ARABIC-CHINESE AND ENGLISH RELAY TRANSLATION (1970-2020):

A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BIBLIOMETRIC

STUDY

by

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this thesis is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material published or written by a third party, except where permission has been obtained and/or appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

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Abstract

The dissemination of Arab heritage has a long history in China, but the first genuine Arabic-Chinese translation interchange did not occur until a century ago. The translation of the classic, *Arabian Nights,* helped the Chinese people understand Arab culture for the first time. On the other hand, the development of Chinese in Arab countries has a very recent history. Since the classic Chinese book, *The Analects,* was translated into Arabic by Ma Jian a century ago, the translation of Chinese literary works remains rare, with the majority of them being translated from English or other western languages via relay translation. In the twentieth century, the government of China vigorously promoted exchanges between Chinese and Arab cultures, which has further deepened the cultural encounters between the two nations. This thesis examines translation from Arabic into Chinese from 1970 to 2020, with a historiographical and bibliometric approach, including through English relay translation.

Search Terms: Arabic-Chinese translation, English relay translation, Historiography, Bibliometrics.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Overview

This chapter includes an introduction to the direction and purpose of the thesis as well as a summary of its structure.

Compared with the exchanges between China and other countries and regions globally, the exchanges between the Arab world and China are ancient. Zhaoyi (2002) suggests that "China and the Arab region have contact with each other in culture and literature much earlier than the relevant records in history books" (p. 15). As early as 139 BCE, Zhang Qian sent an envoy to Tiaozhi. According to some scholars, Tiaozhi refers to Mesopotamia, including the Arabian Peninsula. Ban Chao, the guard squad of the Western Regions, supervised Gan Ying to go to Qin and arrived at Tiaozhi in CE 97. In other words, about 500 years before the development of Islamic civilization, there were already encounters between China and Arabia.

The Arabic language has developed for more than 100 years in China compared with other Asian languages. Dejun and Liangyue (2013) conclude that the Arabic language was first introduced to China during the Han dynasty, and Chinese have been learning and using Arabic during four dynasties which are Tang (618-907 CE), Song (960-1279 CE), Yuan (1271-1368 CE), and Ming (1368-1644 CE). In the middle of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 CE), the Arabic language was a religious language used by many Hui people that lived in northwestern China. As a result, the majority of the time, the study of the Arabic language took place within mosques. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, an increasing number of intellectuals and professionals started to study Arabic, resulting in the publication of several publications books on Arabic-Chinese vocabulary, dictionaries, and grammar. These works also served as a solid basis for the subsequent Arabic to Chinese translation process (Jikun, 2010, p. 20).

Starting from *Arabian Nights* translated by Ma Fuchu, Ma Jian, and others, Arabic-Chinese translation has made its way into China officially. However, China still has very little understanding of the culture and language of Arab countries, as shown

by the fact that there are only a few translated publications available on the market. Many university libraries can only locate a few dozen books, which is a small number when compared to the number of books available in English translations. According to *National Bibliography* (2020), from the time that there was a translation of *The Quran* in the 18th century until today, the number of Arabic literary works translated by Chinese translators has not exceeded 400, while the number of English works has reached 460 in just the past ten years. It is undeniable that Arabic-Chinese translation is in its infancy, owing mostly to a scarcity of translators and a disregard for cultural differences, which has resulted in consumers' disinterest in literature translated from Arabic (Jikun, 1988, p. 14).

However, since the reform and opening-up in 1978, the Chinese government has vigorously promoted the translation movement from Arabic to Chinese. The Arabic language has steadily gained recognition as a result of the extensive interactions and solid collaborations between China and Arab nations in a wide range of areas. In addition to the more than 40 colleges that now provide courses in Arabic, there are also five universities that offer translation courses between Arabic and Chinese. Meanwhile, with the development of translation courses, the number of Arabic books and works translated into Chinese has also increased. In the 21st century, the Chinese government has promoted two translation projects in collaboration with Arab countries; one is the 'Translation and Publication Project of Ancient Codes and Records of Arabic and Chinese' and another is the 'Translation and Publication Project of Chinese and Saudi Arabia Classics and Contemporary Literary Works'. Though research, with the help of these two projects, the number and quality of Arabic-language books and works translated into Chinese have grown substantially.

