

**NORMS AND HABITUS IN TWO ENGLISH
TRANSLATIONS OF *HONG LOU MENG***

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**NORMS AND HABITUS IN TWO ENGLISH
TRANSLATIONS OF *HONG LOU MENG***

by

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NORMA DAN HABITUS DALAM DUA TERJEMAHAN BAHASA INGGERIS *HONG LOU MENG*

ABSTRAK

Terjemahan bukan sekadar proses linguistik tetapi merupakan amalan yang berakar dalam budaya dan yang dipengaruhi oleh pelbagai norma, motivasi, dan kekangan. Pemahaman tentang interaksi antara faktor-faktor ini penting untuk menganalisis cara terjemahan berfungsi sebagai perantara dalam pertukaran budaya dan mencerminkan dinamika sosiobudaya yang lebih luas. Teori Norma oleh Toury penting dalam menjelaskan amalan terjemahan, namun ia mempunyai kekurangan kerana ia tidak mengambil kira motivasi dan kekangan yang mendasari norma tersebut. Untuk mengatasi kelompangan teoretikal ini, teori sosiologi Bourdieu menawarkan satu kerangka yang dapat menjadi pelengkap kepada kerangka sedia ada. Kajian ini mencadangkan satu metodologi bersepadu untuk menyelidik norma dan habitus dalam dua terjemahan bahasa Inggeris karya *Hong Lou Meng* (*A Dream of Red Mansions* yang diterjemahkan oleh Yang Xianyi dan Gladys Yang, dan *The Story of the Stone* yang diterjemahkan oleh David Hawkes dan John Minford), dalam konteks bidang terjemahan sastera China dan Britain. Kajian ini memberikan tumpuan pada tiga objektif yang saling berkait. Pertama sekali, untuk menyelidik norma, kajian ini menggunakan Teori Norma Toury dan Teori Parateks Genette untuk melaksanakan analisis tekstual dan parateks, khususnya untuk mengenal pasti norma awal, norma awal-operasi, dan norma operasi yang membentuk dua terjemahan bahasa Inggeris *Hong Lou Meng*. Kedua, untuk mengkaji habitus, kajian ini menerapkan kerangka sosiologi Bourdieu dan melaksanakan analisis ekstratekstual, yang melibatkan prakata penterjemah, lampiran, kulit buku, nota kaki,

temu bual, bahan jurnalistik, dan buku-buku lain – untuk mendedahkan habitus awal dan habitus profesional penterjemah. Ketiga, untuk menyelidik bidang terjemahan sastera, analisis parateks dilaksanakan pada bahan seperti prakata, pengenalan, dan nota penerbit untuk mengenal pasti cara terjemahan tersebut diposisikan dalam bidang tersebut dan cara terjemahan tersebut mencerminkan dinamika kuasa, pengaruh, dan pertukaran budaya. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan pendekatan normatif yang berbeza dalam terjemahan *A Dream of Red Mansions* dan *The Story of the Stone*, yang dibentuk secara signifikan oleh habitus penterjemah dalam bidang masing-masing. Selain itu, kajian ini menonjolkan bagaimana penterjemah memperlihatkan habitus mereka melalui keputusan terjemahan, termasuk perspektif terhadap teks asal, pemilihan bahan terjemahan, dan strategi terjemahan. Secara kolektif, faktor-faktor ini menyumbang kepada representasi norma penterjemahan. Hasil kajian ini menekankan peranan kritikal norma, habitus, dan bidang dalam amalan terjemahan *Hong Lou Meng*, dan seterusnya mengutarakan implikasi untuk memperkukuh penyebaran kesusasteraan dan budaya China di dunia Barat.

NORMS AND HABITUS IN TWO ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF *HONG LOU MENG*

ABSTRACT

Translation is not merely a linguistic process but a culturally embedded practice shaped by various norms, motivations, and constraints. Understanding the interplay of these factors is essential for analyzing how translations mediate cultural exchange and reflect broader socio-cultural dynamics. Toury's Norm theory is pivotal in elucidating translation practices, yet its limitations lie in its neglect of the motivations and constraints underlying norms. Addressing this theoretical lacuna, Bourdieu's sociological theory offers a complementary framework. This study proposes an integrated methodology to investigate norms and habitus in two English translations of *Hong Lou Meng* (*A Dream of Red Mansions* translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, and *The Story of the Stone* translated by David Hawkes and John Minford), within the Chinese and British literary translation fields. Central to this investigation are three interrelated objectives. First, to examine norms, it applies Toury's Norm Theory and Genette's Paratext Theory in a textual and paratextual analysis, identifying initial, preliminary, and operational norms that shape the two English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*. Second, to investigate habitus, it adopts Bourdieu's sociological framework and conducts extratextual analysis—examining translators' prefaces, appendices, covers, footnotes, interviews, journalistic materials, and other books—to illuminate the initial and professional habitus of the translators. Third, to explore the literary translation field, paratextual analysis is applied to materials such as prefaces, introductions, and publisher notes to investigate how the translations are positioned within the field and how they reflect the dynamics of

