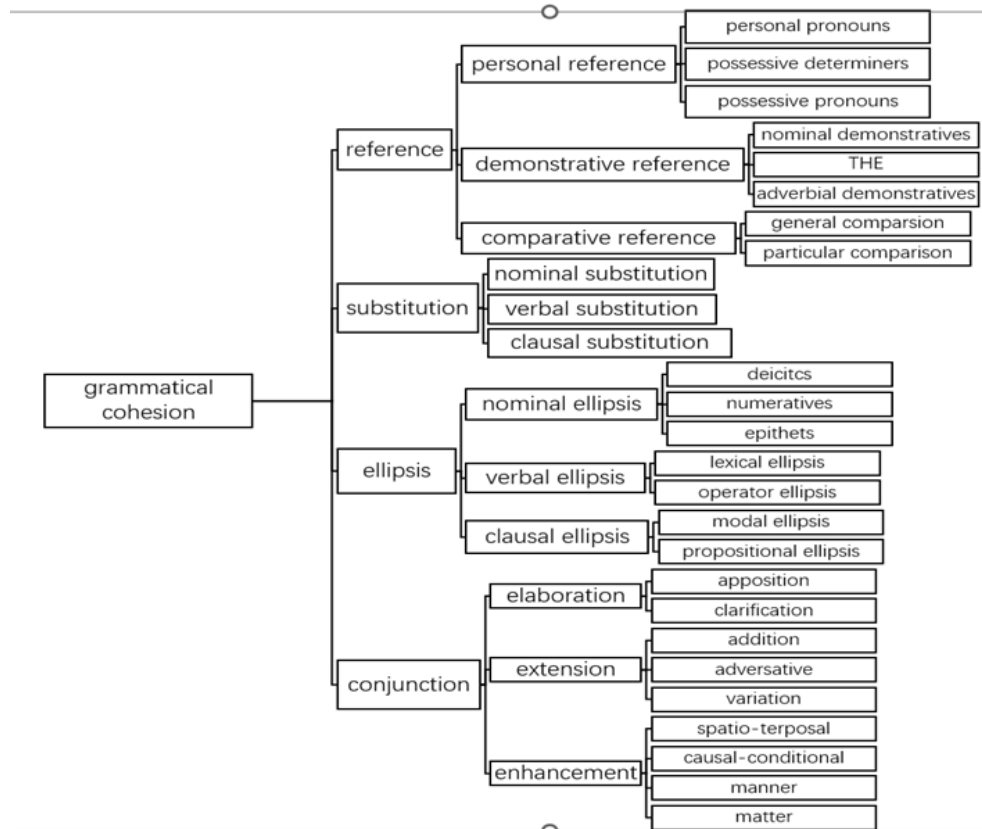


Figure 2. Types of Grammatical Cohesion (Adapted From Halliday & Hasan, 2014)

Classical Chinese is characterized by its brevity and implicit meaning. However, this brings challenges for translators, as their direct application in English can lead to ambiguity or incoherence. This process inevitably results in cohesive shifts, which are not merely linguistic adjustments but also cultural and interpretive decisions. The study of grammatical cohesion in translation is further complicated by the lack of systematic research on its application in classical Chinese texts. While existing studies have explored cohesion in modern Chinese-English translation, few have examined its role in classical texts, where the linguistic and cultural differences are more pronounced. This gap highlights the need for a focused analysis of cohesive shifts in translations of *Sunzi's The Art of War*, as such an analysis can provide valuable insights into the strategies translators employ to balance fidelity to the source text with the need for clarity and coherence in the target language.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection

The corpus for this study comprises the original Chinese text of *Sunzi's The Art of War* and two English versions: Lionel Giles' version (republished by Pax Librorum Publishing House in 2009, originally published in 1910) and Lin Wusun's version (published by Foreign Languages Press in 2004). Both versions were selected based on their distinct translation strategies, historical significance, and linguistic features, which provide a basis for analyzing grammatical cohesion shifts (Munday, 2016). Lionel Giles' version is widely regarded as a pioneering work in the English-speaking world. It has been reprinted numerous times, emphasizing its enduring influence and reliability (Sun, 2024). Lin Wusun's version emphasizes the cultural and linguistic nuances of the original Chinese text, aiming to present the essence of Chinese culture through careful word choice and sentence structure. Both versions were chosen to represent comparative discourse reconstructing approaches: Giles' version leans toward a more literal and historically grounded interpretation, while Lin's version adopts a more communicative and culturally adaptive strategy (Toury, 1995; Pym, 2010). This contrast allows for a comprehensive analysis of grammatical cohesion shifts across different translation paradigms.

