



Data Mining and Enlightenment Analysis of the Overseas Dissemination of the English Translation of Mencius

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Abstract. As a classic of China, *Mencius* is also known as a treasure of Chinese culture with its splendid spiritual and humanistic contribution. It has a profound influence on the world. In the era of globalization, the dissemination of English-translated versions of *Mencius* is of practical significance. However, current research in this field pays more attention to text and translation strategies and lacks research on the acceptance of translated versions by overseas readers. Therefore, this paper uses data mining technology to conduct a multi-perspective statistical analysis of overseas studies on the English translation of Mencius in order to understand the effects of overseas acceptance and dissemination. From different perspectives, the author has analyzed the relevant data of English-translated versions of *Mencius* in the past ten years (from the year of 2011 to 2021) to find problems and put forward two suggestions: strengthen the basic theoretical research on English-translated versions of *Mencius* and its overseas dissemination; enrich cross research of related disciplines and strengthen government support. Thus, provide multi-level support for future research on the overseas dissemination of *Mencius* to further study the impact of overseas dissemination of relevant classics on China's international image Influence.

Keywords: Data mining · Mencius · English translated versions · overseas dissemination

1 Introduction

Against the historical background today that is themed with multi-polarization, economic globalization, cultural diversification, and social informatization, the competition for comprehensive national strength is becoming increasingly fierce. It's of the urgent need to enhance cultural openness. We must further strengthen our cultural self-confidence, enhance our cultural awareness, and provide strong value guidance [1]. Culture is the cornerstone of a nation and its people, offering important support for prosperity. In today's globalized world, the top priority is to realize the dissemination of our brilliant culture.

Throughout our long history, Confucianism has always exerted a huge influence on the transmission of Chinese culture. *Mencius*, as a representative work of Confucianism, has played an indelible role. *Mencius* is not only a literary classic, but also a masterpiece of philosophy with its rich literary expressions and philosophical connotations. It tells many things such as politics, education, literature, philosophy, and the principles of conducting oneself in the world. Meanwhile, this classic has also had a huge radiating effect on other countries, especially in Southeast Asia, where Japan and South Korea have been deeply influenced by its ideas [2]. Therefore, this paper will discuss *Mencius*, exploring the internal relationship between the English translation of *Mencius* and its overseas dissemination with the aim of providing effective data analysis for helping Chinese culture go global.

With national policies that vigorously promote Chinese culture to go global, classic literary works have seen a better picture. Driven by this, the translation and research of *Mencius* have gained new impetus and results [3]. Domestic scholars have sorted out and analyzed the status quo of overseas dissemination and translation studies of Confucian works, including the Analects of Confucius and *Mencius* [4–6]. However, their existing analysis is limited to the overseas data on the acceptance of overseas audiences [7–9], which makes it difficult to clearly reflect the whole picture of research in this field.

Therefore, this paper mainly adopts data mining technology as well as bibliometrics and comparative analysis. Firstly, it investigates and analyzes the number of English-translated versions of *Mencius*, the frequency of Google Scholar citations, Amazon's inventory, and book review structure to learn about its readers' acceptance and the effect of its dissemination. It is expected to provide empirical data reference for research in this field under multiple perspectives, so as to promote our Chinese culture.

2 Data Research on the English Translated Versions of *Mencius* Overseas

In order to understand the overseas dissemination of the English-translated versions of *Mencius* from multiple perspectives, the author searched data on the World Cat, a global catalog of library materials where people can search for books, music, video, articles, and much more at libraries. With online data on the publication of different English-translated versions of *Mencius*, its Google Scholar citation rate, and Amazon inventory and book review structure, the author further analyzes and demonstrates the overseas dissemination and acceptance of the English-translated versions of *Mencius* among different levels of overseas audiences.