power, capital, and cultural exchange. The findings reveal distinct normative approaches in the translations of *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *The Story of the Stone*, shaped significantly by the translators' habitus within their respective fields. Furthermore, the study illustrates how translators manifest their habitus through their translational decisions, including their perspectives on translating *Hong Lou Meng*, choice of translation materials, and translation strategies. Collectively, these factors contribute to the representation of translation norms. These insights underscore the critical roles of norm, habitus, and field in the translation practices of *Hong Lou Meng*, offering implications for enhancing the dissemination of Chinese literature and culture in the western world.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the present study and consists of a number of sections which elaborate on different aspects of the research. These sections include: background of the research, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, methodology, the scope of the study, limitations of the study, significance of the study, definitions of key terms and structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the Research

Translation Studies is a heterogeneous discipline although much research has been conducted and much debate is on its central concepts. Different approaches exist together, each of which zooms in on a specific aspect, focusing on the process or the end product of translation from a unique perspective. One of the concepts which has been investigated and used extensively in Translation Studies is the concept of norms. Bartsch (1987) applied the concept of norms into linguistics and made the distinction between product norms and production norms. The purpose of product norms is to ensure a product is correct and appropriate while production norms are strategies to make correct products.

Toury (1995) developed the Norm Theory, which is considered a milestone within the field of Translation Studies as it switched the focus from a prescriptive paradigm to a descriptive one. Chesterman (1999) underscored the fact that “the concept of norms allows modern translation scholars to take a distance from this prescriptiveness: we can describe the norms which appear to exist in a given culture at a given time, but it is the norms that do the prescribing, not the scholars” (p. 90).

The norms also shifted Translation Studies from a linguistic perspective and functional approaches to studying the translator's behavior. In Toury's opinion, norms is the central part of translating. Toury (1980) defined norms as "a category for descriptive analysis of translation phenomena" (p. 57). Toury (1995) also defined norms as

The translation of general values or ideas shared by a community - as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate - into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations, specifying what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioral dimension (p. 55).

Schäffner (1998) proposed that norms are "internalized behaviour constraints which embody the values shared by a community" (p. 5). In this way, the decisions in the translation process are mainly controlled by the norms. The Norm Theory drew attention away from source-orientedness to target-orientedness, from language-centeredness to culture-centeredness, also from exploring sameness to preserving differences (Chu, 2015). Since then, the concept of norms has been explored extensively in Translation Studies.

Norms in Translation Studies offer solutions to theoretical problems (Chesterman, 1999). According to Chesterman (1999), "norms offered a way of explaining why translations have the form they do" (p. 90). In a certain culture of a certain period, norms can be seen as the causes of certain translation features or translators' decisions. In other words, translators act in this way because they want to conform to the norms. The norms can be seen as explanatory hypotheses that may help us to understand more about the phenomenon of translation (Chesterman, 1999).

Many scholars have conducted research focusing on norms. Pym (1998), for instance, focused on the questions which are not answered in Toury's papers. He was

interested in how norms can be negotiated, in which kind of situation and by whom. Hermans (1999a), meanwhile, illustrated the potential of the concept of norms as an analytical tool and explored the relationship between norms and values. He underscored that “even when we are dealing with a single translation, an approach via the concept of norms can be fruitful in generating questions about and directing attention to certain aspects of the case” (Hermans, 1999a, p. 51). In Hermans’s (1999a) opinion, translation lacks of transparency, which is because it is guided by culturally and historically determined norms that influence a translator’s decisions, such as whether to adapt or preserve certain elements of the source text. These norms shape how the text is interpreted and presented in the target culture, reflecting cultural, ideological, and linguistic expectations. Additionally, equivalence can only be constructed ideologically and “the dominant values, and hence the dominant norms, of communities tend to reflect the hierarchies of power in those communities” (Hermans, 1999a, p. 58). Translations are full of values because they are connected with norms.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Although Toury (1995) believed that successful translators fully conform to the norms in the field of translation in which they are professionally active, the Norm Theory also has some limitations, from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

From a theoretical standpoint, the first limitation is its excessive focus on stability and the rules that guide universal languages, which may overlook the dynamic and evolving nature of translation practices. In Gentzler’s (1993) opinion, “although on the surface Toury accepts the ‘fact’ that all languages are different, he suggests that underlying that difference is a unified and universal structural form” (p. 133). Second, its attitude towards languages is positivistic, which discards human

subjectivity in the name of neutrality. In addition, Gentzler (1993) agreed that “such total objectivity is of course impossible, especially given the nature of the subject matter” (p. 123). Third, the attitude towards translation is depersonalized and deterministic. Hermans (1999b) asserted that

Studies of this nature are not only ferociously abstract and depersonalized, they also run the risk of being ultimately deterministic. [...] the struggle is waged by competing norms and models rather than by individuals or collectives who stand to gain or lose something by the outcome” (p. 118).