The analysis of discourse reconstruction focuses on the main text of *Sunzi's The Art of War*, excluding notes, commentaries, and supplementary materials. While footnotes and translator's comments can provide valuable insights into translation strategies, they were excluded from this study to maintain a focused analysis of cohesion shifts within the main text (Baker, 2018). This decision was made to ensure consistency across the corpus and to avoid diluting the analysis with extraneous material. All 13 chapters of the text were included in the study to ensure a comprehensive and representative analysis (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). The Chinese original text referenced in this study is derived from Lin Wusun's version, as it provides a modernized and accessible rendition of the classical text.

The corpus was prepared using a systematic and replicable methodology. First, the original Chinese text and the two English versions were digitized and aligned at the sentence level to facilitate comparative analysis. Optical Character Recognition was employed to ensure accuracy during digitization, followed by manual cross-checking to correct any errors. Specifically, the corpus was annotated for referential consistency, conjunction usage, and lexical cohesion markers. This pre-processing step ensured that the data was standardized and ready for detailed linguistic analysis.

B. Research Questions and Methods

The research aims to explore how grammatical cohesion is constructed and shifts across the source text and target texts, focusing on the following research questions:

RQ1. From a comparative perspective, what grammatical cohesion characteristics are observed in the source text and the two selected target texts?

RQ2. What are the textual features behind the adoption and shifts of grammatical cohesive devices?

The study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative textual analysis with corpus-based methods to ensure a comprehensive examination of grammatical cohesion. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth analysis of textual features and translation strategies, while the corpus-based methods provide quantitative data to support the findings (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). The software tool (AntConc3.5.7) was used to analyze the English translations. Specifically, AntConc3.5.7 was employed to calculate the frequency of occurrence of three types of grammatical cohesive devices: reference, substitution, and conjunction. Ellipsis, which lacks explicit markers, was manually counted to ensure accuracy. To maintain reliability, the manual counting process was cross-checked by two independent coders, and inter-rater agreement was calculated to ensure consistency (Biber et al., 1998).

C. Data Analysis

To explore and compare the grammatical cohesion strategies employed by the original author and two translators in their versions of *Sunzi's The Art of War*, this study adopted Halliday and Hasan's grammatical cohesion framework. This process was followed by frequency counting to compare the prevalence of each category across the versions. The results of this analysis provide insights into the translators' choices and their impact on the cohesion of the English texts.

TABLE 1
FREQUENCIES OF GRAMMATICAL COHESIVE DEVICES

	Original version [↵]		Lin's version [↵]		Lionel Giles' version [↵]	
	Occurrence [↵]	Percentage	Occurrence [↵]	Percentage	Occurrence [↵]	Percentage [↵]
	of total occurrence [↵]		of total occurrence [↵]		of total occurrence [↵]	
Reference [↵]	172 [↵]	26.5% [↵]	2038 [↵]	59.1% [↵]	1879 [↵]	60.9% [↵]
Substitution [↵]	116 [↵]	17.9% [↵]	152 [↵]	4.4% [↵]	112 [↵]	3.6% [↵]
Ellipsis [↵]	247 [↵]	38.1% [↵]	399 [↵]	11.6% [↵]	348 [↵]	11.3% [↵]
Conjunction [↵]	113 [↵]	17.5% [↵]	861 [↵]	24.9% [↵]	745 [↵]	24.2% [↵]
In total [↵]	648 [↵]	100% [↵]	3450 [↵]	100% [↵]	3084 [↵]	100% [↵]

The table provides a normalized comparison of the frequencies and proportions of grammatical cohesive devices—reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction—across source text and target texts. Normalization was performed to account for differences in word counts, ensuring a valid comparison by adjusting cohesion frequencies per 1,000 words.

In terms of reference, the original version contains 172 occurrences, which account for 26.5% of the total occurrences of cohesive devices. In contrast, Lin Wusun's version includes 2038 occurrences (59.1%), and Lionel Giles' version has 1879 occurrences (60.9%). Both versions demonstrate a significantly higher usage of reference devices, more than double that of the original. This suggests that the translators placed a greater emphasis on using pronouns, demonstratives, and definite articles to maintain textual cohesion. For substitution, the original version has 116 instances, making up 17.9% of the total. Lin Wusun's version has 152 occurrences (4.4%), and Lionel Giles' version includes 112 occurrences (3.6%). The original text employs substitutions more frequently than both English versions, where substitution is relatively rare. This indicates that the English versions might prefer explicit repetition or other cohesive devices over substitution. Regarding ellipsis, the original version contains 247 occurrences, representing 38.1% of the total. Lin Wusun's version shows a reduced frequency with 399 occurrences (11.6%), while Lionel Giles' version includes 348 occurrences (11.3%). The original Chinese text of *Sunzi's The Art of War* features ellipsis as the most prevalent cohesive device, a trend that is not mirrored in the English translations by Lin Wusun and Lionel Giles. This suggests a transitional inclination towards explicitness. Ellipsis was identified manually based on linguistic criteria, including the omission of contextually implied elements (Chen, 2013). The analysis was validated through

