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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Paratexts in Translation as Mediators: A Case Study of Lin Yutang's English Translation of *Dao De Jing***

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**ABSTRACT**

As a world-famous writer and translator, Lin Yutang is recognized as a cultural ambassador who dedicated his entire life to cross-cultural communication between East and West. His translation works are of great significance in promoting cultural exchange between China and the West. Taking his English translation of the Chinese canon *Dao De Jing* as a case study, this article conducts a thorough analysis of paratexts in translation and discusses how paratexts help the translator interpret the source text and introduce Laozi's thoughts for western audiences. More importantly, it explores the mediating functions of paratexts in facilitating target readers' understanding and reception of the original text. The study demonstrates that paratexts in translation provide an effective platform for translators to interpret the source text and facilitate the target reader's comprehension and perception of the source culture, thus highlighting the essential characteristic of translation as a cross-cultural communication activity.

**KEYWORDS**

Paratexts, *Dao De Jing*, English Translation, Lin Yutang, Cultural Communication

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**1. Introduction**

As a fascinating, inspiring and elusive philosophical work completed in ancient China, *Dao De Jing* has been translated by numerous scholars and translators from home and abroad. It is said that this book has been regarded as the most translated classical work in China and the most translated text in the world next to the Bible (Chan, 2018). Recent statistics show that the classical text of *Dao De Jing* has been translated into over 70 languages with more than 500 different English versions (Xin, 2020). Since the first English version of *Dao De Jing* in 1868, there have been an increasing number of English translations, with some becoming popular and classical among western readers.

Among the English translators of *Dao De Jing*, Lin Yutang (1895-1976) is an outstanding Chinese scholar, writer and translator. He devotes his whole life to introducing the Chinese language and culture to the West by writing and translating Chinese literary classics into English and enjoys a high reputation at home and abroad. His translation of *Dao De Jing*, following the conservative principle of dividing the original text into eighty-one chapters, was originally included in *The Wisdom of China and India* in 1942 and subsequently published in book form under the title of *The Wisdom of Lao-tse* in 1948. Characterized by multiple paratexts, Lin Yutang's translated book enjoyed immediate acceptance after publication and was reprinted many times in both England and the U.S. As professor Chen Wing-tsit reviewed, Lin's translation not merely shows provocative philosophy and fascinating literature but also makes *Dao De Jing* "a living classic" (Chen, 1945).

The English translation of *Dao De Jing* has been studied since at least the 1930s. Earlier studies pertaining to English translations of *Dao De Jing* are in the form of book reviews offering critical perspectives on different translated versions. Since the 1980s, a number of research texts, including journal articles, theses, and monographs, have appeared, most of which were published in China. Related studies cover important topics, including translation history (Chang, 2017), cross-cultural translation strategies of

core concepts (Yang & Tang, 2020), cultural interpretation and retranslation (Williams, 2018), foreignization translation and thick translation (Tao & Yu, 2013; Huang et al., 2019), translation reception and classical reconstruction (Li & Wang, 2020; Yin & Wang, 2022). Many of the above studies have expanded the enquiries of the research on the English translation of *Dao De Jing* towards historical and cultural levels. However, research into the English translation of *Dao De Jing* from the perspective of cultural communication is underdeveloped. This study might be seen as an effort to discuss the cross-cultural communication of *Dao De Jing* within the scope of translation studies.

Translation is an entity comprised of translated text and paratexts such as book cover, preface, postscript, note and the editor's introduction information. Not only the translation properly facilitates cross-cultural communication between individuals or groups from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, but also paratexts in translation play significant roles in promoting cross-cultural understanding, which is worthy of being observed. Addressing this issue, a case study of Lin Yutang's English translation of *Dao De Jing* is conducted in the article. The aim of this study is to explore the function of paratexts as mediators in facilitating the interpretation of the source text and shaping the transmission and perception of the source culture in the target context. Based on the investigation of paratexts in Lin Yutang's English translation of *Dao De Jing* (hereinafter referred to as Lin's translation), the study examines how paratexts facilitate the translator interpret the source text and introduce Laozi's thoughts for western audiences. Hopefully, the study can highlight distinctively mediating functions of paratexts in translation as well as to provide more supporting evidence for the defining characteristic of translation as a cross-cultural communication activity.