Fourth, it is unable to explain the phenomena that deviate from the norm (Yannakopoulou, 2008). Translators may not always follow the norms. On the contrary, they may break the norms and make translation choices that are different from other translators. Pym (1998) emphasized that many traces of challenging the norm can be seen in translation history and “instead of mapping norms onto just one social group or dominant ideology, we start to see them as the results of disagreements bridged by adaptation and compromise” (p. 111).

Furthermore, when zooming in the actual translation process, norms are not enough to explain translation choices. Gouanvic (2005) underlined the fact that

Translation as a practice has little to do with conforming to norms through the deliberate use of specific strategies; in other words, it is not a question of consciously choosing from a panoply of available solutions. Norms do not explain the more or less subjective and random choices made by translators who are free to translate or not to translate, to follow or not to follow the original closely. If a translator imposes a rhythm upon the text, a lexicon or a syntax that does not originate in the source text and thus substitutes his or her voice for that of the author, this is essentially not a conscious strategic choice but an effect of his or her specific habitus, as acquired in the target literary field (p. 158).

Norms are no doubt important because “if one is to understand the context in which a translation came into being, they can also describe the position a particular

translation had in the target culture” (Yannakopoulou, 2008, p. 7). Norms, however, cannot explain the motivation behind the translator’s choices. Furthermore, the social and cultural constraints that actually influence the translators’ choices cannot be explored only by the norms. Therefore, the issue of norms in the actual translation process makes it necessary to investigate the motivation and constraints behind the norms, which can be explored through an investigation of the translator in the social, cultural and political context from a sociological perspective.

Taking into account these limitations, Toury (1980) and Hermans (1999b) underscored that it is necessary to combine Norm Theory with social and cultural theories. In Pym’s (1998) opinion, Toury and Hermans’ papers were “adjusting to critical theory with a sociological bent” (p. 107). The reason for investigating the translator from the perspective of sociology is that “translators are more than mere translators” (Meylaerts, 2008, p. 94). They may have other social identities such as teachers, scholars, missionaries, critics etc., and they are not living in a vacuum. It is, therefore, necessary to conceptualize translators as social individuals. From this aspect, what is needed is to conduct research at the individual level, analyzing social reality in its individualized, internalized form (Lahire, 2003). Furthermore, exploring translators’ internalization of social, cultural, political and linguistic structures is heuristic in understanding their position-taking, constraints in the process of translating and translation choices at both micro-level and macro-level (Meylaerts, 2008).

Yannakopoulou (2008) underscored that “unless one looks into the whole spectrum that is responsible for the makeup of the translator’s habitus, one would be at a loss as to how to interpret specific translational choices” (pp. 10-11). Habitus as an important concept in Bourdieu’s theory can illuminate translators’ views and

choices by tracing their personal and professional trajectories and further account for how they cope with norms and various political, social and cultural constraints. Currently, however, research on both initial and professional habitus is not in-depth enough (Xu, & Chu, 2015). Simeoni (1998), for instance, did not explore the features and the relationship between the initial and professional habitus in detail. Meylaerts (2010), meanwhile, focused on the initial habitus without analysing the professional habitus of the translator in depth.

It is not enough, however, to establish norms, habitus and social, cultural constraints based on the translated text. Munday (2016) and Pym (1998) emphasized the fact that norms can be established via paratexts. Yannakopoulou (2014) asserted that it is necessary to analyse paratextual materials such as introductions, footnotes and articles because “as the habitus functions on an unconscious level, it is not uncommon for translators to claim one thing and do quite on the contrary, or follow a translation strategy for reasons other than what they themselves believe they have” (p. 171). Toury (1995) referred to paratexts as extratextual sources and mentioned that they can be used to study socio-cultural factors in translation studies. Therefore, paratextual materials such as prefaces, interviews, documents, reader’s response, books and journals etc. can be useful in identifying socio-cultural factors in translation.

Considering the fact that norms and habitus are instrumental in exploring translators’ choices, strategies, motivations and the social, political and cultural factors that influence the norms at textual level and paratextual level, the present study attempts to explore the norms of the two complete English editions of *Hong Lou Meng* (a traditional novel among China’s Four Great Classics), which are *A Dream of Red Mansions* (1978-1980), translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang,

and *The Story of the Stone* (1973-1986), translated by David Hawkes and John Minford. The study also intends to explore the habitus of each translator in order to analyse the motivation and various constraints that influence them.

