

Reconsidering Translation From a Bourdieusian Sociological Perspective: A Case Study of the English Translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*

Jing Cao

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Nor Shahila Mansor

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Diana Abu Ujum

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Abstract—Translation activities are not isolated, and an increasing number of researchers have applied sociological theories to translation studies, which contributions to interdisciplinary research in translation. *Luotuo Xiangzi*, written by Lao She, is one of the best modern Chinese novels. Its four English translation versions and translation activities that span decades have deeply interacting with various parts of society. Based on Bourdieu's sociological theories of the “field”, “capital” and “habitus”, this case study of the English translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* explored the relationship and interaction between the translator and other participants (participating groups) in the translation activity. It was discovered that the translation activity could reveal the translator's habitus and be greatly influenced by interactions with various fields of society and by the capital engaged in the translation activity of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, providing proof of the explanatory and guiding power of Bourdieu's sociological theory in translation studies. This paper tries to enrich the interdisciplinary research of sociology and translation and offers additional references for the translation and global dissemination of translated literature, particularly for Chinese literature.

Index Terms—*Luotuo Xiangzi*, translation, sociology

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation is an important information dissemination process (Pradita, 2012). “Translation activities are not isolated but closely related to the politics, economy, science, technology, and culture of human society” (Xu & Murray, 2009, p. 17). Translation theorist Lefevere (1998) notes that “the essence of effective methods for studying translation can only be studied from social and historical perspectives” (p. 47). He (1998) also believes that the most important aspect of translation studies is not the corresponding of words, but why words corresponded in this way and what social, literary, and ideological considerations made translators translate in a specific way. Moreover, the translator's intended purpose should be examined. Translation studies and sociological studies have intersected in the same spirit of situating translation activities in broader contexts, such as social and historical. Bourdieu's sociological theory has been employed by many scholars (Wolf, 2007; Xing & Chen, 2020) to analyze translation activities.

Written by Lao She, *Luotuo Xiangzi* is the “finest modern Chinese novels” (Hsia, 2016, p. 155). It tells the story of a working-class young man, Xiangzi, struggling to realize his dream of buying a rickshaw of his own to live a decent life. In this novel, “the lower-class protagonist is portrayed with a degree of loving attention and emotional intensity that has no parallel in Chinese fiction” (Liu, 1995, p. 107). The first translation, entitled *Rickshaw Boy*, was a best-seller in America, selling over a million copies (Li, 2013, p. 177). To date, there are four English translation versions of *Luotuo Xiangzi* (see Table 1). The translation activities of *Luotuo Xiangzi* span decades, with the profound involvement of four different translators and interactions with various parts. The success and translation activity of *Luotuo Xiangzi* are typical and of great value for research in providing a reference for translation and the dissemination of translated literature, particularly for Chinese literature.

TABLE 1
FOUR ENGLISH TRANSLATION VERSIONS OF *LUOTUO XIANGZI*

No.	First publication year	Title	Translator	Publisher
1	1945	<i>Rickshaw Boy</i>	Evan King	Reynal & Hitchcock, New York, USA
2	1979	<i>Rickshaw: The Novel Lot'o Hsiang Tzu</i>	Jean James	University of Hawaii Press, Hawaii, USA
3	1981	<i>Camel Xiangzi</i>	Shi Xiaojing	Foreign Language Press, Beijing, China
4	2010	<i>Rickshaw Boy</i>	Howard Goldblatt	HarperCollins Publishers, New York, USA

Previous research on the English translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* has focused on themes related to cultural elements (Wang & Zhang, 2018; Fan, 2019), translators' styles (Huang, 2014; Zhang & Fu, 2019), and how the texts were received (Xie, 2012; Jin & Wu, 2016). The most recent research relates to the positioning of the translators (Zhao & Li, 2021). Nevertheless, few have explored the translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* sociologically, and even fewer have compared the four English translations and discussed the translation activity, which spans decades, from a Bourdieusian sociological perspective. Therefore, this study is conducted to provide a thorough analysis of the English translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* from a sociological perspective, aided by Bourdieu's theory of "field", "capital" and "habitus", exploring the relationship and interactions between the translator and other participants (participating groups) in the translation activities of *Luotuo Xiangzi* as well as the interactions between the translation activities of *Luotuo Xiangzi* and various parts of society.

II. THE SOCIOLOGICAL TURN OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

James Holmes highlighted in the 1970s that translations could be studied from a sociological perspective with a focus on what texts were translated at a specific time and place (often the texts that were not translated were equally important) and what kind of influence the translations had (Holmes, 2000). In early 1998, Lefevere developed Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" in the anthology *Constructing Cultures* (Lefevere, 1998, p. 42). In *Translation Practice(s) and the Circulation of Cultural Capital*, Lefevere (1998) used the concept of "cultural capital" to explore the dissemination and reception of Virgil's epic *Aeneid* in the English-speaking world. Semioni detailed Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" as a supplement to translation studies, specifically descriptive translation studies, in the same year (Semioni, 1998). The application of Bourdieu's sociology to translation studies was then investigated by Gouanvic (2005), Sela-Sheffy (2005), and Wolf and Fukai (2007), based on Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, and habitus. In 2005 and 2007, the publishing companies St. Jerome and John Benjamins published essay collections focused on translation studies from a Bourdieusian sociological perspective. Thus, translation studies underwent a sociological turn, which was advocated by Wolf (2006). Merkle (2008) concedes that translation studies "are undergoing a kind of sociological turn in recent years" (p. 175). Regardless of whether the term "sociological turn" in translation studies was appropriate, translation studies from a sociological perspective clearly evolved into a new model of contemporary translation studies (Wang, 2011).