## 2. Literature Review

Paratext is primarily described in the opening paragraph of *Seuils* by Genette as something 'enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public' (1997, p. 1). It refers to various verbal or nonverbal accompanying productions either within the book (titles, introductions, illustrations, notes, afterword) or located outside it (advertisement, book reviews or interviews), which serve as mediation 'between the world of publishing and the world of the texts' (1997, p. xvii). The paratext is rather a 'threshold' through which insights can be obtained on how the texts are received.

Currently, there are two distinctive views to studying paratexts and translation in current scholarship. One view, supported by Genette himself, is to regard translation as paratexts of original texts, another taking paratexts as sites for the translator or publisher's invention or adaptation of the text to its new environment. Scholars in translation studies usually prefer the second view; as Tahir-Gurcaglar (2002, p. 46) has argued, the first view of considering translation as paratexts will 'serve translation research little.' Based on a function-based definition of paratexts by Batchelor (2018, p. 12), paratexts in translation might be described as something that enables a translated text to become a book conveying additional information for the translated texts or present the translated texts to the target readers or influence the reception of the translated works

In translation studies, based on Genette's typology of paratexts, a number of scholars have explored multiple functions served by paratexts in translation. A few noteworthy studies have discussed how paratexts promote the understanding, presentation or reception of the translated text and facilitate the process of cultural translation (McRae, 2012). Other studies have focused on the functions of paratexts in helping, attracting and guiding target readers (Zhang, 2012) and in the reconstruction of source cultural identity (Luo & Zhang, 2017).

Apart from that, scholars have explored the functions of different forms of paratext, such as subtitles, introductions as well as notes in translation. Gerber (2012, p. 46) emphasized that the title of the source text provides one of the first invitations to potential readers of the text. It offers guidance in attempts to control the reader's approach to the text and the reader's construction of that text. Introduction, as an integrated part of the 'translator's archives', provides the target audiences with useful information regarding the translator and his translated text. The examination of the translator's archives, according to Guzmán (2012, p. 91), can reflect the translator's 'self-understanding and the 'theories' of language that inform their practice.' In terms of location, notes can be at the bottom of the page, at the end of the chapter or the book, in a supplementary glossary or even in specialized dictionaries (Pym, 2004, p. 100). According to the function of notes, Buendía (2013) classifies notes into two types: explanatory notes and performative notes. The former is to achieve a perfect understanding of the original text and reproduce all the effects of the source text in the target language (p. 157), while the latter conveys the opinion and judgement of the translator (p. 159).

In light of the function of paratexts in translation investigated in previous studies, this study centers on exploring the function of paratexts as mediators in translated Chinese classics. For the purpose of promoting successful cross-cultural communication, the translator employs various paratextual materials, which can be viewed as his special techniques for interpreting the source text and conveying the source culture in translation.

## 3. Research Methodology

The study focuses on the analysis of paratexts in Lin Yutang's English translation of *Dao De Jing* and attempts to highlight the functions of paratexts as mediators in translation. The research data are collected from the paratextual elements of annotations (a total of 145 footnotes and 135 in-text notes) in the translated work. Considering this translated work is characterized by multiple forms of paratexts, other forms of paratexts, including subtitles, introductions and supplementary materials, are taken into

consideration. In addition, a small-scale English-Chinese parallel corpus is established based on the original text and the translated version of *Dao De Jing*. The identification of the English annotated words or expressions and the corresponding Chinese ones are manually performed. Inspired by previous studies (Buendía, 2013; Huang et al., 2019), we classify footnotes in Lin's translation into three types, i.e., explanatory notes, informative notes and performative notes and in-text notes as supplementary notes, implicational notes and referential note.

In this study, descriptive and comparative approaches are employed to explain how Laozi's philosophical ideas are better interpreted and transmitted via paratexts. As Holmes (1988, p. 71) stated, the main objective of descriptive translation studies is to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience. It should be indicated the identification of the paratexts in translation and the analysis of Laozi's thoughts represented in translated text are based on the comparison between the source text and the target text. Through an in-depth text analysis of various forms of paratexts, this study discusses major cultural communication strategies employed by the translator to facilitate the transmission and reception of Laozi's philosophical ideas.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1 Annotations in Lin Yutang's translation of *Dao De Jing*

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of footnotes and in-text notes in Lin's translation.