As the outstanding complete English editions of *Hong Lou Meng*, both *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *The Story of the Stone* have received much attention from the general public in the literary field. However, in existing literature, research mainly focuses on the textual level. Liu (2008), for instance, explored the use of Chinese tenor in titles and honorifics in five English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*. Wu (2008), meanwhile, analysed the motion event from a linguistic perspective of *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *The Story of the Stone*. In many of the previous attempts to explore these two English editions at the textual level, one of the problems is that they limit themselves to translation choices without taking into account the reasons behind the choices. In other words, translation norms have been ignored (Wu, 2021). Additionally, as mentioned before, norms are insufficient to explain particular translation choices, the translator's motivation behind and the social, political and cultural factors which had influence on the translated text. The concept of habitus is instrumental in achieving a more thorough outlook of the translated work by finding clues of the translator's trajectory.

Another problem of the research on *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *The Story of the Stone* is that the habitus of the translator lacks the fine-grained analysis which can account for the translators' behavior and the factors that influence the behavior. Only Wang (2020) briefly compared the habitus of Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang and concluded that the differences of their habitus are caused by cultural identities, childhood experiences together with education background. No research has been done on the habitus of the four translators in particular. Therefore, a systematic

exploration of norms and habitus would be able to account for David Hawkes, John Minford, Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang's choices and strategies in the process of translating *Hong Lou Meng* and different motivations behind the translations together with miscellaneous factors that influence their translation norms.

The limitation from the practical perspective is that the underrepresentation of Chinese literature in Western countries poses significant challenges to cross-cultural understanding and the global appreciation of China's literary heritage. Despite its rich traditions, Chinese literature encounters linguistic complexities, cultural nuances, and imbalances in the global literary market that hinder its dissemination and reception in Western contexts. These barriers often result in superficial engagement or misinterpretation of Chinese works, emphasizing the need for effective translation and dissemination strategies.

A critical gap lies in the lack of a systematic understanding of how translators, influenced by norms and habitus within their respective literary translation fields, affect the reception and marketability of Chinese literary works. Addressing these issues is essential for mitigating the persistent imbalances in global cultural exchange and enhancing the visibility and acceptance of Chinese literature within the international literary marketplace. Without such efforts, the recognition and integration of Chinese literature into global literary discourse will remain constrained.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

- i. to analyze the norms of Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang's *A Dream of Red Mansions* and David Hawkes and John Minford's *The Story of the*

- Stone* at the micro level respectively, guided by Toury's Norm Theory,
- ii. to analyze the translators' habitus in the field of translation at the macro level by drawing on Bourdieu's Sociological Theory and Genette's Paratext Theory,
 - iii. to explore the social, political and cultural factors that influence the norms by relying on Genette's Paratext Theory.

1.5 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

- i. What are the norms that Yang and Yang, and Hawkes and Minford employed in their complete English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*?
- ii. How does the translators' habitus, examined through Bourdieu's Sociological Theory and Genette's Paratext Theory, explain the translation norms observed in their work?
- iii. How did the social, political, and cultural paratexts surrounding the translations of *Hong Lou Meng* by Yang and Yang, and Hawkes and Minford shape the translation norms in China and Britain?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This research draws on a three-fold approach: (i) Toury's (1995) Norm Theory, (ii) Bourdieu's (1990a) Sociological Theory, and (iii) Genette's (1997) Paratext Theory.

Toury (1995) regarded translation as a norm-governed activity. He further considered that "norms" is a sociological term that has been used in the field of sociology to investigate agents' social behaviors (Toury, 1995). Descriptive Translation Studies is gradually changing its paradigm in a social and cultural

context. Toury (1995) claimed that norms can be classified as three kinds which function at different stages of translation: initial norms, preliminary norms and operational norms. These translation norms are in a hierarchical order according to social translation convention, with initial norms at the top, preliminary norms in the middle while operational norms at the bottom.

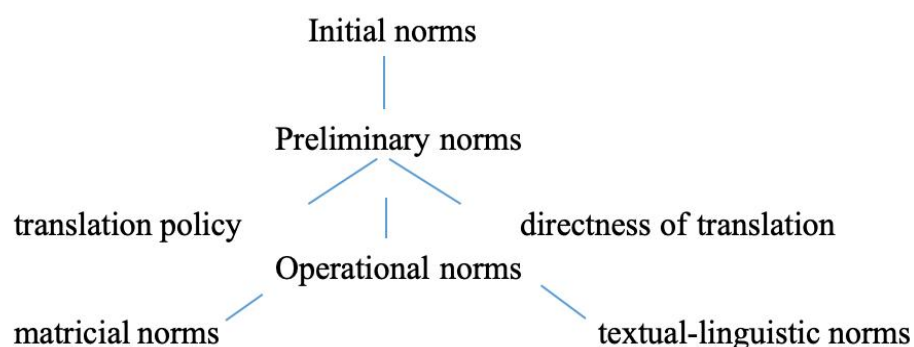


Figure 1.1 Initial, preliminary and operational norms (Munday, 2016)

The concept of norm can be used as the descriptive and explanatory tools to explore regularity of translation behavior. Taking into account the resources for reconstructing the translational norms, Toury (1995) underscored that textual sources and extratextual sources can be used together.