At present, only a few experts who specialize in the history of Arabic in China have researched this area. Moreover, the history of Arabic translation into Chinese is known only in the 21st century when a few scholars made in-depth summaries, and the historiography of Arabic-Chinese translation is even rarer. As a result, this thesis bridges the gap by summarizes the books translated from Arabic into Chinese from

1970 to 2020 as well as relay translations through English, and it examines the present status and concerns surrounding Arabic translation. And also this thesis expresses the necessity of relay translation for Arabic-Chinese translation via English. At the same time, it discusses and evaluates the two major translation projects that China is currently vigorously developing: 'Translation and Publication Project of Ancient Codes and Records of Arabic and Chinese' and 'Translation and Publication Project of Chinese and Saudi Arabia Classics and Contemporary Literary Works'.

1.2. Organization of the Thesis

In addition to this introductory chapter, this thesis includes four chapters. Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review, which includes Arabic-Chinese translation, research on cultural issues in translation, the introduction of the historiography of translation, and relay translation. Chapter 3 examines the two translation projects between Arabic and Chinese. This chapter begins with examining the current state of Arabic-Chinese translation, then analyzes the issues and causes, and lastly offers an introduction and evaluation of the two translation projects. Chapter 4 describes the bibliometrics of translation production from Arabic to Chinese (1970-2020) and relay translation (Arabic- English- Chinese). Chapter 5 brings the thesis to a close and makes suggestions for the future development of Arabic-Chinese translation.

Chapter 2: Arabic-Chinese translation

The previous chapter briefly introduced the history and current situation of Arabic-Chinese translation. This chapter mainly summarizes the most pertinent research on Arabic-Chinese and English relay translation. Concurrently, it also provides theoretical support for the topics that are discussed in this thesis.

2.1.   Overview

Translation research no longer only involves transferring word by word, but is a fusion process of many aspects of knowledge. In this process, historiography and culture are equally crucial for translating Arabic and Chinese. In order to have a complete understanding of the historiographic bibliometrics of Arabic-Chinese translation and relay study, some terms need to be clearly defined, such as historiography and relay translation. Therefore, the study of Arabic-Chinese translation conducted by previous scholars is discussed in this chapter, as are the definitions of translation history and the distinction between history and historiography. Meanwhile, this chapter also discusses the definitions of relay translation, which is Arabic to Chinese via English.

2.2.   Arabic-Chinese Translation

Hassanein and Zhai (2019) state that Arabic and Chinese are subordinate to different language families and cultures. This section will examine translation from Arabic into Chinese, which is the process of transferring the Arabic language and culture to the Chinese language and culture. Therefore, Arabic-Chinese translation facilitates cultural interchange and growth between the two nations. The Dean of the College of Arabic language at the School of International Studies at Peking University, Zhang Hongyi (2019), presented a workshop on Arabic-Chinese translation arguing that it will be impossible to head towards modernity and modernization in either China or the Arab world, without the help of the translation movement. Moreover, Mrs. Zhang Hongyi believes that it is necessary to explain translation in order to attain the aim of correct delivery of the Chinese or Arabic materials in question. His idea implies that

the translation is an explanatory process, which may aid readers in developing a better grasp of the source language and culture.

In terms of the discourse over the translation of Arabic into Chinese, most Chinese scholars consider *the Quran* as representative of the first introduction of Arab culture to China. Shuhong (2013) states that the translation of *the Quran* marked the beginning of the translation of Arabic literature into Chinese, since this holy classic is also a work of literary art in its own right. Shasha (2014) also believes that a more conservative view about Arabic-Chinese translation originated from *the Quran*.

However, some academics argue that *Qasidah al-Burdah* was the first translation of Arabic texts into Chinese. Weilie (1986) believes that the first accurate Arabic-Chinese translation was the *Qasidah al-Burdah* translated by Ma Anli, photocopied and republished by the Beijing People's Literature Publishing House in 1956. Despite the fact that *the Quran* was available to Chinese readers before it, he had his own reasons:

> First of all, the translation of *the Quran* has been limited in scope, and secondly, *Qasidah al-Burdah* was directly translated from Arabic, setting a precedent for the translation of Arabic into Chinese. It has a significant historical significance in the history of Arab-Chinese cultural contacts, and there should be no dispute about it. (Weilie,1986, p. 54)

Additionally, since *the Quran* and *Qasidah al-Burdah* are both religious literature, many readers and intellectuals have a limited understanding of them. As a result, a large number of Chinese academics have investigated and evaluated the *Arabian Nights*. For decades in China, readers have adored the novel *Arabian Nights*, which is known for its great imagination and vivid imagery. The translation of *Arabian Nights* was awarded the prestigious 'First National Excellent Foreign Literature Book Award' in 1991 in China. Weilie (1986) claims that since *Arabian Nights* created such a lasting impact on the reader, *Arabian Nights* can be considered synonymous with Arabic literary works.