cross-examination by multiple annotators to ensure reliability (Artstein & Poesio, 2008). The higher frequency of ellipsis in classical Chinese can be attributed to its syntactic allowance for brevity, contrasting with English's demand for explicitness. Lastly, for conjunction, the original version has 113 instances, accounting for 17.5% of the total. Lin Wusun's version contains 861 occurrences (24.9%), and Lionel Giles' version has 745 occurrences (24.2%). Conjunctions are used more frequently in both versions compared to the original version, suggesting that the translators relied more on explicit linking words to ensure the logical flow and cohesion of the text.

In summary, both English versions show a higher reliance on reference and conjunction devices compared to the original text. Substitution is more prevalent in the original version, whereas ellipsis is notably more frequent in the original than in the translations. These differences highlight the translators' efforts to enhance readability and coherence in the target language by using more explicit cohesive devices. In the following sections, the study analyzed the function of each grammatical device with examples.

(a). Reference

Reference is a relationship in meaning. In *Cohesion in English*, Halliday and Hasan (2014) describe reference as the introduction of a participant or element that serves as a reference point for subsequent text (p. 309). This concept is supported by other scholars including Baker (2018), Hoey (2000), Bell (2016), Hatim (2006), Li (2001), and Zhang (2001), who provide concordant definitions without further elaboration.

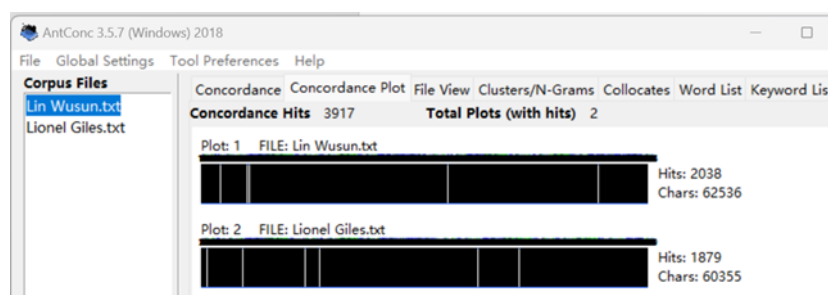


Figure 3. Frequency of Reference

From the screenshot of AntConc 3.5.7, it can be seen that Lin Wusun's version (2038) has a slightly higher frequency of adopting reference compared to Lionel Giles' version (1879), with extensive black bars showing numerous hits throughout the document. Both translations show a high density of concordance hits, indicating regular and consistent use of the grammatical device throughout the texts.

1. Personal Reference

Halliday and Hasan (2014) define personal reference as the use of person-related elements to establish cohesion within discourse. They differentiate between first and second person forms, which relate to the speech situation, and third person forms, which refer anaphorically or cataphorically to the text. This study focuses on the third personal pronouns (he, him, she, her, they, them, it, one), the possessive determiners (his, her, its, their, one's) and the possessive pronouns (his, hers, theirs, its), which collectively form lexical cohesive chains to enhance textual cohesion.

[Text 1]

Source Text: 利而诱之，乱而取之，实而备之，强而避之，怒而挠之，卑而骄之，佚而劳之，亲而离之。攻其无备，出其不意。《计篇》(p. 13)

Giles' Version:

20. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.
21. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him.
22. If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant.
23. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest. If his forces are united, separate them.
24. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected. (p. 5)

Lin's Version:

When the enemy is greedy for gains, hand out a bait to lure him; when he is in disorder, attack and overcome him; when he boasts substantial strength, be doubly prepared against him; and when he is formidable, evade him. If he is given to anger, provoke him. If he is timid and careful, encourage his arrogance. If his forces are rested, wear them down. If he is united as one, divide him. Attack where he is least prepared. Take action when he least expects you. (p. 9)