III. BOURDIEU'S SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

During the 1960s, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defied many disciplinary boundaries by conducting in-depth research on anthropology, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, and political science from an interdisciplinary perspective and constructing a series of unique ideological categories. Following Bourdieu's work, waves of debate erupted in France and throughout the Western humanities and social sciences, promoting major reforms of contemporary western humanities and social sciences theory and methodology and opening a broader prospect for the development of the humanities and social sciences (Li, 2007).

A. Field

In Bourdieu's practice of sociology, "field" is a crucial concept: "to think from the perspective of the field is to understand from the perspective of relations" (Bao, 1997, p. 141). Bourdieu used the field concept as a "social space with its own unique laws of operation" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 162). Furthermore, "various fields are interrelated" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 109). "In highly differentiated societies, the harmonious unity of the society consists of a relatively autonomous microcosm, which refers to the space of objective relations and the site of logic and necessity". (Bao, 1997, pp. 142-143). Bourdieu opines that these social microcosms are composed of the fields of economics, politics, arts, and academia. Therefore, society, as a broad field, comprises several independent and interconnected sub-fields.

B. Capital

Bourdieu (1997) drew on the concept of “capital” in economics and believed that capital could be classified into economic, cultural, and social capital. “Economic capital” is like “capital” in the conventional sense of the word, which refers to assets (money and stocks) that can be used to directly purchase products or services. The term “cultural capital” refers to the knowledge and skills gained via social interaction, such as writing and diplomas from accredited higher learning institutions. “Social capital” refers to the multiple interpersonal connections, personal ties, and societal responsibilities within society.

C. *Habitus*

To avoid the use of the word “habit”, Bourdieu used the term “habitus” sparingly. His intention was to state not only the repetition, mechanicalness, passivity, and a specific type of reproduction to which the word “habit” refers, but also to express a specific type of generative ability ignored by most sociologists, which exists in the generative capacity as an art in the dispositional tendency system. Bourdieu’s sociological theory emphasizes the analysis of participants’ habitus because habitus is the internalization of the rules of the “field”. In this context, the rules of the translation field influence and even restrain translators’ behaviour. Bourdieu states that habitus initially indicates a stance or defined attitude toward creating and comprehending practice with a unique logic. The constructive principle of habitus resides in a system of socially constituted, created, and constructed dispositions acquired in practice, which continue to play a practical role (Bao, 1997).

Bourdieu considered that “habitation” suggests a generative capacity that is “inscribed in the system of temperament as an art, in the most powerful mastery of practice” (Bao, 1997, p. 169). Xing (2007) traced Bourdieu’s vocabulary and noted that habitus “constitutes the core of human practice and lies at the center of the interaction among objective environment, history, and human psychological tendency, thus providing an interpretive framework that enables us to view human behaviour comprehensively” (p. 11).

D. *Application to Translation*

Translation can be considered a special and relatively independent field, or, in Bourdieu’s words, “a field with a relatively low refractive index,” so the surrounding peripheral and power fields interpenetrate with the translation. Therefore, translation activity does not only occur in the translation field but also in other fields concurrently. These other fields infiltrate and influence one another with the rules of these related fields, and this is similar to the way individuals in society work in more than one field. Thus, the translation field should be observed with consideration of the way that it interacts with and relates to other fields to examine the rules of translation field. This is the first step of Bourdieu’s sociological research method (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Translation is an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural activity. The operations of power in the translation field are more complicated than those in relatively independent fields, such as literature and commerce, as specific fields and national culture-level battles feature power relations (Wang, 2011). Thus, the power relations and capital structure of translation are more complex than the common field, and its rules are more diverse. Only with the introduction of the idea of “capital” can a more comprehensive understanding of the constantly evolving historical translation practices be gained and the distinctive laws and traits of each translation peak be disclosed (Xin & Fei, 2018). The translator’s capital is generally considered to be symbolic and mainly consists of good bilingual ability, expertise with the relevant disciplines, translation theory mastery, and previous translation experience (Wang, 2011).

In translation, the habitus of translators specifically refers to the thinking habits and behavioral tendencies that are developed in translation and other fields. A translator acquires their habitus through various interactions beyond translation. The translator’s habitus should not only be related to the translation field because translators are social individuals. Translators’ behaviors are influenced by their translation habitus and attitude towards the culture of the original work, their professional identity positioning, their relationship with publishers, and other habitus (Wang, 2011). Thus, translators’ habitus affect both micro aspects, such as their translation strategies and diction, and macro aspects like text selection.

