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**Translation Methods of Sound Words from Weapon  
Collisions in Legends of the Condor Heroes**

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# Translation Methods of Sound Words from Weapon Collisions in *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the translation methods of sound words from weapon collisions in *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. This qualitative case study probes into how the sound words from weapons collisions are translated. The translation material of this study adopts translated Volume I and Volume II of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. The sound words or expressions (n=120) of weapon collisions are collected based on purposive sampling method. Data is analyzed by inductive thematic analysis method. The finding illustrates that the sound words from weapon collisions are translated with the methods of omission with the figure of 48%, onomatopoeia of 29% and explication 23% in the translation version. In conclusion, the trend of translation method of sound words from weapon collisions in *Legends of the Condor Heroes* goes towards target language-oriented translation.

**Keywords:** Words, translation methods, weapon collisions, Chinese martial arts fiction.

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## Introduction

*She Diao Ying Xiong Zhuan* is written by Jin Yong (pen name of Louis Cha, 1924-2018), a contemporary master martial arts novelist. This fiction has been translated and published to English version in the name of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* since 2018. To date, together with *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (1976, 1996), *The Deer and the Cauldron* (1981, 1997, 1999, 2002) and *The Book and the Sword* (1976, 2004), in total, Jin Yong's four martial arts fictions have already owned the English translation version.

Studies on translation of Jin Yong's martial arts are conducted (Mok, 2001; Ren, 2016; Luo, 2016; etc.). For example, Mok (2001) examined the translation strategies of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*. Ren (2016) evaluated the degree of holistic adaptation and selection in the Mok's translation of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*. Luo (2016) explored translator's positioning and cultural transfer with reference to *The Book and the Sword*. Still, little translation studies involve the translated two volumes of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* since the constrain of the recent publish time of its English version.

Most previous studies of translation methods of martial arts fiction focuses on translating the words or phrases related dates and periods (Mok, 2001), appellations in martial arts fiction (Mok, 2002), etc. However, there is scanty in the study on the sounds in the fiction. As a martial art fiction, *Legends of the Condor Heroes* embraces plenty of breath-taking scenes experienced through different sounds across the various weapons. While

the sounds in martial arts fiction are often accompanied with the weapons, the sounds not only bring the acoustic feelings but also demonstrate the features of the objects. Thus, how to translate the sounds of the fiction should be paid much attention. This study explores the translation methods of sound words from weapon collisions of *Legends of the Gender Heroes* to fulfill the translation studies of martial arts fiction.

## Method and Material

This study is qualitative in nature since it entails examining the textual data using interpretive analysis to describe the translation methods of sound words of weapon collisions. A case study is adopted to gain insights into translating the sound of weapon collisions in one of Jin Yong's martial arts - *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. Purposive sampling is adopted in this study. Those sound words that produced among weapon collisions and through weapon and other non-weapon objects are included into the study as samples. Because these sounds produced related weapons can reflect the different features among weapons or between weapon and another object. These sound words are coded manually because the coding process simultaneously is done on the fiction and the translation version. These data are analyzed with inductive thematic analysis method.

Sound words of weapon collisions produced in Volume I and II of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* (*Legends of the Condor Heroes 1: A Hero Born* translated by Holmwood Anna and *Legends of the Condor Heroes 2: A Bond Undone* translated by Gigi Chang) are selected in this study as the research objects since only these two volumes are translated and published till the start of this study. The translation version of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* has obtained a pretty fame and met with great favor, which is appreciated that “does accomplish what it set out to do, bringing Jin Yong's martial arts world a little closer to English-speaking readers”(Roy, 2019). The already translated and published Volumes are typical as a case to study on translation methods of sound words of weapon collisions in *Legends of the Condor Heroes*.