2.1 Overseas Publications of Different English Translated Versions of *Mencius*

WorldCat is an online cataloging joint bibliography of OCLC (Online Computer Library Center). It is a joint cataloging library of libraries and other materials around the world, and it is also the world's largest online bibliographic database [10, 11]. Moreover, the database is updated in real-time, which can directly reflect the latest records of various English translation collections. Relying on the WorldCat database, the author investigates overseas publications of *Mencius*, in order to comprehensively and effectively analyze the

Table 1. Overseas publication of different English translated versions of *Mencius*

Book Name	Publisher	Numbers
<i>Mencius</i>	Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, [2015]	671
<i>Mencius: a new translation</i>	Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966, ©1963.	6
The Book of <i>Mencius</i>	Chicago: Otbebookpublishing, 2021	24
Mengzi yu lu	Beijing Shi: Zhongguo hua qiao chu ban she, 2011.	6
Mengzi wen xuan	Beijing: Ren min wen xue chu ban she, 1985.	10
Mengzi wen fa du ben	Xianggang: Xianggang Zhong wen da xue Xin ya shu yuan zhong wen xi, 1979.	6

acceptance among the entire publishing business [12]. It is found that the publication, to a large extent, reflects the degree of recognition and acceptance among different nations or regions. The greater the number of publications, the higher the recognition and acceptance of that translated version, and the greater the benign leading effect on the overseas dissemination of *Mencius*, and vice versa.

Table 1 shows overseas publications of different English-translated versions of *Mencius*. From Table 1, it can be seen that the Counterpoint and the Toronto edition are the best performers with publications of 671 and 24 respectively. This data shows that these two editions are relatively highly recognized overseas with wider circulation. In contrast, Chinese publishing houses do much worse. Only several publishing houses such as People's Literature Publishing House and China overseas Chinese Publishing House published English-translated versions of *Mencius* overseas. It can be seen that there exists different recognition between publication houses at home and abroad. There's a lack of cultural exchanges, which explains the reason why excellent domestic publications of English-translated versions of *Mencius* did not outperform the other editions overseas. And the scope of transmission is still limited.

2.2 Research on the Citation of Different English-Translated Versions of *Mencius* in Google Scholar

Relying on the Google Scholar search engine, the author investigates the citation of different English-translated versions of *Mencius* in Google Scholar, in order to analyze the acceptance of different English-translated versions of *Mencius* among highly educated readers. Google Scholar is a Google web application where people can search scholarly articles for free [13]. This application includes most of the academic journals published in the world, and it is an easy way to search academic literature extensively. It enables readers to search for many disciplines and sources of information with a keyword [14]. The citation of Google Scholar is directly proportional to the attention of the translation and the acceptance of high-level talents [15, 16]. The higher the citation, the more people pay attention to and study the translation, and the lower the citation, the lower the importance and popularization of the translation by high-level research personnel [17]. Therefore, by studying the citation of English-translated versions of *Mencius* in Google

Table 2. Citation of different English translated versions of Mencius in Google Scholar

Book Name	Writer	Citations
<i>Mencius</i>	B Van Norden	25
The significance of <i>mencius</i>	C Chang	11
<i>Mencius</i>	AK Chan	84
<i>Mencius</i>	Waley, Arthur	396
Late Han Chinese: A Study of the Archaic	Dobson, W. A. C. H.	76
The story of Chinese philosophy	Chai, Chu; Chai, Winberg	67

academics, it can reflect its influence in the academic world to a certain extent, and at the same time, it can reflect the acceptance effect of these translations among high-level readers.

Table 2 shows the citation of some different English-translated versions of *Mencius* in Google Scholar. It can be seen from Table 2 that the three versions have the highest frequency of Google Scholar citations which are Arthur's translation, Dobson's translation, and Chai Chu's translation with citations of 396, 76, and 67 respectively. However, compared with the former 2 versions, Chai Chu's translation citation is still much lower. This also explains the difference in the acceptance between overseas translation dissemination and domestic research. It also reflects different recognition levels of educated readers and the difficulty of integrating the classic Confucian culture with world culture.

2.3 Research on the Inventory and Book Review Structure on the Amazon Website

Relying on the Amazon website, the author investigates the inventory and book review structure of different English-translated versions of *Mencius* in order to analyze the general public's acceptance of *Mencius* overseas [18]. Amazon, in the United States, is currently the largest online bookstore in the world. It has formed a relatively complete reader review system, and these reviews are well-known for their fairness and reference value [19]. Through the investigation and analysis of the inventory of different English-translated versions of *Mencius* on Amazon and the overall book review structure, we can get a glimpse of ordinary readers' understanding of the translation methods of the books, and also reflect the share of different translated editions in overseas markets to a certain extent. At the same time, overseas readers' ratings on translations can also reflect readers' preferences for different versions. The degree of dissemination and popularity of the English-translated versions of *Mencius* overseas can be seen as well.