IV. INTERACTIONS OF THE *LUOTUO XIANGZI* TRANSLATIONS WITH DIFFERENT FIELDS

A. *Evan King: Rickshaw Boy*

King’s translation emerged during the time of World War II, when China was an ally of the America and the United Kingdom. As Kao (1980) states in *Two Writers and the Cultural Revolution*, *Rickshaw Boy* was published “when ‘warm feelings’ toward China, the wartime ally, were still widespread” (p. 37). The extraordinary welcome of King’s translation version of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, *Rickshaw Boy*, mirrored these “warm feelings” toward China.

King’s version rewrote the fate of Xiangzi, the protagonist, into a happy ending to meet the expectations of American readers at that time and maximize commercial value. This rewriting resulted in similarities between Xiangzi’s bold and upbeat spirit and the resilient and self-fulfilling aesthetic cultural principles promoted by the American culture following World War II. Thus, King’s translation is closely related to and interacts with the social, translation, and commercial fields.

B. *Jean James: Rickshaw: The Novel Lot’o Hsiang Tzu*

China and America parted ways, particularly after the Korean War in 1950. Following President Nixon's 1972 visit to China, diplomatic ties between China and America were restored after seven years. However, despite the swift change in diplomatic ties to serve common goals, the ideological preconceptions and misunderstandings that developed during the Cold War continued to impede effective communication between the two countries. Based on the Vietnam War and its previous involvement in Asian affairs, America was interested in learning more about China, including its history and culture.

Furthermore, a sociological school emerged in the academic field in America due to the anti-Communist sentiment gradually waned in the 1960s with profound shift of the American political consciousness (Gotz, 1976, pp. 407-408). The sociological discipline was particularly immediately applicable to 1970s politics. Following Nixon's 1972 visit to China, academics were eager to conduct studies on the country. Social science researchers mainly relied on data related to China after the feudal system to comprehend the contemporary China that Nixon had just visited.

James' translation version of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, *Rickshaw: The Novel Lot'o Hsiang Tzu*, was produced when the mutual hostility between China and America began to wane. James' translation was obviously influenced by the 1970s political climate, specifically the rapid improvement in America-China relations. Since James was associated with academia and the translation was intended to be a textbook, it also clearly reflected the academic setting, which may have prevented her from rendering the translation differently. This new translation was warmly received by people with an interest in China, which had recently opened to America, as well as largely by students of Chinese literature due to the political context and the growth of higher education in America.

C. Shi Xiaojing: *Camel Xiangzi*

China sought greater international recognition once their home climate, both economically and politically, improved during the mid-1970s. Internationally, China replaced Taiwan as a permanent member of the UN Security Council in 1971 and, shortly afterwards, in 1972, forged diplomatic ties with Japan and with America in 1979. China decided that it was a good time to change the world's impression of the country. A prominent Chinese translator, Yang Xianyi, proposed that the literature of China should be translated to promote a better understanding of China by Western countries. Aided by his wife Gladys Yang and other partners, Yang published numerous English translations of Chinese literature, history, and other subjects, of which the most well-known is the Panda Books series. Nonetheless, the series received a poor reception due to ideological differences between China and America.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Chinese government rehabilitated the reputations of most of the people who had been imprisoned or died during that time. Lao She was one of those who were rehabilitated. The Chinese International Publishing Group (CIPG) decided to translate *Luotuo Xiangzi* into English circa 1976. Thus, Yang invited Shi Xiaojing, who had just started at CIPG, to translate the novel in 1976. In an interview, Shi stated that she did not receive any royalties at the time. Yang did not limit Shi's translation, and she "executed it by her own standard" (Chen, 2015, p. 56). Therefore, Shi's translation was not substantially influenced by the client (Yang Xianyi).

The translation was released in 1981 by the Indiana University Press and the Foreign Languages Press. At that time, communist propaganda frequently featured the current proletariat ideology, which could have been offensive to American readers. Although it was produced in collaboration with a prestigious American publisher, Shi's translation struggled to gain readers due to China's low standing in the world at that time (Li, 2007).

D. Howard Goldblatt: *Rickshaw Boy*

In 2008, the *New York Times Book Review* published a rare full-page introduction to several translations of contemporary Chinese literature, which included *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out*, *Song of Eternal Sorrow*, *Serve the People*, and *Wolf Totem*. Subsequently, Howard Goldblatt asserted that "this was unimaginable before" (Ji, 2009, p. 52). Given its remarkable performance during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, as well as the successful hosting of the Beijing Olympic Games (2008) and the Shanghai World Expo (2010), the increased influence wielded by China naturally left traces in literature and film.