## Findings and discussion

Based on the data analysis, this study codes 120 sound words or expressions of weapon collisions appeared in Volume I and II of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. Based on inductive thematic translation methods, these sound words are categorized into omission translation with the figure of 48%, onomatopoeia of 29% and explication of 23%. The analysis of these three translation methods is as followed:

### *Omission*

Cases where source language is omitted in translation is counted as ‘omission’ translation. Omission often removes the traces of source culture specificity from the target text, which is often categorized into target language-oriented translation method. This section focuses on ‘omission in word or expression’ to investigate the translation from weapon collisions. From the findings, omission translation was most used in translating sound words of weapon collisions. The use of omission took up nearly half of the amount, more than any other translation methods. The examples (a-c) could be seen as follows:

- a. yuèguāng xià zhǐjiàn yíkuài yuánpán sì de hēi wù fēi jiāng chūqù tuō de yī shēng qīng xiǎng qiànrù  
 月光下 只见 一块 圆盘 似的 黑物 飞 将 出去， 托 的 一 声 轻 响， 嵌入  
 le nà wǔguān hòunǎo  
 了 那 武官 后脑。 (Jin Yong, 2013, p. 12)

It glinted an inky black as it sailed through the air, drawing a curve and landing on the back of the

soldier's head with a dull thud. (Holmwood Anna, 2018, p. 8)

- b. tū rán cǎo duī zhōng yī bǐng duàn tóu mǎ dāo jí shēn chū lái , dāng lǎng shēng xiǎng  
突然草堆中一柄断头马刀疾伸出来，当啷声响。(Jin Yong, 2013, p. 99)

Out from the haystack popped a broken sabre to block his swing. (Holmwood Anna, 2018, p. 118)

- c. ōu yáng fēng huī shǒu dàn zhēng zhēng liǎng xià shēng rú liè bù  
欧阳锋挥手弹箜，铮铮两下，声如裂帛。(Jin Yong, 2013, p. 610)  
Viper Ouyang struck the *zheng* twice, sending forth a tremolo so violent that it could tear cloth. (Gigi Chang, 2019, p. 411)

In example a, the translation of “托” is omitted from the translated version. The sound produced by an inky black is used in source text to describe the collision between the weapon of an Eight Trigram disk and the head of the soldier. In example b, the sound of “当啷” produces between a broken sabre and the arrow, which disappears in the translated version. In example c, “铮铮” is used to describe the sound of the *zheng* (a musical instrument), which just keeps the number and omits the sound produced by the instrument. This happens between person's hands and the instrument (the person uses this instrument as a weapon). In these three examples, the sound words are special in source language. All three examples indicate that the source flavors are lost in the target language. It may be assumed that such sound words cannot find equivalents in the target language and the translation intentionally omit the original words to keep the fluency of the transfer of the plot.

### Onomatopoeia

As a form of sound expression, “onomatopoeia forges magical links between our words and our physical senses—sight, hearing, touch and taste” (Lasserre, 2018). Onomatopoeia in the translation is used to retain the connection between words and hearing senses. Cases where use onomatopoeia to have equivalent translations are defined as ‘onomatopoeia’ translation in this study. The translation version uses onomatopoeia to take word-for-word translation to get similar equivalences. For example (d-f):

- d. nán xī rén yì yán bù fā , dài tóng gāng fēi dào , jǔ qǐ biǎn dān zài kōng zhōng dǎng zhù , dāng de yī shēng , tóng gāng zài kōng zhōng shòu zǔ , luò le xià lái 。  
南希仁一言不发，待铜缸飞到，举起扁担在空中挡往，当的一声，铜缸在空中受阻，落了下来。(Jin Yong, 2013, p. 58)

*Clang!* Woodcutter Nan said nothing, but stopped the censer with his shoulder pole. (Holmwood Anna, 2018, p. 68)

- e. hū tīng dé sōu sōu liǎng shēng , chuāng gé zhōng dǎ jìn liǎng zhī xiù jiàn 。  
忽听得嗖嗖两声，窗格中打进两枝袖剑。(Jin Yong, 2013, p. 524)

