

# Research on English Translation of Chinese Medical Classics

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**Abstract:** With the implementation of the “The Belt and Road” policy and the strong promotion of Chinese culture “going global”, the unique charm of Chinese culture has become more and more prominent. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, the great role played by Chinese medicine in the fight against the epidemic has made scholars at home and abroad more and more aware of the culture of Chinese medicine and the valuable value of Chinese medicine, thus setting off another wave of “Chinese medicine research”. The data in this paper were obtained from the Chinese medical classics in English translation (2000-2022) in the CNKI database, and combined with the traditional measurement and statistical methods and Cite Space visualization software, to clarify the current development of Chinese medical classics in English translation in China. The results show that the scope of research on the English translation of Chinese medical classics is relatively narrow, with the core research institutions mainly being major medical colleges and universities, and the studied books are mainly focused on the well-known classics, and the research method is relatively single. Therefore, based on the paper published in the past 20 years, the writer analyzes the current research hotspots in this field and the reasons for their formation, hoping to put forward some suggestions for promoting the development of English translation of Chinese medical classics and further promoting the dissemination of the excellent culture of Chinese medicine to the outside world.

**Keywords:** Chinese medical classics; English translation; CiteSpace

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## 1. Introduction

Chinese medical classics are the treasures of the Chinese civilization for thousands of years and the cultural heritage shared by the whole world. It has a long history and a rich cultural heritage. It reflects traditional Chinese values, the holistic view of the unity of nature and human beings, and the benevolent view of the universal benefit of all spirits. The spread of Chinese medicine classics to foreign countries began in the Qin and Han dynasties, more than two thousand years ago<sup>[1]</sup>. With the passage of time, the main position of the study of Chinese medicine classics translation has long since shifted to China, and more and more scholars have begun to pay attention to and enter the field, and related translations, books, textbooks, and papers have been published, presenting a prosperous prospect, and the status of the study of the history of Chinese medicine classics translation has thus become increasingly prominent. With the implementation of the strategy of “going abroad” of Chinese culture and a series of cultural translation projects<sup>[2]</sup>, the research on the English translation of Chinese medical texts has attracted increasing attention from the academic community. This paper analyzes the current situation of the English translation of Chinese medical classics using CiteSpace visualization software, with a view to providing substantive reference and reference for the study of English translation of Chinese classics.

## 2. Data collection and research methods

### 2.1 Data collection

The study used the CNKI database as the source of journal papers, and only 109 papers were obtained by setting “Chinese medical classics + English translation” as the title search term, and the publication time span was short and the institutions of publication were diverse. Therefore, the writer used “Chinese medical texts + Huangdi neijing + Nan Jing + Sheng Nong’s herbal classic + Treatise on Cold Pathogenic and Miscellaneous Diseases” AND “English translation” as the subject term, and searched for an unlimited period of time, and obtained 371 documents in total. After manual screening to eliminate duplicates and irrelevant documents, 390 documents were finally obtained. The first literature appeared in 2000, so the time span of the study data analysis was set as 2000-2022.

## 2.2 Research method

The study extracted metadata information from 390 papers, such as paper title, author's name, author's unit, journal name, year of publication, keywords and abstract, etc., and saved them as txt text files after manual noise suppression processing. The number of articles, core institutions, and main authors of Chinese medicine classics research was counted in turn to analyze the research profile. The data were imported into CiteSpace software to generate keyword network co-occurrence map, timeline map, and emergent keyword map, to mine information elements, and to form the quantitative rationale for research hotspots and frontier analysis.