During the first decade of the 21st century, several book reviews of Chinese literature were published, such as *Of Red Poppies* and *Big Breasts and Fat Hips*, which were published in *The Washington Post* and *The New Yorker*. Some of the reviews were written by well-known book critics, which indicates an increasing acceptance of translated Chinese literature in foreign translated literature and social fields. Goldblatt highly favoured *Luotuo Xiangzi* and considered the previous three translations to be unsatisfactory (Ji, 2009, p. 50). In 2010, Goldblatt's translation version of *Luotuo Xiangzi* was published in an open and developing environment where the Chinese literature translation field had been further integrated with foreign social fields, which created a more favorable translation and dissemination environment for Goldblatt's translation.

V. THE INFLUENCE OF CAPITAL ON THE TRANSLATIONS OF *LUOTUO XIANGZI*

A. Evan King: *Rickshaw Boy*

The first translator of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, King, was a former American diplomat, described in *Time* magazine as "one of those already vanishing Americans who knew China down to its 'grass and ashes'" (*Time Magazine*, 1955), which was likely because of his professional experience in China. Some of those who interacted with China during the early 1990s

eventually became translators because they were familiar with the language during a period when a more authoritative source on China was not apparent (Li, 2007). Diplomatic status and good Chinese proficiency were King's principal capitals. The considerable fame of Lao She and *Luotuo Xiangzi* also provided more symbolic capital for the success of King's translation.

King was a novelist in addition to a diplomat and a translator and, presumably, believed that he had the ability and capacity to further refine and adapt Lao She's work, because he was confident in his fictional creativity.

Guanvik (2005) believes that some translators' capital does not stem from the translation activity but rather from the symbolic capital of the original author and their works. Wang Chi-Chen (also known as Wang Jizhen) translated five of Lao She's short stories and published them in a book titled *Contemporary Chinese Stories* in 1944, before King's translation version of *Luotuo Xiangzi* became renowned in 1945. The increased fame of Lao She and *Luotuo Xiangzi* also conferred more symbolic capital to the success of the King's translation.

B. Jean James: *Rickshaw: The Novel Lot'o Hsiang Tzu*

For the same reason as the above proposed by Guanvik (2005), James' translation also gained significant capital from Lao She's enhanced reputation and his works after King's translation. It is impossible to overstate the importance of the American scholar Hsia's 1996 publication, "A History of Modern Chinese Fiction," as a field-founding work for modern Chinese literary studies. Hsia praised Lao She's dramatic storytelling skills, claiming that *Luotuo Xiangzi* was the best work of modern Chinese literature. It is logical to assume that Hsia's remarks influenced *Luotuo Xiangzi*'s rise to fame, especially in Western academia. And then, the published translations of Lao She's works before James' translation version are shown in the following Table 2:

TABLE 2
PUBLISHED TRANSLATIONS OF LAO SHE'S WORKS BEFORE 1979

Publication year	Original work (in Chinese Pinyin)	Translation in English name	Translator
1944	Five short stories	<i>Included in Contemporary Chinese Stories</i>	Wang Chi-Chen
1945	Luotuo Xiangzi	<i>Rickshaw Boy</i>	Evan King
1948	Lihun	<i>Divorce</i>	Evan King
1948	Lihun	<i>The Quest for Love of Lao Lee</i>	Helena Kuo
1951	Sishi tongtang	<i>Yellow Storm</i>	Ida Pruitt
1952	Gushu yiren	<i>The Drum Singers</i>	Helena Kuo
1964	Maocheng Ji	<i>City of Cats</i>	James E. Dew
1970	Maocheng Ji	<i>Cat Country; A Satirical Novel of China in the 1930's</i>	William A. Lyell Jr.

Furthermore, by mentioning King's translation in the preface, James capitalized on the fame created by that translation to attract readers to her own rendition. People would be interested to read the novel again because King's translation had been so successful in the market.

James gained academic capital from her knowledge of China. After World War II, higher education dissemination gradually led to the development of a substantial group of academically qualified experts, including James, and, by the 1970s, they had conducted in-depth research into China. James's translation received capital support and was published by the University of Hawaii Press. Several academic magazines published reviews of her translation. In addition, *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* featured a University of Hawaii Press advertisement for her translation version.

Translators and sponsors defined James' translation as academic research reading. Hilary Conroy, a professor of Far Eastern History at the University of Pennsylvania, commented that, as China-America cultural exchanges continued to develop and deepen, *Luotuo Xiangzi* should become a bibliography for China-America cultural relations studies. James's translation version has, to some extent, inspired many overseas researchers to conduct in-depth research on Lao She's works, thus expanding and enriching the overall study of the works, both locally and abroad (Liu & Li, 2021). Accordingly, this research enhanced the gain of more symbolic capital for James's translation.

C. Shi Xiaojing: *Camel Xiangzi*

Shi Xiaojing spent her early years in China and much of that time in Beijing, which was Lao She's hometown and the setting for *Luotuo Xiangzi*. This conferred extra social capital to Shi, who acknowledged it as follows: "I was fortunate to be in Beijing, where I had many resources to ask for and find help" (Chen, 2015, p. 56). As a senior United Nations simultaneous interpreter and translator, Shi possesses profound bilingual skills, familiarity with relevant fields, mastery of translation theories, and previous translation experience, which have provided her with significant capital in translation.