In addition to *Arabian Nights*, *The Cairo Trilogy* by Egyptian author Naguib Mahfouz received the same prize in China in 1991. Mahfouz's writings and Egyptian

culture piqued the curiosity of a large number of Chinese readers. From the early 1980s, the translations of Mahfouz's novels were only found in some periodicals. But after he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1988, his work became the most translated and researched. Many Chinese scholars have examined and researched Mahfouz's works from different aspects, such as Egyptian culture and the status of women. Shuhong (2009) describes that Mahafouz's work has been intensively studied in China because the Chinese people and intellectuals have a profound affection towards it. There are three different Arabic-Chinese translations of *The Cairo Trilogy*, with a fourth edition coming out shortly, enabling readers to compare and contrast the concept and appeal of the original work.

Poetry is also an essential part of the translation between Arabic and Chinese. Jikun (2001) believes that Chinese and Arabic poetry are very similar in many ways, from the format and rhythm of the poetry to the theme and content.

Ma Anli translated *Qasidah al-Burdah* from Arabic to Chinese because it imitates the classic Chinese poetry, *The Book of Songs*. The four-character per line pattern is adopted and it is known as *Book of Songs of Arab Countries* in China. The late Chinese scholar, Ma Jian, highly affirmed this translation, saying: "This is the first time that Arabic poetry has been translated into Chinese poetry. This attempt is quite successful, and it is an inspiration to post-scholars" (as cited in Shuhong, 2013).

On the other hand, some scholars also put forward that Arabic-Chinese translation works are still rare. Even in China's educated circles, there is little enthusiasm for Arabic-Chinese translation. Jikun (1988) expresses his dissatisfaction with the current state and position of Arabic literature in China. When people talk about world literature and foreign literature, they refer to western literature. The dazzling array of bookstores contain primarily European, American, and Soviet Russian literature. He still believes that western nations place a higher value on Arab culture and translation when it comes to introducing Arabic literature and translation into their nations. This situation also illustrates the importance of Arab culture. China, on the other hand, is still lagging behind in terms of both quantity and quality.

Weilie (1986), Jikun (2001), Yan (2013), and other Chinese scholars state that the total number of translations of Arabic works in China is limited. The scarcity and limitations in Arabic-Chinese translation reveals that there is a need to let more Chinese or Arabic scholars pay more attention which is the gap this thesis is trying to fulfill.

2.3.   Culture and Translation

According to Spencer-Oatey (2012), culture is a difficult term to define. For a long time, researchers have struggled to come up with a coherent definition of culture. According to Apte (1994), "Despite a century of efforts to define culture adequately, there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature" (as cited in Spencer-Oatey, 2012, p. 13).

However, some scholars have offered definitions of culture; for example, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) believe that:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviors acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p.181, as cited in Adler, 1997, p.14)

Talyor (1871) defines culture as a complex whole, including knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other abilities and habits acquired by human beings as members of society (as cited in Bracaj, 2014). Language is also a part of a culture, and it can also represent a part of people's living habits.

Meanwhile, Spencer-Oatey (2012) summarizes twelve essential cultural features, such as "culture is a descriptive, not an evaluative concept" (p. 3); "culture is associated with social groups" (p. 7); and "culture is learned" (p. 12). The various characteristics of culture also make it more difficult to define the term culture. The cultural features also indirectly reveals a relationship between the Arab culture and Chinese culture and a cultural relationship between the two languages.

There are also some academics who study the cultural differences between Arabic and Chinese. Daher (2009) states that the struggle between the Chinese and Arab cultures has seldom ceased throughout history. Such as food culture, clothing culture and others. Muhammad (2016) states that Arabic and Chinese share comparable linguistic systems and mental processes, which are represented in numerous cultural nuances. He emphasized calligraphy in his article. Both Chinese calligraphy and Arabic calligraphy have a vital position globally, and this is where the Arab culture and Chinese culture merge.