Scholars of translation gradually notice the importance of sociology. Holmes (1988) has pointed out that “greater emphasis on it could lead to the development of a field of translation sociology for (or—less felicitous but more accurate, since it is a legitimate area of translation studies as well as of sociology—socio-translation studies)” (p. 77). In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), an important equation was put forward by Bourdieu: $[(\text{Habitus}) + \text{Capital}] + \text{Field} = \text{practice}$. Thus, the concepts of “habitus”, “capital” and “field” are closely investigated in this study to better account for the motivation and social factors behind the norms and behaviors of the translator.

The third theory employed in this study is Genette's (1997) Paratext Theory. The concept of paratext was first put forth by Genette, a French literary theorist. Paratext was designated as the extra textual materials related to the literary text such as journals, covers, prefaces, footnotes, forwards made by writers, translators or publishers to present the text to target readers to enjoy and better understand the text. In this study, paratext involves all kinds of referential materials that may demonstrate translators' habitus and social, cultural and political factors that may exert influence on norms.

1.7 Methodology

The current study explores the norms of two complete English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*, which are Yang and Yang's *A Dream of Red Mansions* (1978-1980) and Hawkes and Minford's *The Story of the Stone* (1973-1986). The study also investigates the habitus of the translators of these two English translations together with the literary translation field of China and Britain.

Hong Lou Meng, one of the greatest vernacular novels in China, has been translated into various world languages. Numerous scholars have conducted extensive research on the English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*, yet few have analyzed the translation norms in conjunction with the socio-cultural factors influencing these translations.

The first research question, "What are the norms that Yang and Yang, Hawkes, and Minford employed in their complete English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*?", aims to identify and analyze the norms in these two translations. Additionally, it seeks to explore how these norms influenced the translators' decision-making processes and the ways in which they shaped the cultural

adaptation of the original text in the target language. Norms as mentioned before, can be classified into the initial norm, preliminary norm and operational norm and they are in a hierarchical order. In order to reconstruct the norms in these complete English translations that influence the translation practices, the initial norm, preliminary norm and operational norm are identified respectively from textual analysis and paratextual analysis such as translator's preface, appendix, front cover, footnotes to address the first research question.

The second research question, "How does the translators' habitus, examined through Bourdieu's Sociological Theory and Genette's Paratext Theory, explain the translation norms observed in their work?", aims to investigate the habitus of the translators, who are Yang and Yang, and Hawkes and Minford through extra textual analysis, such as translators' correspondence, interviews, speeches, journal papers, books and theses/ dissertations etc. In the process, the initial habitus (early experience) and professional habitus (translation activities) of the translator respectively will be analysed thoroughly. In addition, the externalization of their habitus, as reflected in translation views, the selection of translation materials, and translation strategies, will be analyzed to better understand the formation and application of these norms.

Finally, the third research question, "How did the social, political, and cultural paratexts surrounding the translations of *Hong Lou Meng* by Yang and Yang, and Hawkes and Minford shape the translation norms in China and Britain?" aims to examine the influence of these literary fields on the norms in the two English translations. This involves exploring the Chinese and British literary translation fields through paratexts, especially the epitexts such as journals, books, interviews and articles to address the third research question. In addition, the

relationship between norm and habitus in these two English translations are also investigated. The methodology as a whole helps the researcher to suggest a general outline of the norms and habitus of the two complete English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*.

1.8 The Scope of the Study

The present study was conducted to investigate the norms of *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *The Story of the Stone* together with the habitus of the translators, Yang and Yang and Hawkes and Minford respectively, and social, political and cultural factors which influence the norms. Whilst the translator's strategies of translating cultural elements of *Hong Lou Meng* have been well explored through textual analysis (Dang, 2015; Zhu, 2015), the research on the norms and habitus with resources which are beyond the text is sorely lacking. This study aims to complement other studies that have been carried out by means of textual and paratextual analysis.

The scope of the study is limited to the two complete English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*, which are Yang and Yang's *A Dream of Red Mansions*, and Hawkes and Minford's *The Story of the Stone*. Other English translation editions are not within the scope of the thesis.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The current research investigates the norms and habitus in English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*. This study is limited to analysing the norms and habitus only in the two complete English versions of *Hong Lou Meng*, and exploring habitus mainly from social, cultural and political perspectives instead of from other perspectives, for instance, cognitive and psychological perspectives. These two

versions were purposefully selected due to their completeness, critical acclaim, and significant influence in both Chinese and Western literary circles. They represent not only different historical periods and ideological backgrounds but also distinct translation fields (China and Britain), making them ideal case studies for investigating the interaction between norms, habitus, and socio-cultural context. While other English versions exist, most are partial, abridged, or lack sufficient paratextual material, making them less suitable for the kind of comprehensive analysis required in this study.