Shi stated that, while translating *Luotuo Xiangzi*, she had to consult Beijing residents if there was anything that she did not understand. Her ex-husband was also from Beijing. At that time, her friend Ying Ruocheng was employed at the Foreign Language Bureau. Born and raised in Beijing, Ying was Lao She's friend and had translated his play, entitled "*Tea House*". Shi frequently sought Ying's assistance regarding terms related to Beijing culture in *Luotuo Xiangzi* (Chen, 2015).

Regarding economic capital, Shi's translation was sponsored by the Chinese Central Government. Nonetheless, the translation fared poorly when it was originally released in America by the Indiana University Press in 1981. The 1981 edition was not widely distributed as the Indiana University Press did not print many copies, apparently to preserve capital. Shi's *Camel Xiangzi* was less well-publicized than James' better-promoted translation, and it was not promoted or academically reviewed. Thus, Shi's translation had substantially less symbolic capital. However, Shi's version was published just two years after James' version, so it was possible to gain some capital from the fame of the former book.

D. Howard Goldblatt: *Rickshaw Boy*

Goldblatt was defined as a sinologist by Chinese scholars because of his profound Chinese skills. Commenting on Goldblatt's language skills, Liu (1980) said that "American scholars are better at speaking Chinese than the average European scholar, but those who can write Chinese are still very rare. Apart from Goldblatt, it is considerably harder to find the collection and publication of several Chinese writings" (pp. 3-4). His proficiency in Chinese contributes the most significant capital to his translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*.

Goldblatt was referred to as "the chief translator of Chinese modern and contemporary literature" by sinology master Professor Xia Zhiqing and the "midwife" of Chinese modern and contemporary literature by the American writer John Updike (Sun, 2016). In *English-speaking Western World*, Berry (2002) stated that "if you have ever read an English translation of a Chinese novel published at any time in the past 20 years, then it was probably translated by Goldblatt" (p. 18). His famous translation works that won awards before *Rickshaw Boy*, his translation version of *Luotuo Xiangzi* published in 2010, are listed in the following table.

TABLE 3
AWARDED TRANSLATIONS OF HOWARD GOLDBLATT BEFORE 2010

Original work (in Chinese Pinyin)	Translation in English name	Author	Awards	Year of award
Fuzao	<i>Turbulence</i>	Jia Pingwa	Mobil Pegasus Prize for Literature	1989
Huangren Shouji	<i>Notes of A Desolate Man</i>	Zhu Tianwen	American Translators Association Annual Awards	1999
Lang Tuteng	<i>Wolf Totem</i>	Jiang Rong	Man Asian Literary Prize	2007

These awards proved that Goldblatt has been recognized in the fields of translation and translation literature. Ji (2009) remarked that Goldblatt's translation has built a bridge of cultural communication between Chinese literature and Western readers. His translation of Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* (first issued in 1993) sold 15,000 copies in America and remained out of print for more than a decade. His fame both in China and in the Western world has enabled him to accumulate some capital in the publishing market. Goldblatt's deep understanding of the American literary field and good interaction and cooperation with various translation actors aided his accumulation of cultural and social capital in the literary field and his pursuit of more discourse power, which paved the way for the successful publication and distribution of his subsequent translations.

In the preface to Goldblatt's translation, the publisher emphasizes both the author's and the translator's social status and reputations, which affirms the literary value of both the original work and the translation. Moreover, the publisher stated that Goldblatt's translation was "the latest and most perfect translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*". Goldblatt admitted that "I was approached by publishers" (Yan & Goldblatt, 2014, p. 195). The substantial amount of economic capital invested by the publishing house further promoted the dissemination of Goldblatt's *Rickshaw Boy* in English-speaking countries.

VI. THE TRANSLATION OF *LUOTUO XIANGZI* REVEALS THE TRANSLATORS' "HABITUS"

A. *Evan King*

Evan King spent many years in Beijing and became well-versed in Chinese customs, language, and culture. His habitus were closely tied to the supremacy of English culture and mainstream American social philosophy, which involved an entirely different social ideology from that of China. His attitude or prejudices towards the two cultures and languages affected both the micro-operations (literal translation or free translation) and macro-text selection (selecting content that conformed to or subverted the values of his own country) of his translation activities. These habitus influence the translator's behaviour in the translation field and demonstrate how the translation field interacts with other fields at the personal level.

King's habitus is evident in *Rickshaw Boy*. During the translation process, King fabricated several plots and rewrote the ending to align Xiangzi's image with the aspirations of the American dream to appeal to readers of the target language culture. Despite the fact that many criticized his actions from the translation perspective, his translation garnered sales and high recognition among readers, which promoted the spread of Lao She and his works in America and the West.

B. Jean James

Jean was a Ph.D. student at the University of Iowa when she translated *Luotuo Xiangzi*. James had a rigorous academic background, and her translation even depicted Xiangzi's escape route on a map of Peiping (later called Beijing) in the time setting of the novel. James is not only a translator but also a reader and critic. Liu and Li (2021) considered James' preface for *Rickshaw: The Novel Lot'o Hsiang Tzu* a literary criticism of high academic value, whereas the publisher categorized James's translation as a textbook.