In the source text, two personal pronouns “之” and “其” are used to achieve textual cohesion. In ancient Chinese, “之” can be used as personal pronoun and demonstrative pronoun. As a personal pronoun, it is used to substitute for a person (persons), a thing (things), and matter (matters) which in Chinese are “她、他、它、她们、它们、它们”. “之” is used as object in Chinese sentences. In ancient Chinese, when “其” is used as the personal pronoun, it can be used to express the meaning of “he, she, it, they, his, her, its and their”. Here in this sentence all the eight “之” and two “其”

refer to “the enemy”, “he” and other relevant pronouns. And the reader know that “之” and “其” refer to “敌”. In the target text, generally speaking, both translators use the reference chain – the third personal pronoun he and him, as well as the possessive determiner his to achieve personal reference. Moreover, “his forces” and “them” also can be regarded as a reference chain which consists of the third personal pronoun “them” and pronoun phrase “his forces”. Except the noun “the enemy”, there are respectively 14 and 15 times of using personal reference. Both the translators translate the four-word phrases of the source text into independent sentences. They use the above referent items to connect the information they got from the source text. Then, on the basis of faithfulness, they reorganize the information according to the expression style of English. At the same time, these referential items help them to achieve textual cohesion.

2. Demonstrative Reference

Demonstrative reference refers to pointing out things based on proximity (Halliday & Hasan, 2014). This thesis focuses on selective nominal demonstratives (this, these, that, those), adverbial demonstratives (here, there, now, then), and the definite article “the”. “this/these” and “that/those” denote nearness or distance, with “this/these” used for both anaphora and cataphora, while “that/those” are restricted to anaphora. The article “THE” is unmarked, serving as a cohesive device to refer to identifiable, specific subjects without additional pragmatic meaning. “here/now” indicate proximity, and “there/then” denote distance, typically used in anaphoric references.

[Text 2]

ST: 故将有五危，必死可杀，必生可虏，忿速可侮，廉洁可辱，爱民可烦。凡此五者，将之过也，用兵之灾也。覆军杀将，必以五危，不可不察也。《九变篇》(pp. 140-141)

Giles' Version:

12. There are five dangerous faults which may affect a general:

- (1) Recklessness, which leads to destruction;
- (2) cowardice, which leads to capture;
- (3) a hasty temper, which can be provoked by insults;
- (4) a delicacy of honour which is sensitive to shame;
- (5) over-solicitude for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble.

13. These are the five besetting sins of a general, ruinous to the conduct of war.

14. When an army is overthrown and its leader slain, the cause will surely be found among these five dangerous faults. Let them be a subject of meditation. (p. 30)

Lin's Version:

There are five weaknesses of character for a commander. If he is stubborn and reckless, he may be deceived and killed. If he fears death more than anything else, he may be captured. If he is hot tempered, he may be provoked. If he is honest but has too delicate a sense of honor, he is open to insult. If he is too compassionate towards his people, he may be easily troubled and upset. These five traits constitute serious faults for a commander, and can prove calamitous in his conduct of war. The destruction of the army and the death of its commander are invariably the consequences of these weaknesses which must not be overlooked under any circumstances. (p. 73)

In ancient Chinese, when “此” is used as a pronoun, it means “这，这些，那，那些”. In the first source text, “此” means “这”，which specifically refers to the above eight arts of employing troops. In the second one, “此” means “这些”，which refers to the five weaknesses having been discussed in the former text. In the last sentence of “必以五危”，“此” is omitted between “必以” and “五危”. In the first group of target texts, Giles uses “such” to achieve anaphora, and its referent is the above eight arts of employing. Similarly, Lin uses “this” to achieve textual cohesion. In the second group of target texts, both the translators use “these” to reach anaphorical reference with the five traits constitutes serious faults for a commander. To solve the ellipsis in the source text, that is, the omitted “此”，both translators choose to add “these” to improve the textual cohesion through nominal demonstratives.

3. Comparative Reference

Comparative reference, the indirect reference by means of IDENTITY or SIMILARITY (Halliday & Hasan, 2014), sets up a relation of contrast. It is divided into two types: general and particular comparison. General comparison involves likeness or unlikeness without focusing on specific features, using terms like “same, another, similar”, or comparative degrees like “higher and bigger”. Particular comparison refers to quality or quantity, typically using comparative adjectives and adverbs like “better, more, or healthier” (Halliday & Hasan, 2014).

[Text 3]

ST: 孙子曰：凡治众如治寡，分数是也；斗众如斗寡，形名是也；《势篇》(p. 69)

Giles' Version:

1. Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same in principle as the control of a few men: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.
2. Fighting with a large army under your command is nowise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals. (p. 17)

Lin's Version:

Sunzi Said:

There is no difference between administering many troops and few troops. It is a matter of organization, of instituting layers of control. There is no difference between commanding a large army and a small one. (p. 39)

In the source text, “如” is used to achieve comparative reference which means “像...一样” in modern Chinese and have the same meaning as “like or the same” in English. In the source text, Lin uses “no difference” to achieve textual cohesion. While in Giles' translation, to avoid repetition of the same words which might bring monotone, he uses “the same” and “nowise different from” respectively. However, the functions are the same.