Table 3 shows the inventory, book review and evaluation of different English translated versions of *Mencius*. Through the research, it is found that the inventories of Penguin English translation, Chinese Edition English translation and Translations from the Asian Classics English translation are 2, 3 and 2 respectively. The overall inventory of different English translated versions of *Mencius* is not high. Amazon's recognition

Table 3. Inventory and book review structure on the Amazon website

Book Name	Inventory Quantity	Evaluation Quantity	Overall Evaluation Score
<i>Mencius</i> (Penguin Classics)	2	107	4.2
<i>Mencius</i> (Translations from the Asian Classics)	2	9	4.5
Mengzi (<i>Mencius</i>): With Selections from Traditional Commentaries	-	33	4.5
<i>Mencius</i> (Chinese Edition)	3	3	4.7

of and confidence in the books are not high so the inventory will not be kept sufficient. There is still a long way to go before traditional Confucian culture go global.

Judging from overall evaluation score, the Penguin Classics translation is the most popular one in the market among overseas readers. The electronic audio method of Mengzi (*Mencius*) may be in line with the reading habits and cognition of overseas readers as it adopts classic literary translation method and fully fit overseas readers' lacking cultural background knowledge. It not only preserves the characteristics and original appearance of Chinese culture, but also allows Western readers to better understand the cultural origins. The translation of the Chinese Edition adopts the method of Chinese literal translation. Although it can fully retain the inner philosophical meaning of *Mencius* and with a high evaluation score, the amount of comments is at a very low level, indicating that overseas readers are not very much attracted by this kind of translation, so the acceptance is low so as its dissemination.

3 Data Mining Experiment and Analysis

In order to explore the correlation of data in different English translations of “Mencius”, we further classify and aggregate algorithms to fit related data. This is meaningful for in-depth exploration of the correlation between different data.

3.1 Experiments of Different Publishers, Citations and Stock Quantities, Number of Reviews and Comprehensive Review Scores

In order to further explore the role of different publishing houses in the overseas dissemination of “Mencius”, we visualized the aggregation relationship between different publishing houses and the number of reviews, the overall evaluation score and the number of citations as shown in Fig. 1. In the experiment, we can find that Beijing Shi played

the most important role in the overseas dissemination of “Mencius”, with the highest citations and overall evaluation scores.

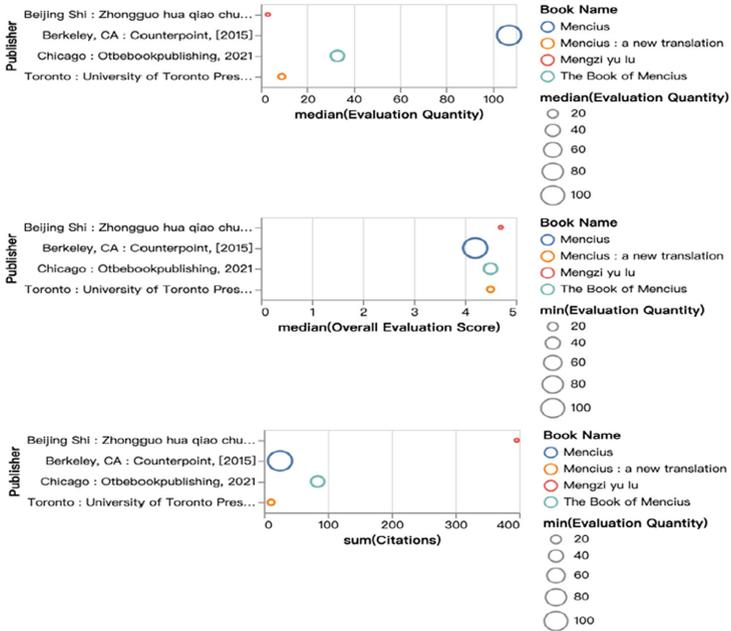


Fig. 1. Experiments with different publishers and inventory quantities, number of reviews and comprehensive review scores