James' translation habitus at that time was affected by the academic tendency created by sociological schools and the canonization of *Luotuo Xiangzi*. From the end of the 1950s to the 1970s, China studies in America tended to emphasize practical issues rather than detached studies of Chinese history or culture, like European sinology (Li, 2007). During the 1970s, the sociological school that researched Chinese literature sociologically and historically was the most well-known group among the literary experts who studied Chinese literature (Gotz, 1976). James considered *Luotuo Xiangzi* a social document that required the most honest translation possible, which was like the viewpoint of the sociological school.

C. Shi Xiaojing

Shi was born in Nanjing, China, and spent her youth in Geneva, Switzerland. After graduating from Peking University's Department of Chinese Language and Literature, she enrolled in the United Nations Translation Training Class of the Beijing Foreign Studies University, where she majored in English-Chinese and Chinese-English simultaneous interpretation and was one of the earliest graduates. After four years with the Geneva United Nations Office, Shi worked in China as a translator and editor for the *China Construction Magazine* (currently *China Today*).

As a Chinese national, Shi had a Chinese education and was employed by Chinese government units. Thus, her habits opposed the hegemonic position of the English and demonstrated a Chinese self-confidence in the Chinese language and Chinese literary masterpieces. Shi was straightforward regarding adaptation and modification for the sake of the reader and posed the following remarks in an interview:

When Western literature arrived in China, did they care about what the Chinese thought? Not at all. The translation is only 你能接受就接受, 接受不了拉倒 (literally, if you can accept it, do so; if not, forget about it). Culture is reflected in language. You cannot understand the language unless you are familiar with the culture. You can comprehend the culture through reading. I do not want to alter it only to appease readers. Shakespeare's tragedy would not be turned into a comedy just because everyone enjoys a happy ending, right? (Chen, 2015, p. 58).

Shi had professional translation training, mainly in interpretation. Her translation habitus was intensely personal, and she reasoned that she should consider her readers. Nevertheless, she did not always alter or rewrite the text for the readers' benefit. Shi believed that, while a translator should have a degree of understanding and know what is appropriate, they should mainly adhere to the intended meaning of the text (Chen, 2015).

D. Howard Goldblatt

Born in California, Goldblatt earned his bachelor's degree from Long Beach State College, his master's degree from San Francisco State University, and his doctorate in Chinese literature from Indiana University. During World War II, he studied Chinese in Taiwan, where he acquired and increased his Chinese-language habitus. He once expressed his deep affection for China and the Chinese people and his desire to be Chinese: "When I was in my twenties or thirties, I thought Chinese was beautiful and everything was beautiful. What a joy to relax in a Chinese robe at home!" (Ji & Goldblatt, 2009, p. 50).

Goldblatt's Chinese language proficiency and cultural literacy increased because of studying with Chinese scholars during his master's and PhD programs. Goldblatt engaged in modern and contemporary Chinese literature research, teaching, and translation for nearly 40 years after receiving his degrees. Goldblatt's translation of *The Field of Life and Death & Tales of Hulan River* by Xiao Hong garnered extensive praise in the fields of translation and Chinese literature (Xiao, 2018), earned him symbolic capital, and aided in the shaping of his distinct translation habitus. All the serious modern and contemporary Chinese literary works he initially encountered were in Chinese. Thus, he developed a specific preference for literature, and his subsequent selections of translation sources were mainly novels. The vast majority of Goldblatt's translations were intended for target-language readers and complied with market demand.

In contrast to Shi, Goldblatt opines that the most important issue for a translator is to be worthy of the reader rather than the author (Ji, 2009). Goldblatt adhered to the translation habit that emphasizes the value of "elegance", which is influenced by the translator's creativity (Yan & Goldblatt, 2014, p. 202). Goldblatt's habitus is also evident in how he perceived the publishing house, and he thought that publishers invested money, time, and effort into producing a work before branding it with their name. Therefore, he believed that the publisher's suggestions were crucial and worthwhile

to take into consideration, and that China and America should establish a network of powerful editors who could provide publishing houses with advice (Yan & Goldblatt, 2014).

VII. CONCLUSION

This article presents an understanding of the English translations of a Chinese novel, *Luotuo Xiangzi*, by examining and summarizing the historical materials to demonstrate and explain the social connotations and functions of the translation activities of *Luotuo Xiangzi* that spanned several decades. It reveals that the English translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* interacted closely with different fields, such as the social field, the translation field, and the publishing field. Meanwhile, the capital that the translators earned greatly contributed to the success and dissemination of their translation versions. And the translations and translation activity demonstrated the translators' habitus, which developed from their educational background and personal experiences, which also influenced their behavior in translation subtly. This translation study of the four translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* from the Bourdieusian sociological perspective is another example of how translation is never a solitary activity and that social characteristics should be included in the various translation features.