*Whoosh, whoosh!*— two sleeve arrows hurtled. (Gigi Chang, 2019, p. 286)

- f. pū pū pū sān shēng , sān méi fēi yàn yín suō dōu dǎ zhèng tā bèi xīn 。  
噗噗噗三声，三枚飞燕银梭都打正她背心。(Jin Yong, 2013, p. 620)

*Pop, pop, pop!* All three darts bounced off her Hedgehog Chainmail. (Gigi Chang, 2019, p. 425)

In example d, the translations of “当” is treated with onomatopoeia Clang!. The sound is produced from the collision shoulder pole and censer (censer is as a weapon at this moment). In example e, the sound of “飐飐” is translated to Whoosh, whoosh!, which is produced when the arrows fly in the air. The same vein is also seen in the translation of the example f, “噗噗” is translated to Pop, pop, pop!, which happens between three darts and shirt named Hedgehog Chainmail. These three sounds are put in the front of the whole sentence, which gives a sound shock firstly. The emphasis on the sounds demonstrates the equivalence between source language and target language. Not like omission translation, onomatopoeia leaves space for the sound words, which means that the sounds can be translatable. Though the utilization of onomatopoeia could find the equivalence in the target text and preserve the original sound impact, the translation method still leans to target language-oriented translation since the translation uses adaptation which is familiar to source language to substitute the source language.

### *Explication*

In this section, since explication is to explain or describe explicitly the sounds based on the context to the target readers, explication is regarded as a target language-oriented expression. Cases where the implied meaning of sound word is disclosed are categorized into ‘explication’ translation. It not only keeps the space of sound words but also conveys the meaning to the readers. For example (g-i):

- g. hū tīng dé lín wài zhuàn lái yí zhèn duó duó duó zhī shēng  
忽听得林外传来一阵铙铙铙之声。(Jin Yong, 2013, p. 11)

At that moment a loud smack of wood against metal echoed around the woodland from beyond the tree line. (Holmwood Anna, 2018, p. 7)

- h. zhè kǒu jù dà de tóng gāng zhì lái shí hū hū shēng fēng  
这口巨大的铜缸掷来时呼呼生风。(Jin Yong, 2013, p. 58)

Just by listening for the rush of air around it. (Holmwood Anna, 2018, p. 67)

- i. liǎng dàn pā de yī shēng zài kōng zhōng zhuàng dé huǒ xīng sì jiàn shí zǐ suì piàn bā fāng luàn shè  
两弹啪的一声，在空中撞得火星四溅，石子碎片八方乱射。(Jin Yong, 2013, p. 505)

Crashed together in an explosion of sparks and shrapnel. (Gigi Chang, 2019, p. 258)

In example g, the translation of “铙铙铙” is explicated to “a loud smack of wood against metal,” which reveals the feature of the sound that is produced between a smack of wood against metal. In another example h, “呼呼” is explicated to “the rush of air,” which describes how the sound produced by censer stirs the air, representing the strong power of the weapon. In example i, the sound of “啪” is produced between two masonries, which is described to “crashed together” by explicating the real action at that moment. This translation method maintains the presence of sound words of source language and replaces the source words with phrase or term which is more readable for target text.

## Conclusion

This study has identified translation methods adopted in the sound words from weapon collisions of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. From the findings, it could be seen that sound words are translated by omission, onomatopoeia and explication. Omission translation accounts for nearly half of the amount, followed by onomatopoeia and explication with the similar percentage. The use of these three translation methods indicates that the trend of the translation of sound words produced from weapon collisions goes towards target language-oriented method, which omits, adapts or explains the source language. It is assumed that the omission, onomatopoeia and explication are to decrease the influence on readers' understandings of the complex source language expressions, thus pushes the development of the plots. Further studies should be conducted to explore the reasons of the translation methods of sound words.

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