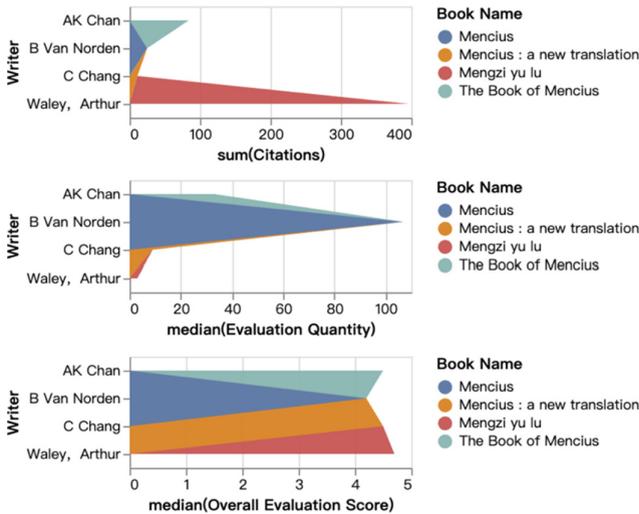


Fig. 2. Experiments with different authors and number of citations and reviews, and overall review scores

At the same time, the relationship experiments between different authors and related parameters are shown in Fig. 2. We mapped the relevant parameters of the papers by different authors and expressed them using area ratios. It can be seen that the number of English translations of the original text of “Mencius” is the most popular, which may mean that the original text is more attractive to readers and has a more positive meaning for dissemination.

At the same time, in order to further illustrate the role of different citation numbers in the overseas dissemination of “Mencius”, we visualized the aggregate relationship between different citation numbers and evaluation numbers, overall evaluation scores, and citation numbers, as shown in Fig. 3. In the experiment, we can find that the number of citations and overall evaluation scores of most publishing houses are still relatively uniform, but Beijing Shi is still much higher than others, which has played an important role in the overseas dissemination of “Mencius”.

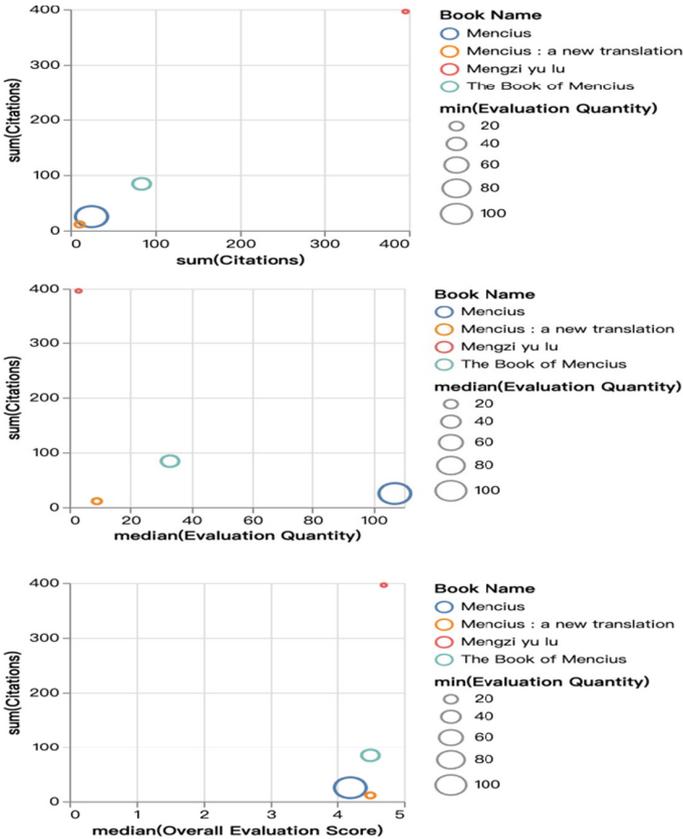


Fig. 3. Experiments with different citations and inventories, number of reviews, and comprehensive review scores

3.2 Relationship Analysis Experiments for Different Citations, Comments and Composite Review Scores

In order to further explain the internal correlation between different citations, number of evaluations, and comprehensive evaluation scores, we use the number of evaluations as a transparency parameter and use the area method to explore the actual relationship between different variables, as shown in Fig. 4. In the experiment, we can find that there is a strong correlation between the number of evaluations and the comprehensive evaluation score, the number of citations and the comprehensive evaluation score in most books, which means that the English translation of “Mencius” needs more relationship evaluations in the process of overseas dissemination. Together with the number of citations, this is the key parameter leading to overseas influence.