Furthermore, whether in translation or in other fields, the translator's cultural, social, symbolic, and habitual capitals and habitus are all closely linked with various related or adjacent fields. Simultaneously, it has been proven that Bourdieu's sociological theory provides a new perspective for observing translation phenomena, which enables the investigation of how translation activities operate, what laws apply to a global social and cultural context, and how different participants in translation activities interact and behave. Bourdieu's sociological theory enables the observation and analysis of the inextricable connections between translation activities and translators, society, culture, and globalization from a perspective that is more in line with fundamental translation attributes.

Therefore, to successfully translate and disseminate Chinese literature to the Western world, the translator must thoroughly consider the target language's culture and social environment, as well as the target language readers' preferences and psychological expectations, to ensure that the translated work will interest readers and be easy to understand. Moreover, the requirements for the translator have increased, and the translator should not only be extremely careful in the selection of translation materials but also thoroughly understand the target-language literary field to make informed decisions throughout the translation practice. Various translation methods are used to ensure that the translation blends seamlessly into the target language culture, satisfies commercial publishing company needs, and is recognizable by most target language readers. Otherwise, it would be challenging to disseminate Chinese literature outside of China as the translation would struggle to conform with the target language's cultural milieu and, thus, be disregarded.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bao, Y. M. (1997). *wen hua zi ben yu she hui lian jin shu* [Cultural capital and social alchemy: An interview with Bourdieu]. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House.
- [2] Berry, M. (2002). The translator's studio: A dialogue with Howard Goldblatt. *Persimmon: Asian Literature, Arts and Culture*, 3, 18-25.
- [3] Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. University of Chicago press.
- [4] Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Polity Press.
- [5] Bourdieu, P. (1997). The forms of capital in Halsey. *Education, culture, economy and society*, 46-59.
- [6] Chen, L. (2015). *cong luotuo xiangzi de ying yi ben shuo kai qu--fan yi jia shi jiaojing fang tan lu* [From the English translation of Camel Xiangzi--an interview with translator Shi Xiaojing]. *Dong fang fan yi*, 05, 55-58.
- [7] Fan, J. (2019). *kua wen hua shi jiao xia de zhong guo min su wen hua ci yu fan yi yan jiu--yi lao she de luotuo xiangzi ying yi wei li* [A Study on the translation of Chinese Folk Culture Words from a cross-cultural perspective -- A Case study of Lao She's Camel Xiangzi]. *Overseas English*, (20), 18-19+40.
- [8] Gouanvic, J. M. (2005). A Bourdieusian theory of translation, or the coincidence of practical instances: Field, 'habitus', capital and 'illusio'. *The translator*, 11(2), 147-166.
- [9] Gotz, M. (1976). The development of modern Chinese literature studies in the West: A critical view. *Modern China*, 2(3), 397-416.
- [10] Holmes, J. S. (2000). orig. 1972. *The name and nature of translation studies*. In: Venuti, Lawrence (ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 172-185). London & New York: Routledge.
- [11] Hu, A. J. (2010). *zhong guo wen xue zou "zou chu qu" zhi yi zhe mo shi ji fan yi ce lve yan jiu--yi mei guo han xue jia ge hao wen wei li* [Translator model, translating strategy, and the "going out" project to promote Chinese literature abroad: With American sinologist Howard Goldblatt as an example]. *Chinese Translators Journal*, 31(6), 10 -16.
- [12] Huang, L. B. (2014). *luotuo xiangzi san ge yi ben zhong xu shu hua yu de fan yi--yi zhe feng ge yu liao ku kao cha* [Translation of narrative discourse in three English versions of Camel Xiangzi-- A corpus investigation of translator's style]. *Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages*, 37(1), 72-80+99.
- [13] Hsia, C. T. (2016). *A history of modern Chinese fiction*. The Chinese University Press.
- [14] Ji, J. (2009). *wo yi, gu wo zai--ge haowen fang tan lu* [I translate, therefore I am--Interview with Howard Goldblatt]. *pi ping jia lun tan*, (6), 45-56.