In addition, this research limits its exploration of the translators' habitus to social, cultural, and political dimensions, excluding cognitive and psychological perspectives. This decision was made to maintain coherence with the sociological framework of Bourdieu and to ensure methodological focus. Incorporating cognitive or psychological approaches, while valuable, would require different theoretical models and tools that fall outside the scope of the current study.

1.10 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is two-fold, which contributes both theoretically to the study of English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*, and practically to the spread of Chinese literature and culture.

Since the publication of English translations of *Hong Lou Meng* came out, many studies have been conducted, covering various topics, such as domestication, foreignization and skopos theory. However, few scholars have adopted sociological theories with this kind of study. Understanding the norms of translation by exploring the translator's habitus and social constraints is also still limited. From this point of view, this study provides a different theoretical perspective. In this way, it can

provide a relatively panoramic view of the norms of the two English translations of *Hong Lou Meng* and reveal the motivation behind norms which can be seen from the translators' habitus, with a relatively detailed record of their translation activities in the respective literary translation field with the help of paratexts.

Another significance is viewed from a practical perspective. As a hypercentral language and lingua franca in the international exchange, English has significant power and symbolic capital, which can be seen from the number of books translated from English to other languages. Sapiro (2015) once pointed out that the "dominant position of the American publishing industry on the world market of translation confers to American firms a high consecrating power in the transnational literary field" (p. 325). It means that if a book is published in America or the United Kingdom, the possibility of being translated to other language-dominated countries is larger than the opposite situation.

The translation of books is not only considered as an international system but also "based on a core-periphery structure accounts for the uneven flows of translations between language groups as well as for the varying role of translations within language groups." (Heilbron, 1999, p. 429). In this hierarchical system, English is in a hypercentral role while Chinese, although representing many speakers, occupies a peripheral position, which can explain the gap between the number of books translated from English to Chinese, and Chinese to English.

Through an exploration of the translator's role in bringing the translation to the market and an analysis of the concepts of capital and habitus, it becomes evident that Chinese literature is constrained by insufficient resources within the international system. To change the situation, apart from importing and translating literature of English that plays a central role in the international system, it is crucial

to export translations of Chinese into other languages with a comprehensive understanding of the norms of the target culture, so that Chinese culture and literature can be recognized internationally.

1.11 Definition of Key Terms

Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS): is a distinct branch together with Theoretical Translation Studies of pure translation studies. It can be divided into three types, which are product-oriented, function-oriented, and process-oriented (Holmes, 1988, p. 76).

Capital: Bourdieu (1986) classified four types of capital: economic capital, social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital. Economic capital is “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 82). Social capital is the sum of “the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 89). Cultural capital consists of forms of “cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions while symbolic capital concerns “degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour” and is dependent upon “knowledge” and “recognition” (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 7).

Creative Translation: refers to translation that departs significantly from the source text in order to adapt it for a new audience or purpose, often involving reworking, rewriting, or cultural substitution (Kenny, 2009, pp. 53-56).

Field: is a setting in which agents and their social positions are located. The position of each particular agent in the field is a result of interaction between the specific rules of the field, agent’s habitus and agent’s capital (social, economic and cultural)

(Bourdieu, 1984). Fields interact with each other, and are hierarchical: most are subordinate to the larger field of power and class relations.

Habitus: “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53).

Norm: Toury defined norms as “criteria according to which actual instances of behavior” like translation, are evaluated “in situations which allow for different kinds of behavior, on the additional condition that selection among them be non-random” (1995, p. 55).

Paratext: Batchelor (2018) concluded the definition put forward by Genette as follows: “The paratext consists of any element which conveys comment on the text, or presents the text to readers, or influences how the text is received. Paratextual elements may or may not be manifested materially; where they are, that manifestation may be physically attached to the text (peritext or may be separate from it epitext). Any material physically attached to the text by definition conveys comment on the text, or presents the text to readers, or influences how a text is received” (p. 12).

Sociology: the word derives from the Latin word “socius” (companion) and the Greek word “logos” (study of). It refers to “the scientific study of the development, structure, interaction, and collective behavior of social relationships” (Stolley, 2005, p. 1). The concept has been widely used by scholars in Translation Studies. Wolf (2007) refers to sociology in translation as “an umbrella term for the issues that arise when viewing translation as a social practice” (p. 31).