In terms of translation, Catford (1978) defines translation and explains that translation has no meaning equivalent but signifier equivalent. Due to the difference between the source language and the target language, translation equivalence has limitations. This limitation exists not just in terms of word meanings, but also in terms of cultural differences. Chinese scholar, Guo (2012) has also endorsed this viewpoint indicating, "The purpose and characteristic of translation is to promote understanding between different countries and nations" (Guo, 2012, p. 343).

Nida and Taber (1969) interpreted the translation process as the closest natural equivalent that reproduces the source of information in the receiving language, primarily in terms of meaning and style.

Cultural issues and translation are inextricably linked, and cultural disputes may contribute to deviations in translation. Torop (2009) pays attention to the relationship between culture and translation. After all, culture functions primarily via translation activities because only by incorporating new text into culture can culture innovate and perceive its particularity.

For the interactions between culture and translation, House (2009) indicates that translation is a cultural activity involving language and a cross-cultural communication act. Culture and language are inextricably linked in translation. In the process of translation, therefore, not only the two languages but also the two cultures come into contact. In this sense, it can be said that translating is a form of intercultural communication' (House, 2009, p.11).

Meanwhile, Snell-Hornby (1988) points out that whether two languages can be translated depends on the degree of cultural embedding, history, and location. Munday (2001) also supports this view that the relationship between culture and translation is a cultural turn, from text translation to cultural and political translation. In many situations, researchers combine culture and translation into a single word. Some scholars have defined cultural translation. Nida and Taber (1982) consider the definition of cultural translation and state that cultural translation presents the information in the original language with the culture that the readers of the target language understand, while the content included may not be available in the original language.

The above research reveals that culture and translation are inextricably linked, and no matter what style of translation is performed, the cultural influence of the target language cannot be disregarded.

2.4. Historiography of Translation

Translation historiography has become one of the most popular subjects in translation studies worldwide. When writing translation historiography, the meaning of 'historiography' should be clarified. Several historians have different definitions of the term's meaning, such as historical writing, historical methodology research, analysis of different interpretation schools of specific historical themes, or historical writing history (Bentley, 2005 , as cited in Cheng, 2012).

Vann (2020) defines historiography as the writing of history:

Historiography, the writing of history, especially the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particular details from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands the test of critical examination. The term historiography also refers to the theory and history of historical writing. (p.1)

Bentley (2005) defines historiography as having a greater degree of meaning. He believes that people are willing to call historiography "philosophy of history" in an applied form in higher-level fields.

Meanwhile, several academics have distinguished between historiography and history. According to Lambert (1993), the difference between history and historiography is that historiography deals with the discourse of historians, and history mainly refers to historical materials. Lustick (1996) thinks that historiography could multiply history because the cases can expand from the case itself to the number of accounts in these cases, allowing for new patterns to emerge.

In terms of the historiography of translation, Donthula (2020) argues that:

The historiography of translation should comprehensively describe the different approaches of the translation traditions of various languages from the antiquity to the present and then explain the emergence of these approaches in the context of their time and show how they reflect the socio-economic, cultural, political, and religious developments of their time. (p.1)

Pym (2014) indicates that archaeology is part of the historiography of translation. In his book, he introduces how to carry out the historiography of translation. Apak (2003) examines and concludes the method of Pym (2014). He argues that organizing the gathered bibliography into a corpus before investigating it is crucial in this strategy. At the same time, he argues that inductive procedures required for analysis from the micro level to the macro level require inductive methods. Pym's method will also be a way of research in this thesis. This thesis evaluates the sections of the sorted bibliography that needs to be studied.