- [15] Jin, J. & Wu, P. (2016). luotuo xiangzi ying yi ben zai ying mei guo jia deduzhe jie shou yu chuan bo [An analysis of the reception and dissemination of the English version of Camel Xiangzi in Britain and America]. *Journal of Yanshan University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, (04), 83-86.
- [16] Kao, G. (1980). *Two Writers and the Cultural Revolution*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- [17] Lefevere, A. (1998). Translation practice (s) and the circulation of cultural capital: Some Aeneids in English. *Constructing cultures: Essays on literary translation*, 41-56.
- [18] Li, H. M. (2007). bu di e yu fan yi she hui xue de li lun gou jian [Bourdieu and the theoretical construction of translation sociology]. *Chinese Translators Journal*, (05), 6-9.
- [19] Li, Y. J. (2007). *Context, translator and history: a study of three translations of Luotuo Xiangzi in the USA*.
- [20] Li, Y. (2013). *Lao She zuopin yingyi yanjiu* [A study on the English translation of Lao She's works]. Intellectual Property Publishing House.
- [21] Liu, L. (1995). *Translingual practice: Literature, national culture, and translated modernity—China, 1900-1937*. Stanford University Press. (Original work published 1995)
- [22] Liu, F., & Li, Z. M. (2021). lao she luotuo xiangzi ying yi ben de fu wen ben yan jiu [A study of English versions of Camel Xiangzi from the perspective of the paratext theory]. *Journal of Northeast Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, (06), 58-69.
- [23] Merkle, D. (2008). Translation constraints and the “sociological turn” in literary translation studies. In *Beyond Descriptive Translation Studies* (pp. 175-186). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [24] Pradita, I. (2012). An Introduction To Translation Studies: An Overview. *JEE: Journal of English and Education*, 6(2), 14.
- [25] Sela-Sheffy, R. (2005). How to be a (recognized) translator: Rethinking habitus, norms, and the field of translation. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 17(1), 1-26.
- [26] Simeoni, D. (1998). The pivotal status of the translator's habitus. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 10(1), 1-39.
- [27] Sun, H. J. (2016). *Howard Goldblatt and his translation and promotion of mordent and contemporary Chinese fictions*. Shanghai Jiaotong University Press.
- [28] Wang, Y. C. (2011). cong she hui xue shi jiao kan fan yi xian xiang: Bourdieu she hui xue li lun guan jian ci jie du [Translation through a Bourdieusian sociological lens]. *Chinese Translators Journal*, (1), 5-13.
- [29] Wang, H. T. (2011). gou jian she hui fan yi xue: ming yu shi de bian xi [Socio-Translation studies: the name and nature of a discipline under construction]. *Chinese Translators Journal*, (1), 14-18.
- [30] Wang, X. J. & Zhang, Y. (2018). luotuo xiangzi zhong yuyan wenhua fuzai ci ying yi yan jiu--yi ge haowen yi ben wei li [A Study on the English translation of culture-loaded Words in Camel Xiangzi -- A case study of Goldblatt's translation]. *Journal of Anhui University of Science and Technology (Social Science)*, 2(4), 58-62.
- [31] Wolf, M & Fukari A. (eds.). (2007). *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [32] Xie, M. (2012). luotuo xiangzi zai hai wai de chuan bo yu jie shou [The overseas dissemination and acceptance of Camel Xiangzi]. *min zu wen xue yan jiu*, 127-130.
- [33] Xin, H. J. & Fei, Z. Y. (2018). Bourdieu she hui xue li lun guan zhao xia de fan yi xian xiang po xi--yi xu guangqi li madou fan yi ji he yuan ben wei li [Rethinking translation from a Bourdieusian sociological perspective: *Euclid's Elements of Geometry* translated by Xu Guangqi and Matteo Ricci]. *Foreign Language and Culture*, 2(04), 79-88.
- [34] Xing, J. (2007). yi zhe si wei guan xi--miao shu fan yi xue xin shi jiao [Translators' “Habitus”: a new perspective on descriptive translation studies]. *Chinese Translators Journal* (5), 10-15.
- [35] Xing, J. & Chen, J. N. (2020). chang yu li lun shi yu xia ge yi wa fan yi ce lve jie xi [An analysis of Howard Goldblatt's translation strategy of Frog from the perspective of field theory]. *Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages*, 43(02), 59-67.
- [36] Xu, J., & Mu, L. (2009). *zhong guo fan yi yan jiu (1949-2009)* [Translation Studies in China (1949-2009)], Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education.
- [37] Yan, Y. X. & Goldblatt, H. (2014). Literary translation: process and criterion -- an interview with Howard Goldblatt. *Review of Contemporary Writer*, (01), 193-203.
- [38] Zhao, M., & Li, D. (2021). Translator positioning in characterisation: a corpus-based study of English translations of Luotuo Xiangzi. *Perspectives*, 1-23.
- [39] Zhang, W., & Fu, N. (2019). *Ge haowen fanyi fengge yanjiu* [A study on translator's style of Howard goldblatt]. Shanghai Jiaotong University Press.



Jing Cao was born in Gansu, China, in 1987. She is currently a Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication at Universiti Putra Malaysia. She published five articles in provincial research journals in China in 2013 and received her Master's Degree in the Department of English Language and Literature from Northwest Normal University in 2014.

Her research focus is on translation practice and theory. Her latest publication in Scopus is entitled Subtitle Translation of American Sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5719-8578>



Nor Shahila Mansor earned her doctorate from the University of Valladolid in Spain. She is currently a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. She has published articles in research journals in the area of her studies. Her research interests include (but are not limited to) sociolinguistics, Spanish language, and translation.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6744-0065>

SCOPUS ID: 57203027022



Diana Abu Ujum obtained her Doctoral Degree from Universiti Putra Malaysia. She is currently a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her most recent journal and book chapter publications delve into local popular romance fiction and social networking. Her research areas encompass postfeminist fiction, young adult fiction, popular fiction and digital humanities.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6080-7565>