1.12 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into 6 chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter which puts forward the background of the research, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, methodology, the scope of the study, limitations of the study, significance of the study and definitions of key terms. This foundational chapter sets the stage for the subsequent analysis by framing the research within both theoretical and methodological perspectives. Chapter 2 reviews Toury's Norm Theory, Bourdieu's sociological theory, Genette's paratext theory and related literature on the English translations of *Hong Lou Meng*. This review not only contextualizes the current study but also highlights the research gaps that Chapters 3 to 5 aim to address. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical framework and presents the research methodology of the current study. It integrates the theories into a composite analytical framework that guides both the micro- and macro-level investigations carried out in the subsequent chapters. Chapters 4 and 5 apply this framework to the case studies. Chapter 4 focuses on the micro level, which are the norms of Yang and Yang's *A Dream of Red Mansions*, and Hawkes and Minford's *The Story of the Stone*. Chapter 5 explores the macro level of the research, which are the habitus of these translators and social, political and cultural factors influencing the norms. Chapter 6, which is the final chapter, draws together the insights gained from both the micro- and macro-level analyses, and summarizes the whole findings and implications and comes to the conclusion. In addition, the contributions of the study and related future studies are also added.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a twofold literature review. The first part surveys Translation Studies literature relevant to Toury's (1980) Norm Theory, Bourdieu's (1977) sociological theory, and Genette's (1997) Paratext Theory, in order to situate the present study within the broader scholarly landscape. The second part focuses specifically on prior research concerning *Hong Lou Meng*, including Redological studies and key investigations into its English translations. Together, these perspectives inform the theoretical and methodological directions developed in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Norms in Translation Studies

In Baker's (1998) opinion, Toury is the first scholar who brought the concept of "norms" in Translation Studies in the late 1970s and conducted a systematic research on norms. Toury (1995) underscored that norms should be used to explore certain translational phenomena by "descriptive analysis". In Toury's (1978) opinion, the term "norms" is an important tool to analyse translator's behavior because "norms" can be used to measure the "regularity of behaviour in recurrent situations of the same type" (p. 200). The concept of norms gained prominence as it established a standard of appropriateness for translators within a given community, ensuring translation quality and guiding consistent behavioral patterns (Xu & Tian, 2020). In Schäffner's (1998) view, norms in translation also determine the selection, production and reception of translations and "all decisions in the translation process

are primarily governed by norms” (Schäffner, 2010, p. 237). After Toury introduced the concept of “norms” into Translation Studies, many scholars such as Hermans (1991), Chesterman (1993), Nord (1991) and Schäffner (1998) concentrated on certain aspects of translation norms such as classification, functions, effects and features, which contributes significantly to the research on the Norm Theory.

Some scholars studying this area of Translation Studies have chosen to focus on specific norms of Toury’s Norm Theory. Nasirpour and Saffarian (2019) and Xu and Tian (2020) for example, concentrated on the initial norm and preliminary norm of the Norm Theory respectively. Adopting a corpus-based approach, Nasirpour and Saffarian (2019) investigated the initial norm of translation. They tried to study the adequacy and acceptability of novels in translation from 1350s to 1390s in Iran and computed the frequency and percentage of the norms. The results show that as to the adequacy and acceptability of initial norm, translators prefer acceptability to adequacy. In other words, translators try to ensure target audience’s reading experience. Nasirpour and Saffarian (2019), however, did not investigate the reason why the translators prefer acceptability to adequacy, which may be further explored from social and cultural perspectives.

The preliminary norm is the focus in the study carried out by Xu and Tian (2020) with emphasis on the norm dynamics of translating Agatha Christie’s *Death on the Nile* in Chinese. Xu and Tian (2020) suggest that research on norm changes has not been systematic and in depth enough and they decided to explore the process of norm evolution diachronically. In Finnemore and Sikkink’s (1998) opinion, the life cycle of norm consists of three stages, which are emergence, cascade, and internalisation. Xu and Tian (2020) further proposed a theoretical framework of norm dynamics to examine the emergence, cascade, internalisation, erosion, and

extinction of preliminary norm, especially about selecting the source text and the forces shaping the dynamics. Their paper also introduced the concept of “entrepreneurs”, referring to innovative persons or institutions without authority introducing a new norm in the translation field. In this area of study, Xu and Tian’s (2020) research is particularly inspiring in that they discussed norms not just in the field of translation, but also in Chinese political science and international relations. Xu and Tian (2020) concluded many factors that contribute to the norm evolution of China’s publishing of foreign literature, such as publisher’s commercial considerations, ideological considerations of the political party and complex diplomatic relations between countries. The tendency to combine the Norm Theory with social and cultural factors can better account for translation activities. The tendency is also noticed by Hermans (1991) who stated that “more attention is paid to deepening the knowledge of translation practice and the knowledge of the socio-cultural contexts in which translation takes place” (p. 165).

As norms not only influence translators’ choices but also reflect the social and cultural values of a certain community, it is important to combine the study of norms with the knowledge of social, political and cultural contexts in which the activity of translation happens. This is seen in the studies by Enríquez-Aranda (2016), Yu and Xu (2016) and Hu, (2020) who combined translation research with social and ideological aspects.