## 3. Overview of Research on English Translation of Chinese Medical Classics

### 3.1 Quantity of published articles

The analysis of annual publication volume helps to grasp the overall development trend of research in a subject area<sup>[3]</sup>. In general, the number of publications on the research of English translation of medical classics in China has shown an increasing trend. 2003-2012, when the SARS epidemic was serious in China, "Chinese medicine played an important role in the fight against SRAS"<sup>[4]</sup>. The important value of Chinese medicine has received widespread attention, as shown in Figure 1, which shows that the number of articles published in 2004 has increased compared to the previous year;

At the same time, the research results of scholars such as Li Zhaoguo, Xie Zhufan, and Zhu Zhongbao were published, all of which contributed to the creation of a new landscape for Chinese medicine translation research<sup>[5]</sup>. With the increasing interest of researchers in this field and the introduction of China's "The Belt and Road" policy in 2013, the number of articles published in journals after 2014 showed a clear upward trend. Meanwhile, the outbreak of Covid-19 has seen Chinese medicine play a crucial role in the fight against the epidemic, as well as sparking a wave of research on Chinese culture and Chinese medicine at home and abroad.

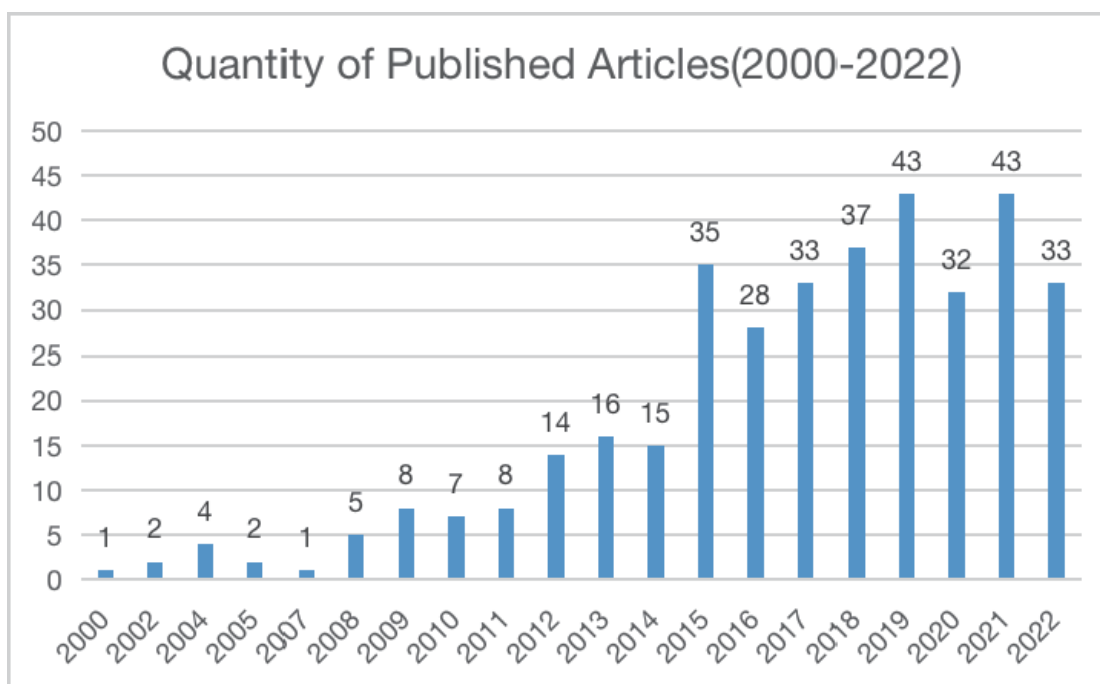


Figure 1. Quantity of Published Articles (2000-2022)

### 3.2 Keyword analysis

Keywords reflect the main content of a paper's research, and this study applied CiteSpace to analyze the co-occurrence of keywords in the included papers. There were 330 keywords appearing in the included papers, and 9 keywords appearing more than or equal to 10 times, namely English translation (95), Huang Di Neijing (61), translation (43), Chinese medical classics (30),<sup>[6]</sup> translation strategies (25), English translation of Chinese medicine (24), Chinese medicine (14), Chinese medicine translation (11) rhetoric (10), high-frequency keywords also represent the research hotspots in this field. Although translation strategies, methods, and techniques are much discussed in the translation community, the problems of unclear definitions, improper classification, and confusion of concepts are more common. Translation strategies are more extensive than translation methods, and the implementation of strategies is reflected in the application of specific methods. This may be due to the fact that the theoretical framework in the field of the English translation of Chinese medicine classics is not yet perfect and needs a lot of learning and practice to gradually form its own framework<sup>[7]</sup>. Therefore, the theoretical framework of it should be further deepened, specified, and systematized.