Table 1. The distribution of footnotes and in-text notes in Lin's translation

| Type<br>(Footnote) | No  | %    | Type<br>(In-text note) | No  | %    |
|--------------------|-----|------|------------------------|-----|------|
| Explanatory        | 105 | 72.4 | Supplementary          | 102 | 75.6 |
| Informative        | 24  | 16.6 | Implicational          | 29  | 21.5 |
| Performative       | 16  | 11.0 | Referential            | 4   | 2.9  |
| Total              | 145 | 100  | Total                  | 135 | 100  |

It can be seen that the most frequently used type of footnote is the explanatory one and in-text notes serve mostly supplementary functions. This result is closely related to the abstruse and succinct language of the original text of *Dao De Jing*. In order to make the content of the original text entirely presented, the translator attempts to explain Laozi's thoughts in the form of footnotes, and the employment of supplementary in-text notes makes the translated text intelligible for target readers. Moreover, other types of footnotes and in-text notes help the translator express his view on Laozi's philosophy and make his presence felt and voice heard so as to establish contact with target readers.

Table 2 shows examples of different types of footnotes from Lin's translation.

Table 2. Examples of three types of footnotes from Lin's translation

|       | ST                                                                                       | TT                                                                                                        | Footnote                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ex. 1 | shì yǐ shèng rén zhí zuǒ qì, ér bù zé yú ré. (是以圣人执左契，而不责于人。) (ch. 79)                   | Therefore the Sage holds the left tally <sup>3</sup><br>And does not put the guilt on the other party.    | Fn. 3: Sign of inferiority in an agreement.                                                                                                                      |
| Ex. 2 | Zhī qí xióng, shǒu qí cí, wéi tiān xià xī. (知其雄，守其雌，为天下溪。) (ch. 28)                      | He who is aware of the Male<br>But keeps to the Female<br>Becomes the ravine <sup>8</sup> of the world.   | Fn. 8: See Ch. 6. The valley, or ravine, is symbol of the Female Principle, the receptive, the passive.                                                          |
| Ex. 3 | shì wèi xíng wú xíng, rǎng wú bì, rēng wú dí, zhí wú bīng. (是谓行无行，攘无臂，扔无敌，执无兵。) (ch. 69) | That is, to march without formations,<br>To roll not up the sleeves,<br>To charge not in frontal attacks, | Fn. 16: Or to feel like being in this condition, i.e., the subjective condition of humility. This is entirely consistent with Laotse's philosophy of camouflage, |

|                                       |                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| To arm without weapons. <sup>16</sup> | the earliest in the world.<br>("great eloquence is like<br>stuttering," etc., Ch. 45) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

An explanatory footnote is employed by Lin to explain difficult terms and expressions to avoid confusing target readers. In Example 1, the Chinese character qì (契) in the source text denotes a wooden or bamboo contract in ancient Chinese society, which is split into left and right parts and kept by the creditor and the debtor, respectively. The left part of the contract is carved with the name of the debtor, indicating the inferiority of the contract. It is apparent that footnote 3 provides the implication of zuǒ qì (左契), which can successfully reproduce the meaning of the source text and show the noble character of the sage; in other words, even if the sage holds the contract that is inferior to the debtor, he never blames and takes advantage of the debtor.

An informative footnote serves to provide background information and reference for target readers to deeply understand relevant topics or gain more approaches to Laozi's wisdom. In Example 2, Lin translates gǔ (谷) into 'ravine,' literally a small narrow steep-sided valley, and offers referential information in footnote 8. Based on the translator's view in chapter 6 that the spirit of the valley is eternal, the referential footnote in the target text explains the rational why Laozi admonishes people to 'become the ravine in the world.' Another point worth to be noticed is that Lin uses the capitalized 'Male' and 'Female' to symbolize the male's qualities of being strong and active and the female's qualities of being soft and modest, which makes the translated text laconic and profound as the original text.

The footnote in Example 3 is the performative one, which conveys the translator's views and judgement on the original text and makes his voice heard by target readers. Being an anti-war supporter, Laozi claims, in chapter 69, the maxim of military strategies, namely, if one is forced to engage in a war, he should be on the defensive instead of taking the offensive. Laozi's saying denotes that even if the combatant is able to defeat the enemy, he should not resort to force with little hindrance, for it is incongruent with the Daoist principle of being modest and uncontentious. Such military tactic, in Lin's eyes, is consistent with Laozi's philosophy of camouflage, which can be obtained from footnote 16.

Table 3 shows examples of different types of footnotes from Lin's translation.