In Enríquez-Aranda’s (2016) view, translation behavior is regarded as “a communicative and social practice” (p. 89). Enríquez-Aranda (2016) explored translation norms from social and cultural perspectives and suggested that norms are the rules guiding social and cultural behavior when the process of translation begins. Furthermore, translation norms can reflect the value of a certain social system. This

perspective highlights the interplay between translation practices and the societal structures they emerge from, establishing norms as both regulatory and reflective tools within a community.

Building on the understanding of norms as socially and culturally constructed, Yu and Xu (2016) expanded the discussion by exploring the dynamics of norm conformity and norm-breaking within Translation Studies. While norm conformity has been extensively discussed in Translation Studies, they observed that norm-breaking remains insufficiently explored. Yu and Xu (2016) focused on Zhang Guroo's norm-breaking activity of not translating the literary dialect in his Chinese translation of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* with Bourdieu's sociological study as the theoretical model. Yu and Xu (2016) tried to find out who broke the norm, why some norm-breaking activities succeeded, and the factors that contributed to the process of norm-breaking into norm-making. Yu and Xu (2016) also asserted that "translators do not just follow another translator simply because this translator is more successful or prestigious, especially when he or she deviates from a social norm" (p. 76), which clarified the importance of norm-breaking activity. In addition, they collected many paratextual materials such as reviews, research essays, prefaces and footnotes to provide substantial evidence to support their idea that the norm-breaking activity is a social action, initiated by an agent with various kinds of capitals in the field. The activity further shows the power distribution and change in the translation field in which it is more likely to develop into a new norm and become popular with more and more followers.

Shedding light on social factors that formulate the norms of interviewed translators, Hu's (2020) research concentrated on norm negotiation of Chinese institutional translation. Hu (2020) explored Chinese institutional translation and

proposed a risk-management model that helped to explain how norms are negotiated by different Chinese institutional translators. Hu's (2020) mixed-method research integrated a quantitative approach to analyze respondents' ranking tasks with a qualitative approach to interview translators and interpret their opinions within the context of socio-cultural factors. An enlightening point mentioned by Hu (2020) is that he was fully aware of the importance of "people" in Norm Theory. In other words, the lack of 'people' in Norm Theory resulted in two problems. One is the rigidly binary categorization (source and target) of Norm Theory, the other is the deterministic view of human action, which means that submissiveness is regarded as an invariable part of a translator's habitus, allowing "almost no room for understanding choice and variability in their action" (Sela-Sheffy, 2005, p. 3). Therefore, it is necessary to combine Norm Theory with the study of "people", in particular the translators and other human agents that are active in the process of translation.

In Hanna's (2014) opinion, norms are employed to describe what are the appropriate collective behaviour of translators in a certain period of time. This means that the Norm Theory has not been able to explain the personalised behavior of individual translator. For example, how do the individual translators internalise the norms and under what conditions do they choose to maintain or challenge the norms? Translators do not acquire and deal with norms in vacuum environment. On the contrary, individual translators' behaviors about norms are conducted in a social context, which can be explained by Bourdieu's theory because the concept such as "habitus" can bridge the gap between social structure and individual translator's behavior (Bourdieu, 2005). Toury (1995) also acknowledged that it is necessary to combine Norm Theory with Bourdieu's theory, especially the concept of "habitus".

2.3 Bourdieu's Sociological Theory (1977) in Translation Research

Bourdieu's theory has attracted much attention from scholars conducting research in Translation Studies. The major concept of "habitus", together with "field" and "capital" have proved to be valuable in exploring the translator's social practice and behavior in the process of translation. Inghilleri (2005b) also agreed that

Bourdieu's theoretical insights contribute a distinctive perspective in relation to the increasingly influential culturalist and globalist research paradigms within translation studies. The application of his theory to translation and interpreting research has also been considered more specifically as part of the re-evaluation of descriptive and polysystem approaches, offering a more powerful set of concepts than norms and conventions to describe socio-cultural constraints on acts of translation and their resulting products (pp. 125-126).

Gouanvic (2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2014) concentrated on translation research with Bourdieu's theory in a series of papers. These papers made it clear that it is important to explore the practice of human agents' in the translation field. Gouanvic (2005) especially paid attention to the concept of "habitus". He listed different social trajectories of translators such as Coindreau, Marcel Dhhamel and Boris Vian to prove his opinion that an effective approach to studying translators' habitus is by tracking their trajectories, including their biographies and translated texts. Gouanvic (2014) focused on habitus from a theoretical perspective by illustrating two famous French translators Maurice-Edgar Coindreau and Michel Duhamel. He asserted that "translation is the product of multiple conditionings and determinants situated at the influence of the history of the field and of the habitus of the translator" (Gouanvic, 2014, p. 39), and concluded that habitus is soluble and potential in the study of translation.

As a major concept in Bourdieu's equation, "habitus" has been studied by many scholars. Simeoni (1998), for instance, acknowledged the importance of