(b). *Substitution*

Substitution, defined as the replacement of one item by another (Halliday & Hasan, 2014), is a lexical-grammatical relation between words. Substitution can be divided into three types, namely, nominal substitution (one, ones, same, and the same), verbal substitution (do) and clausal substitution (so, not).

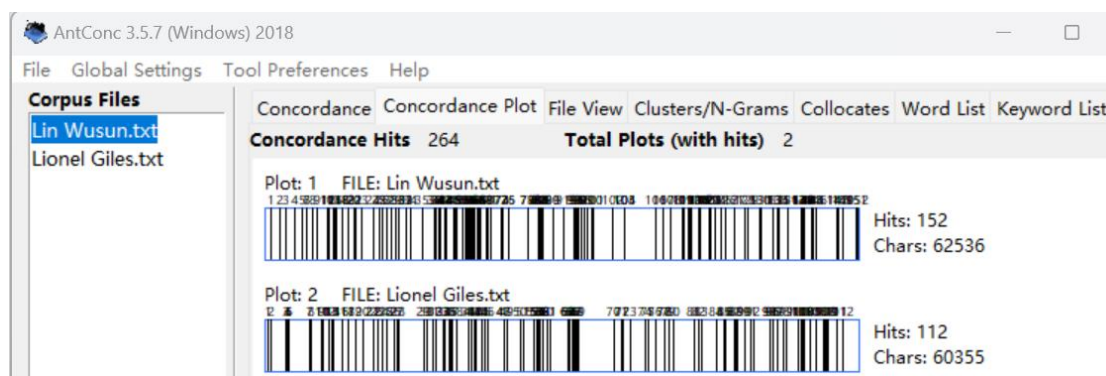


Figure 4. Frequency of Substitution

In the screenshot, the plot shows the distribution of concordance hits throughout the text, with black bars representing the locations of hits. From it, it can be shown that Lin's version has a higher frequency (152) of substitution usage compared to Giles' version (112), despite having a slightly longer text. The distribution of substitution instances is relatively consistent throughout both texts, indicating regular use of this grammatical device by both translators.

[Text 4]

ST: 将不能料敌，以少合众，以弱击强，兵无选风，曰北。《地形篇》(p. 176)

Giles' Version:

19. When a general, unable to estimate the enemy's strength, allows an inferior force to engage a larger one, or hurls a weak detachment against a powerful one, and neglects to place picked soldiers in the front rank, the result must be a *rout*. (p. 39)

Lin's Version:

If the commander, unable to assess his enemy, sends a small force to engage a large one, pits his weak force to against the enemy's strong Φ , and the operates without a vanguard of crack troops, the result will be *rout*. (p. 91)

In the source text, the author omitted the noun “力量” or “兵力”，instead, he just makes the adjectives “弱、强、少、多” instituted the nominal group. The reader can understand even though the structure is not complete. In the target text, both the translators use “one” to achieve nominal substitution when the nouns force, detachment and troops appear the second time. Differently, Giles follows the habit of English writing, whenever the same word appears again, he uses one to replace it. What's more, he uses detachment to substitute force, which is in accordance with the expressing habit of English, that is, to use the similar word to express the same meaning instead of the same word. In Lin's version, he uses “one” to substitute force which achieve nominal substitution and further realize textual cohesion. While, in the second sentence, he omits the word “ones” which is expected to replace the word troops and leaves only the strong behind.

[Text 5]

ST: 极其火央，可从而从之，不可从而止。《火攻篇》(p. 226)

Giles' Version:

8. (3) When the force of the flames has reached its height, follow it up with an attack, if that is practicable; if not, stay where you are. (p. 50)

Lin's Version:

Let the fire reach its height, then if you can follow through with an attack, do so; if not, stay where you are. (p. 121)

In the origin, cohesion is achieved by means of similar constructions expressing contrastive meaning. In Giles' version, clausal substitution is used to realize textual cohesion. He uses “not” to substitute the clause “that is

impracticable". In Lin's version, both verbal and clausal substitution is adopted with "do so" substituting "follow through with an attack" and "not" substituting the previous clause "you cannot follow through with an attack". It can be seen from the example above that "do+so" can constitute complex substitution structure. Although the techniques they use are different, their English versions are all cohesive. One more thing that should be paid attention to is that "do" has different tense in different context. In Chinese, words can realize verbal substitution is not as various as in English. The most often used ones are "干、来、搞".