Table 3. Examples of three types of in-text notes from Lin's translation

|       | ST                                                                                                 | TT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ex. 4 | dà bāng zhě xià liú, tiān xià zhī pìn, tiān xià zhī jiāo yě. (大邦者下流，天下之牝，天下之交也。) (ch. 61)          | A big country (should be like) the delta low-<br>regions,<br><br>Being the concourse of the world,<br><br>(And) the Female of the world.                                                                                           |
| Ex. 5 | Zhī qí bái, shǒu qí hēi, wéi tiān xià shì. (知其白，守其黑，为天下式。) (ch. 28)                                | He who is conscious of the white (bright)<br><br>But keeps to the black (dark)<br><br>Becomes the model for the world.                                                                                                             |
| Ex. 6 | shì ér bù jiàn, míng yuē yí; tīng zhī bù wén, míng yuē wēi. (视而不见，名曰夷；听之不闻，名曰希；搏之不得，名曰微。) (ch. 14) | Looked at, but cannot be seen—That is called<br>the Invisible (yi).<br><br>Listened to, but cannot be heard—That is<br>called the Inaudible (hsi).<br><br>Grasped at but cannot be touched—That is<br>called the Intangible (wei). |

Supplementary in-text notes serve target readers by adding omitted expressions to make the translated sentence complete in form and meaning. The source text of example 4 expresses Laozi's suggestion for dealing with the relationship between big countries and small countries. It is pointed out that the reliance and allegiance from small countries depend on whether the big country keeps a low profile, modest and tolerant like a downflow river. It can be found in the translated text that Lin adds two supplementary in-text notes to complement the predicate and adverb of the target sentence, making the grammatical structure of the target text complete and appropriate. In the source language, especially in ancient Chinese, it is a common phenomenon for a sentence constituted by two noun phrases like dà bāng (大邦 a big country) and xià liú (下流 a down flowing river) in chapter

61. However, eliminating the predicate for a sentence in the target language can hardly conform to its grammatical norms; thus, a supplementary in-text note in such a condition makes the translated sentence acceptable at both syntactic and semantic levels.

Implicational and referential in-text notes provide implied meaning and referential information for foreign terms, respectively, which can bring the source text closer to target readers. In example 5, the source text in chapter 28 discusses the significance of balancing both sides of things, e.g., *bái yǔ hēi* (白与黑 the white and the black), *róng yǔ rǔ* (荣与辱 the glory and the obscurity), etc. In the source text, Laozi admonishes people to stay in lower places like the valley, which knows the bright place yet still lives in the dark, that is to say, to keep one's mind open and humble. Literally translating *bái* (白) and *hēi* (黑) into 'white' and 'black,' Lin adds two implicational in-text notes of 'bright' and 'dark' to facilitate target readers' full understanding of Laozi's implicational lessons.

In example 6, three nominalized characters *yí* (夷), *xī* (希), *wēi* (微) in the source text of Chapter 14 represent three essential features of Dao described by Laozi as *shì zhī bù jiàn* (视之不见 Something cannot be seen), *tīng zhī bù wén* (听之不闻), *bó zhī bù dé* (博之不得). The translator capitalizes and nominalizes three English adjectives in the target text as 'Invisible,' 'Inaudible,' and 'Intangible' and employs three referential in-text notes of 'yi,' 'hsi,' 'wei' to indicate Laozi's original expressions in Wade-Giles romanization, thus bringing target readers closer to the source text.

In one word, notes of different types adopted by the translator in the translation of *Dao De Jing* not merely help display his understanding of Laozi's philosophy to its full extent but also make the translated text more intelligible and acceptable for target readers.

## 4.2 Functions of paratexts in cultural communication

### 4.2.1 Guiding target readers by cultural comparison

In part of the introduction, the translator compares the paradoxes of Laozi with that of Emerson by repetitively mentioning that Laozi's philosophy of life and the universe can be revealed in the passages of Emerson. For instance, Laozi's sayings *wàn wù bīng zuò, wú yǐ guān fù. fú wù yún yún, gè fù guī qí gēn* (万物并作, 吾以观复。夫物芸芸, 各复归其根。) emphasize that all things in the universe move in circles under the principle of reversion. The similarities between the eastern and western philosophical thoughts are demonstrated by a number of paradoxes from Emerson's essay on 'circles' like 'every end is a beginning,' 'that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon,' 'under every deep a lower deep opens.' Emerson's sayings regarding the relativity of opposites, like 'One man's beauty is another's ugliness; one's man's wisdom, another's folly' are also in accordance with Laozi's idea on the relativity of all things like *tiān xià jiē zhī měi zhī wéi měi, sī é yí* (天下皆知美之为美, 斯恶已).