And in order to further illustrate the internal correlation between different inventory quantities, evaluation quantities and comprehensive evaluation scores, we respectively use the comprehensive evaluation scores as color parameters and use the histogram method to explore the actual relationship between different variables, as shown on the left in Fig. 5. In the experiment, we can find that the larger the stock quantity, the more positive evaluation scores it brings, which means that more attention should be paid to the stock quantity in the overseas dissemination of the English translation of “Mencius”, which is also the key factor leading to the overseas influence.

Finally, based on all parameters, we use a forecasting algorithm to make nonlinear forecasts on the overall change trend, and the overall forecast results are shown on the right side of Fig. 4. We can find that the overall prediction results are basically consistent with the results of our above analysis.

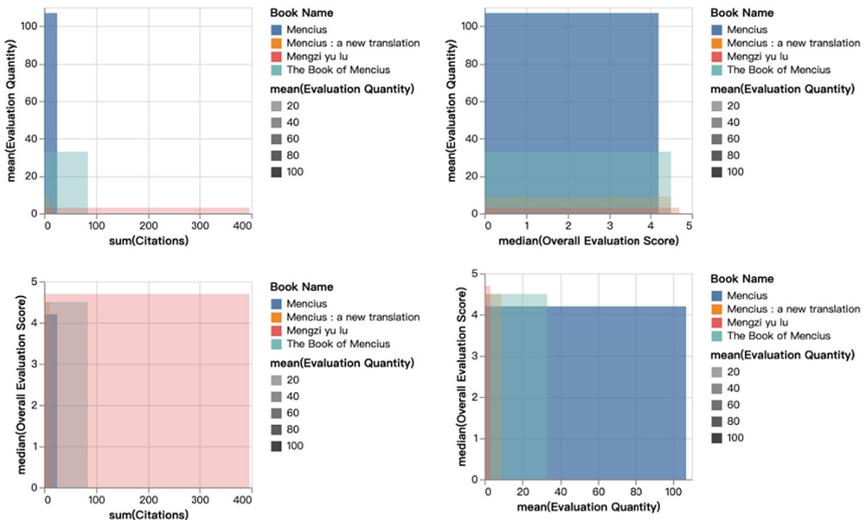


Fig. 4. Variable correlation experiment of different number of evaluations, comprehensive evaluation score and citations, number of evaluations and comprehensive evaluation score.

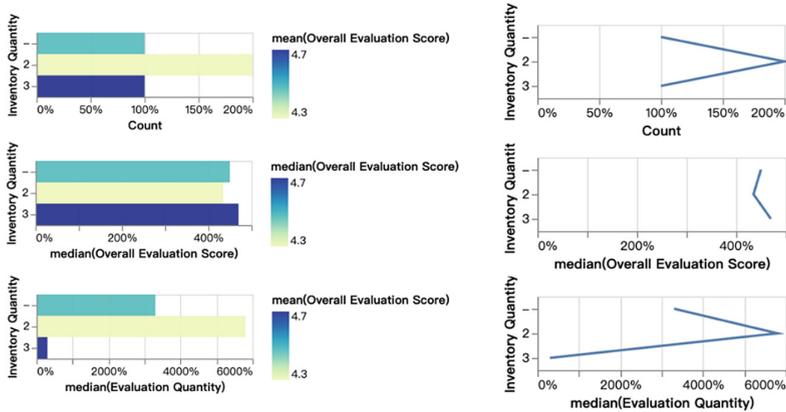


Fig. 5. Variable correlation experiments of different inventory quantities and citations, evaluation quantities, and comprehensive evaluation scores

4 Questions and Reflections

To analyze the overseas dissemination of different English-translated versions of *Mencius*, the author starts with three perspectives, which are publication amount, Google Scholar citation, and Amazon inventory and book review structure to investigate the acceptance among different groups of readers, which are publishing houses, scholars and ordinary readers. The study found that the overseas research and dissemination of English-translated versions of *Mencius* do not meet expectations in terms of market circulation and public acceptance. Throughout the years from 2011 to 2021, our national policies have always been boosting the development of translation and dissemination of *Mencius*. However, there are still some problems in the current research on *Mencius* translation and overseas dissemination, including the lack of basic theoretical research, the lag of research by high-level personnel, and the need to strengthen national support. Facing various problems and challenges, many improvements can be made from the following aspects.