(c). *Ellipsis*

Ellipsis is defined as substitution by zero. Like substitution, ellipsis is a form of omission where an item is replaced by nothing (Halliday & Hasan, 2014). Since ellipsis lacks a specific marker, this study manually identified and counted instances of ellipsis based on Halliday and Hasan's definition. The frequency is shown below.

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY OF ELLIPSIS

Version	Total chars	Instance of ellipsis
Lin Wusun's	62536	399
Lionel Giles'	60355	348

1. *Nominal Ellipsis*

Nominal ellipsis refers to the omission within the nominal group, which can involve the headword, part of the modifier, or the entire group. Modifiers include Deictics, Numeratives, Epithet, Classifiers, and Qualifiers. An example from *Sunzi's The Art of War* demonstrates their role in textual cohesion.

[Text 6]

ST: 古之善用兵者，能使敌人前后不相及，众寡不相恃，贵贱不相救，上下不相收，卒离而不集，兵合而不齐。《九地篇》(p. 194)

Giles' Version:

15. Those Φ who were called skillful leaders of old knew how to drive a wedge between the enemy's front and rear.... (p. 42)

Lin's Version:

In ancient times, those Φ described as skilled Φ in war were able to reduce the enemy to such a state that his vanguard could not be of help to each other.... (pp. 99-101)

In the source text, the sentence structure is complete. In the target text, both the translators choose to adopt nominal ellipsis. They use deictics "those" to realize nominal ellipsis. That is, the headword "the generals/the leaders" is omitted and the deictics "those" is upgraded from the status of modifier to that of the headword. In Lin's version, "skilled", is upgraded from the status of epithet to that of the headword, which is what will be discussed later, the epithet. If this sentence is put into the whole text of the eleventh chapter, it can be found the word "those" not only make the sentence more concise, but also make this sentence closely connected with the above text and thus achieve textual cohesion, for from the context, the reader can easily get that those refers to the skillful leaders or generals.

2. *Verbal Ellipsis*

Verbal ellipsis is the ellipsis within verbal group which consists of the omission of verb or the whole group. Generally speaking, verbal elements in a verbal group can be divided into lexical verb and operator. Thus, verbal ellipsis consists of these two. Most scholars named lexical ellipsis as ellipsis from the right, and the other from the left. For lexical verbs always located in the left side of operator, vice versa.

[Text 7]

ST: 故 Φ 备前则后寡，备后则前寡，备左则右寡，备右则左寡，无所不备，则无所不寡。《虚实篇》(p. 95)

Giles' Version:

17. For should the enemy strengthen his van, he will weaken his rear; should he strengthen his rear, he will weaken his van; should he strengthen his left, he will weaken his right; should he strengthen his right, he will weaken his left. If he sends reinforcements everywhere, he will everywhere be weak. (p. 22)

Lin's Version:

Thus, if the enemy makes preparations by reinforcing his front, his rear will be weakened; and if he makes preparation by reinforcing his rear, his front will be weakened. If he does this to defend his left, his right will be weakened; and if Φ his right, his left will be weakened. To be prepared everywhere is to be weak everywhere. (pp. 51-53)

In the source text, the subject "敌人" is omitted as Chinese is topic-prominent language, the reader can easily find the subject from the context. In the target texts, all add the subject in the beginning of the text. Giles uses the subjunctive mood to translate while all the information no matter repeated or not are all kept. In Lin's version, he first adopts substitution, using "does this" to substitute "makes preparation". Then, he omits "does this to defend", which is a lexical group, as it has appeared before. Devices are various while functions are the same, namely, to achieve textual

cohesion.

3. Clausal Ellipsis

Clausal ellipsis involves omitting part or all of a clause, often related to the question-answer process in dialogue (Halliday, 2014). This can be seen as a type of verbal ellipsis. There are mainly two kinds, namely, yes/no ellipsis and WH-ellipsis. The author tries to find example for each type of clausal ellipsis. However, as explained above, clausal ellipsis happens mostly in dialogue. In *Sunzi's The Art of War*, the dialogue is rare, so only one example of it is found to explain yes/no ellipsis.

[Text 8]

ST: 敢问：兵可使如率然乎？曰：可Φ。《九地篇》(p. 200)

Giles' Version:

30. Asked if an army can be made to imitate the SHUAI-JAN, I should answer, YesΦ. (p. 44)

Lin's Version:

Asked if an army can be trained to behave like the snake of Mount Changing say: Yes, it can Φ. (p. 105)

In the source text, clausal substitution is taken with “可” substitutes “可使兵如率然”. In Giles' version, “an army can be made to imitate the SHUAI-JAN” is omitted. Yet ellipsis is taken to fulfill textual cohesion. In Lin's versions, verbal ellipsis is adopted by omitting the lexical verb and remaining the operator. This is ellipsis from the right.