Besides, the translator attributes Laozi's philosophy of Dao and scientific thoughts sought by western scientists and physicists such as Dr. Millikan, Einstein and Eddington to the great truths in the world. As he claims, 'the great truths of the world have been seen by the wise men of all ages, regardless of country and period' (Lin, 1948, p. 19). Nevertheless, Lin expounds on the progress of scientific thoughts and criticizes the drawbacks of crass materialism and mechanistic science. In the nineteenth century, physicists were fascinated with digging from the material itself, and scientists relied too much on mathematics to solve all problems. However, there are no tools for scientific exploration in the field of meaning, beauty, love and consciousness. In this case, Lin elaborates on Eddington's distinction between the 'symbolic knowledge' of science and the 'intimate knowledge' of routine experience in order to show that the acquisition of knowledge through intuition in the west is similar to Laozi's exploration of the Daoist philosophy, which constitutes the mainstream of knowledge acquisition in oriental philosophy.

In addition, Laozi's lessons of Dao are compared with the intuitive knowledge of the so-called 'the undifferentiated esthetic continuum' in western scientific philosophy. Such a concept was primarily introduced by Northrop (1946, p. 186) to refer to 'all-embracing, initial, immediately apprehended fact with which any attempt to arrive at a description of experience must begin.' The word 'continuum' denotes the fact that it is an 'all-embracing field,' 'differentiated' indicates that 'within this field there occur factors in one part different from those in another and 'aesthetic' ensures that 'it is the qualitatively ineffable, emotionally moving continuum of colors, sounds and feelings which the artist presents in its immediacy' (ibid.). It is pointed out by Northrop (1946, p. 208) that nonbeing (*wú*无) in Laozi's philosophy is not a determinate being (*yǒu*有) or what Laozi called empty space (*chōng*冲) but essentially an undifferentiated aesthetic continuum which is obtained through intuition. As being (*yǒu*有) and nonbeing (*wú*无) are two different manifestations of Dao, in this sense, Dao can be regarded as an 'undifferentiated aesthetic continuum.'

Through cultural comparison, the similarities and close relationship between Laozi's thoughts and western philosophy have been explicitly reflected in the translation. Meanwhile, this comparison promotes the target readers' understanding of Laozi's thoughts and highlights the value of Laozi's intuitive knowledge in western scientific philosophy, especially in the period when crass materialism was rapidly tottering.

### 4.2.2 Further interpreting Laozi's philosophy by cultural supplementation

In part of the prolegomena, the translator supplements some statements and expressions from other ancient Chinese philosophers, especially Zhuangzi and Confucius, to explain Laozi's philosophy. As many of Laozi's philosophical thoughts have been developed by Zhuangzi, Lin attempts to further clarify Laozi's philosophy through Zhuangzi's illustrations of Laozi's thoughts. For example,

Laozi's expressions *tiān dì bù rén* (天地不仁) and *shèng rén bù rén* (圣人不仁) are literally translated by the translator as 'Nature is unkind' and 'The Sage is unkind.' Based on Zhuangzi's illustration of these expressions, Lin (1948, pp. 65-66) interprets these seemingly confusing sayings of Laozi, focusing on three points in the commentary: (1) Laozi's view of the great Dao rises above all individual things and persons. (2) Both Zhuangzi and Laozi emphasize Dao benefits all without conscious kindness. In *Zhuangzi*, the Confucian doctrine of 'ren (humanity),' as being a doctrine leading to conscious affection, is constantly under attack. (3) Zhuangzi emphasizes that the true love of mankind exceeds the Confucian partial love of one's relatives. Lin's interpretation of Laozi's philosophy by introducing views on relevant topics from *Zhuangzi* also reflects the inconsistency of certain philosophical principles between Taoism and Confucianism.