4.1 Strengthen the Basic Theoretical Research

First of all, our understanding of and attention to research on the English translation of *Mencius* is still limited. After statistically investigating Amazon's inventory and book review structure in this field, we found that no domestic representative works have been effectively disseminated overseas, which further demonstrates the lack of basic theoretical research in China. Secondly, although the research on *Mencius* continues to become a hot spot, most of the research is limited to philosophical research from different perspectives but few targeted research on overseas dissemination. To some extent, this status quo does not meet the expectation of some readers who are interested in Confucian culture. In addition, the current research on overseas dissemination of *Mencius* relatively lacks a discussion on the relationship between *Mencius* and other Confucian classics. In addition, a considerable part of the literature on the translation of *Mencius* focuses on the

discussion of translation practice, and the application of overseas spreading is relatively scattered and lacks systematisms. There has been no fundamental improvement in the development of relevant research in overseas spreading in the past ten years. The current research on the model of translation studies is obviously lagging. It still adopts the analysis method in the early days, ignoring finding the latest theoretical references for overseas dissemination in theory studies.

Give full play to the role of academic research institutions such as the Translation Professional Committee and the Institute of Confucian Works and Literature, carry out research on the combination of Confucian works translation theory and foreign languages, and facilitate the development of the discipline. Promote effective exchanges and cooperation between the literary and foreign language circles through special seminars and academic annual conferences held by various academic research institutions. In the study of Confucian literature, the participation of foreign language translation circles is enhanced, and cutting-edge theoretical paradigms in the field of translation studies, such as social translation studies, cognitive translation studies, and the cultural turn theory of the cultural school, are applied to the study of Confucian culture, which contributes to the construction of Confucian theory and overseas dissemination research.

4.2 National Policy Support Needs to Be Strengthened

The current overseas dissemination of English translated version of *Mencius* is a marginal discipline so it requires not only the efforts of researchers but also the comprehensive support of national policies. Taking the project in the study of *Mencius* as an example, as of October 15, 2021, there are a total of 31 projects related to the study of *Mencius* in the National Social Science Fund projects over the years, of which there are only 2 projects on the English translation and overseas dissemination of *Mencius*. The insufficiency of these projects directly reflects problems such as low research enthusiasm and limited national policy support.

After the First Session of the Thirteenth National People's Congress and the First Session of the Thirteenth National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference held in Beijing, China once again entered the "two sessions" and focused on national cultural strategies to help Chinese culture go global. These opportunities will break down the various barriers and constraints faced by the overseas dissemination research of the English-translated versions of *Mencius*. Improve the policy mechanism, establish a multi-department coordination mechanism such as finance, culture, and publishing, and provide policy guarantees for the study of *Mencius* and related research. Set up a key project of *Mencius* English translation and overseas dissemination research and increase financial support. Encourage the investment of capital at all levels of society, set up special funds in various forms, and actively improve the financial supervision system at all levels to provide the necessary financial support for the promotion of Confucianism to go out.

5 Conclusion

For Chinese culture to go global, there are not only many obstacles such as thinking mode, language, customs, and habits, but also many cross-cutting problems. With data analysis in this paper, there exist problems such as single dimension, outdated research paradigms, and unsystematic supporting policies. At the same time, the analysis of data at home and abroad found that overseas dissemination of the English-translated versions of *Mencius* is not only limited by language or people's cognition, but also by the lack of basic theoretical research and the lack of high-end research and the limitation of national policy support. Given strong support from national policies, we should actively strengthen the construction and cross-cultivation of relevant disciplines to bring out more multidimensional study and more talents serving the research. Thus, overseas dissemination of Confucian classics such as *Mencius* can better serve The "Belt and Road" development initiative and cultural policies to build national cultural self-confidence.

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