(d). Conjunction

Conjunction in text refers to the use of formal markers to connect sentences, clauses, and paragraphs (Baker, 2018). These markers clarify semantic relations and allow readers to logically anticipate the meaning of subsequent sentences. “And, but, so then” and “yet” are some familiar conjunctive elements. In present analysis, “in that case, that being so, after that, at this moment”, and “under these circumstances” occur as discourse adjuncts.



Figure 5. Frequency of Conjunction

The plot shows the distribution of concordance hits throughout the text, with black bars representing the locations of hits. The hits are spread across the document, indicating regular usage of the search term. Generally speaking, Lin's version (861) has a higher frequency of using conjunction compared to Giles' version (745). Both versions show a fairly even distribution of hits throughout the text, indicating consistent use of the grammatical device by both translators.

1. Elaboration

In *Discourse Cohesion and Coherence*, Hu (1994) adopts Halliday's classification and describes elaboration as a device to further illustrate, comment or exemplify some elements and the whole part of the former sentences or clauses. “=” can be used to express this relation directly.

[Text 9]

ST: 孙子曰：兵者，国之大事，死生之地，存亡之道，不可不察也。故经之以五，校之以计，而索其情：一曰道，二曰天，三曰地，四曰将，五曰法。道者，令民与上同意也。故可与之死，可与之生而不谗也。《计篇》(p. 5)

Giles' Version:

3. The Art of War, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field.

4. These are: (1) the Moral Law; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; (4) the Commander; (5) method and discipline.

5,6. *The Moral Law* causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger. (p. 1)

Lin's Version:

Hence, it is a subject which calls for careful study. To assess the outcome of a war, we need to examine the belligerent parties and compare them in terms of the following five fundamental factors:

The first is the way(dao 道); the second, heaven (tian 天); the third, earth (di 地); the fourth, command (jiang 将); and the fifth, rules and regulations (fa 法).

By “the way”, I mean moral influence, or that which causes the people to think in line with their sovereign so

that they will follow him through every vicissitude, whether to live or to die, without fear of mortal peril. (p. 3)

In the source text, the writer just uses traditional structure to explain what the five fundamental factors are. In the target texts, Lin's further representation of "道" is given by apposition through the conjunctive words "I mean". While in Giles' version, this cohesive device is not employed for further explanation. He uses a sentence to explain the effect of "The Moral Law", which is equivalent to the structure of the original text. Besides this cohesive device, both the source text and the target text use the casual-conditional device to get textual cohesion. In the origin, "故" is used as the general cause expression to give the results of the above sentence "兵者，国之大事，死生之地，存亡之道，不可不察也". In the target texts, both translators use "then, therefore and hence" to get equivalence with the source text.

2. Extension

Besides expressing the meaning of former sentences, to add new narration from either the positive or the negative side or to express exceptions is called as extension, which is expressed by "+" (Hu, 1994).

[Text 10]

ST: 将听吾计，用之必胜，留之；将不听吾计，用之必败，去之。《计篇》(p. 11)

Giles' Version:

15. The general that hearkens to my counsel and acts upon it, will conquer: — let such a one be retained in command! The general that hearkens not to my counsel nor acts upon it, will suffer defeat: — let such a one be dismissed! (p. 4)

Lin's Version:

The general who employs my assessment methods is bound to win; I shall therefore stay with him. The general who does not heed my words will certainly lose; I shall leave him. (p. 7)

Although both the source text and the target ones do not use any conjunctive words to show the variation, it still can be got through the structure and context of the sentences that the author of the original text wants to show the alternative relations between these two sentences can be understood clearly. As the meanings of "听、不听", "必胜、必败" and "留之、去之" have the complementary relations in themselves, which means X or Y, one should get the choice from these two. Similarly, both the translators choose to maintain the structure of the source text, and the readers can get that the latter sentence is offered as alternative to the former one. The colon stands for "on the other hand, or" etc. What's more, same structure of two sentences can make the reader better understand the meaning and relation of sentences in the text, thus further fulfill textual cohesion.

3. Enhancement

Semantic enhancement refers to a sentence (or clause) provide information from the aspects of spatio-temporal, causal-conditional, manner and matter. It is expressed with "×" (Hu, 1994). Illustrations with an example is as follows.