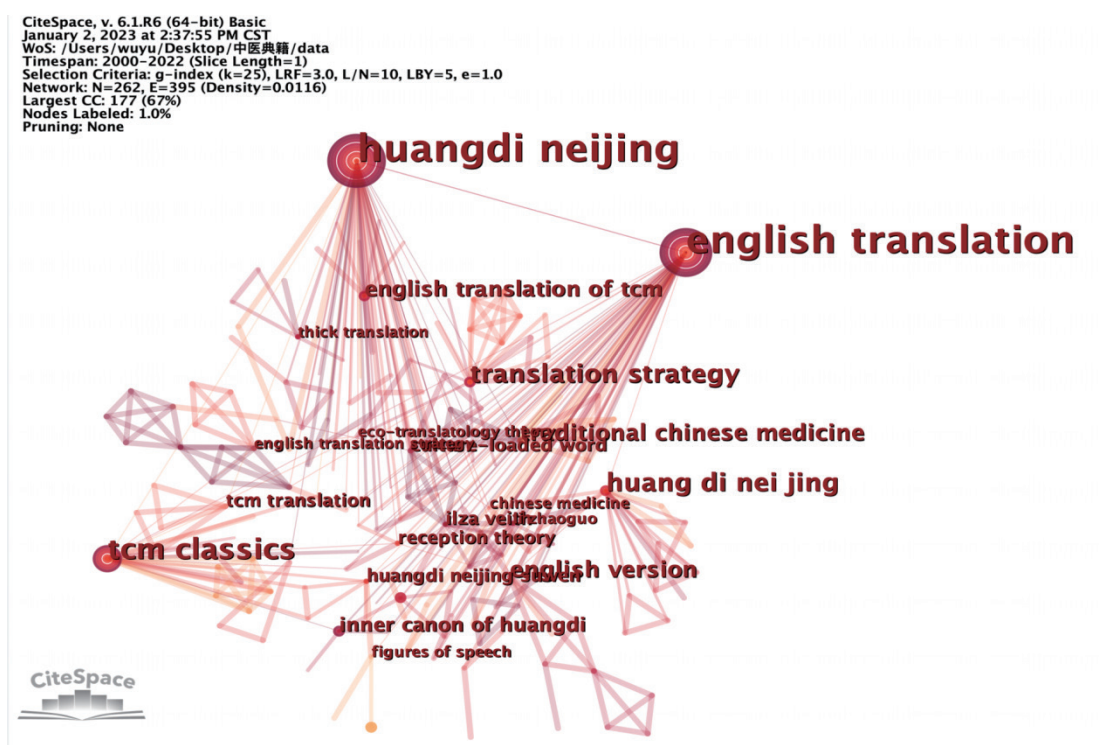


Figure 2. Keywords

## 4. Conclusion

Reviewing the main achievements of the research on the English translation of Chinese medical classics in China during the period 2000-2022, the field has made certain achievements; however, as the research progresses, some problems have gradually emerged, the most prominent one being that the academic community still lacks sufficient understanding of the importance and urgency of reconstructing the Chinese medical discourse system through translation. Therefore, on the basis of the aforementioned achievements, scholars of Chinese medicine translation research should pay attention to the new features presented in the field of Chinese medicine translation in China in terms of theoretical vision, research objects, and research methods, reconstruct the Chinese medicine discourse through retranslation, and solve the problem of westernization of Chinese medicine discourse from the source, so as to better promote the excellent Chinese medicine culture in China.

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