Although Laozi and Zhuangzi's teachings have many similarities, Lin supplements different views of the two Daoist philosophers in both of introduction and commentaries following each translated chapter. In the introduction, Lin (1948, pp. 10-11) briefly points out two main distinctions. Firstly, Laozi's principal teaching is humility. Recurrent themes include gentleness, resignation and the futility of contentiousness, the strength of weakness and the tactical advantage of lying low. Such themes can hardly be found in the sayings of *Zhuangzi*. What Zhuangzi is inclined to speak about is the virtue of quiescence and keeping one's spiritual power through tranquility and rest. Secondly, developing a complete theory of knowledge and reality and the futility of language, Zhuangzi feels and expresses more poignantly the pathos of human life. His most beautiful passages are on the subject of life and death. In commentaries following each translated chapter, distinctions are explored in more detail by the translator. Undoubtedly, the interpretation of Laozi's philosophy based on Zhuangzi's illustration and the complementary distinctions between Laozi and Zhuangzi's philosophical thoughts greatly contributed to the target readers' deep and comprehensive understanding of Daoist philosophy.

Moreover, the translator draws on the philosophical thoughts of other ancient Chinese philosophers, such as Confucius and Liezi, to explain Laozi's philosophy in paratexts. For instance, when it comes to Laozi's saying *bù shàng xián, shǐ mǐn bù zhēng* (不尚贤，使民不争) in chapter 3, the translator introduces Confucius advocacy of 'Exalting the wise in the government' in the footnote, so as to expound Laozi's disapproval of giving favorable publicity to the wise. In the commentary of chapter 35, Lin introduces Liezi, another Daoist philosopher in ancient China, and quotes his conversation with Guanyin, an officer of the past who persuaded Laozi to write the book of *Dao De Jing*, emphasizing the development of part of the Daoist teachings by Liezi. Besides, Lin's translation of imaginary conversations between Laozi and Confucius reveals the different philosophical teachings of the two philosophers on certain subjects. In short, adding the philosophical thoughts of other Chinese philosophers in paratexts, both reflects the translator's extensive knowledge of Chinese philosophy and provides a diverse Chinese philosophical context for western readers to better perceive Laozi's insights of the source text.

#### **4.2.3 Displaying the translator's cultural stance by cultural foregrounding**

Cultural foregrounding is to locate a culture in the position of being prominence. In paratexts of Lin's translation, the translator's own cultural stance for the communication of source language and culture is explicitly displayed. The translator is inclined to foreground the intrinsic values of the source language and culture by making a positive evaluation of Laozi's thoughts when presenting the similarities and distinctions between Chinese and western philosophical insights, as well as Laozi and other Chinese philosophers' views. As mentioned earlier, the translator has repeatedly emphasized the importance and values of Laozi's philosophy to the progress of western scientific development. The chaos of the modern world, as Lin (1955, p. 579) firmly believes, is due to the total lack of a philosophy of the rhythm of life, which can be found in the book of *Dao De Jing*. The translator's affirmative attitude towards the inherent values of Laozi's philosophy fully demonstrates his recognition of the source culture in translation.

In addition, the function of paratexts in cultural communication foreground the translator's roles as a communicator and messenger in promoting the cultural exchanges between China and the West. It has demonstrated that Lin has endeavored to introduce Laozi's clear, mysterious and profound philosophy to western audiences. The following statement proves high approval of Laozi's book of *Dao De Jing* by the translator, providing even more sufficient evidence for his aim of cross-cultural communication in translation: "If I were asked what antidote could be found in Oriental literature and philosophy to cure this contentious modern world of its inveterate belief in force and struggle for power, I would name this book of 5000 words written some 2,400 years ago" (Lin, 1955, p. 579).

### **5. Conclusion**

This study explores and underlines the functions of paratexts as mediators in assisting Lin Yutang's interpreting the source text of *Dao De Jing* and facilitating the target readers' comprehension and reception of Laozi's thoughts. It probes multiple forms of paratexts in the translated work and observes the functions of paratexts as mediators. The major function of paratexts in cultural communication of Laozi's philosophy for westerners is summarized as guiding target readers through cultural comparison, further interpreting Laozi's philosophy through cultural supplementation and displaying the translator's cultural stance through cultural foregrounding.

Admittedly, this study suggests that in the translation of classical cultural texts, paratexts not merely provide an effective platform for the translator to interpret the source text but also help target readers to better perceive the source culture in translated works. However, by focusing on the paratextual elements added by Lin, this study can only determine the kind of paratextual information provided by the translator within the translated work and his views on translation as a cross-cultural communication activity. It does not further explain the translator's rationale regarding the supplementation of various paratexts and the adoption of different cultural communication strategies. It is recommended that further research be carried out, with a focus not limited to the translator's paratexts within the translated work. The present study can be complemented by one that explores both in-text factors and extra-text factors that exert influence on the translator's cultural communication techniques and his communication view on translation.

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