[Text 11]

ST: 是故，始如处女，敌人开户；后如脱兔，敌不及拒。《九地篇》(p. 216)

Giles' Version:

68. At first, then, exhibit the coyness of a maiden, until the enemy gives you an opening; afterwards emulate the rapidity of a running hare, and it will be too late for the enemy to oppose you. (p. 47)

Lin's Version:

Thus, before action starts, appear as shy as a maiden and the enemy will relax his vigilance and leave his door open; once the fighting begins, move as swiftly as a scurrying rabbit and the enemy will find it is too late to put a resistance. (p. 115)

In the source text, "始" and "后" are used as symbols for spatio-temporal relation and by which the two sentences are connected closely by sequential order. In both English versions, the translators all use spatio-temporal device to reproduce the source text. In Giles' version, he uses "at first, until, afterwards, and" to explain "始" and "后". In Lin's version, "before...start, once...and" is employed to show conjunction. In all, different conjunctive elements are used to achieve textual cohesion. Spatio-temporal relations are being used as text-creating cohesive device. Words and phrases which have the meaning of enhancing the text such as "next, afterwards, at the same time, finally, until then and soon" are all elements of this kind. Besides, "then, therefore, thus" is used respectively to be equivalent with "是故" in the source text. They both use causal-conditional conjunctive device to strengthen textual cohesion.

V. FINDINGS

This study concludes that on one hand, although the classification and function of grammatical cohesion are basically the same in Chinese and English, the source text and the target texts still exist great differences in adopting specific grammatical cohesive devices; on the other hand, grammatical cohesive devices used by translators of the two versions have both differences and similarities.

Chinese is a topic-prominent language which is characterized by parataxis, whereas English is a subject-prominent language features hypotaxis. In classical Chinese, textual cohesion is mostly achieved by logical relation instead of

cohesive devices, while in English, grammatical cohesive devices are not only necessary but also indispensable. The present study finds that, firstly, there is no obvious difference in the classification of reference in English and in Chinese. However, from the perspective of using specific words, the frequency of using personal reference and demonstrative reference in English is much higher than that in Chinese. The use of Chinese is more flexible with the characteristic of forming topic chain, while in English it appears as the referential chain. Secondly, substitution in Chinese, which is characterized with semantic substitution and repetition, as an important lexical device, is mostly implicit, whereas English prefers to adopt explicit substitution with various devices. Thirdly, to use the least words to express the richest meaning is the aim of ellipsis in Chinese. Thus, there are many subjectless sentences in classical Chinese. However, English is featured with hypotaxis. As verbs in Chinese are seldom omitted, subject in English generally cannot be omitted; otherwise, the sentence structure is not grammatical. Fourthly, the frequency of using conjunction in English is much higher than that in Chinese.

Both target texts have some differences and similarities in adopting cohesive devices to reconstruct the cohesive relations of the source text. Firstly, both the translators have shown respect for the custom of using English in choosing the cohesive devices. Secondly, Lin Wusun is a translator whose native language is Chinese. His version adopts the technique of literal translation to reconstruct the textual cohesive relations and using of specific cohesive devices of the original text much better than the other two. Thirdly, as Giles is one of the earlier translators who translated *Sunzi's The Art of War*, he did not pay much attention to grammatical cohesion in word choice or sentence pattern. Instead, he tried to reveal the connotative meaning of the original text to the readers through large amount of paraphrase or liberal translation.

Future discourse reconstruction of classical texts, especially those between languages with significant structural differences like Chinese and English, should focus more on improving grammatical cohesion while balancing literal translation with cultural adaptation. Given the paratactic nature of Chinese and the hypotactic structure of English, translators should find creative ways to reconstruct sentences in English while retaining the concise and logical essence of the original Chinese. Additionally, translators should consider the historical and linguistic context of ancient texts like *Sunzi's The Art of War*, using annotations when necessary to clarify meaning. While liberal translations can enhance readability, they should not over-simplify or lose key cohesive devices.

VI. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

Halliday and Hasan's classification of grammatical cohesive devices in *Cohesion in English* basically suits that in Chinese. However, the particular features of Chinese as a language lead to some more differences in use. On the other hand, no matter the grammatical cohesive devices the translators adopt are different or similar, their purposes are all to reconstruct discourse in order to achieve its cohesion in the target text with maintaining the features of cohesive devices in the source text.

Last but not least, although the author exhausts herself to make a thorough analysis on grammatical cohesion of *Sunzi's The Art of War* and its two English versions, there are still limitations. On the one hand, textual cohesion is the inner-system of making discourse coherence. The outer-systems such as context and register are also important parts of research. On the other hand, the author's own understanding on this topic may be too subjective to be true. Therefore, language learners, including the author herself should try their best to overcome these limitations to make even further study of discourse reconstruction.

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