2.5. Relay Translation (Arabic-English-Chinese)

According to Baker and Saldanha (2009), relay translation is about transferring the translated material (in the head or written form) into a third language. Because the source text's meaning is often considered more important than that of the target text, translators and literary critics often overlook relay translation. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that relay translation makes up a significant percentage of all translation work. Until now, there are still many relay translation needs in the translation market, such as simultaneous interpretation at conferences, news reports, popular novels, literature, and subject essays. The rise of this demand as globalization advance is more prospective

but not a decrement. Nowadays, the research on relay translation is still not enough. Baker and Saldanha (2009) indicate that theorists, historians, and others, should pay more attention to this area of research. Relay translation is also regarded as a process of cultural coordination. Scholars are increasingly concerned about the correctness of relay translation since cultural imagery is one of the most important challenges in translation. Baker and Saldanha (2009) also emphasized in the text that it is more challenging to ensure the accuracy of relay translation, especially when the culture of the source language and the target language are quite dissimilar.

As a result, it is crucial to figure out how the original culture is mirrored in the intermediate translation and to judge the original style by examining the intermediate translation. Jichong (2013) argues that expressing the source language's culture is a big challenge for relay translation.

Language is the carrier of culture, and literature is the product of culture. Even if it is a relay translation, it is vital to make every effort to show the reader the culture embodied in the source text. This is one of the biggest challenges of relay translation. (Jichong, 2013, p. 8)

In terms of relay translation from Arabic to Chinese via English, some scholars research it, but still very few. According to Weilie (1986), *Arabian Nights* is a book that Chinese readers are most familiar with, and it enjoys a worldwide reputation. Both classical and vernacular Chinese versions have been translated from English. In the early years of western countries, publishers of the English version of *Arabian Nights*, to satisfy readers' curiosity about the Eastern world, added to the original story and even fabricated fictional stories (Weilie, 1986, p. 54). Therefore the translation's dependability is a major issue. Jikun (2010) suggests that some academics employed relay translation from Arabic to Chinese through English in the early versions of the book. *Arabian Nights* has also become the most popular translated version of the English relay book that many translators have chosen to translate. He also mentions that, to coordinate the development of the political situation in the Middle East in the middle of the 20th century and to show support for the Arab people's just struggle, the

first apex of spreading Arabic literature in China occurred at that time. Translation works such as *The History of Ali Baba and the Forty Robbers*, *The Magic Lamp*, and other works, are mostly translated from English relay.

The translation of *Arabian Nights* also became the pinnacle of Arabic-Chinese translation via English. Later, with the development between Arabic and Chinese translation, more Arabic-Chinese translators emerged, and Arabic directly translated into Chinese became the primary means of entry for most Arabic literature and works (Fengmin, 2021).

The study of the aforementioned researchers provides evidence that Arabic-Chinese translation is advancing rapidly, but whether it is the translation from Arabic to Chinese directly or through English relay translation, the number is far from enough. However, as communication has increased, the importance of translation between Arabic and Chinese has gradually attracted the attention of governments. According to the Chinese government's report (2010), the administrations are thinking of ways to promote Arabic-Chinese translation. Therefore, there have been many Arabic-Chinese translation projects in the past ten years (Fengmin, 2021).

Chapter 3: Translation projects between Arabic and Chinese

The second chapter presented a summary of the thoughts of various researchers on Arabic-Chinese translation, cultural translation, and relay translation. It also highlights the fact that the present state of Arabic-Chinese translation is far from satisfactory. The current chapter elaborates on the existing situation of Arabic-Chinese translation, the prevailing issues and causes, as well as the translation efforts undertaken by Chinese government and Arab countries govenments to ameliorate the current condition. This chapter utilizes chart data to summarize.

3.1.   Situation of Arabic-Chinese Translation

When it comes to the status of Arabic-Chinese translation, this section may be separated into two distinct phases. One is before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the other is after.

The history of Chinese translation begins with *Buddhist Scriptures* in 2 BCE. Compared with *Buddhist Scriptures*, the translation of Arabic-Chinese works was nearly seventeen centuries later. Of course, there are valid explanations for this circumstance. As mentioned before, most Chinese scholars believe that the earliest Arabic translation works introduced into China should be *the Quran*. Despite the fact that this crucial Islamic classic arrived in China as early as the 7th century CE, it was not translated at first due to various reasons. Some religious people did not translate the scattered chapters of *the Quran* until the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty to meet the needs of written books (Shuhong, 2013).

The two historical eras before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, which have already been discussed, are as follows: one historical period was from the late Ming and early Qing dynasties with sporadic translations of *the Quran* until the abdication of the Qing emperor in February 1912; the second was the Republic of China from 1912 to April 1949. It is difficult to locate all of the Arabic-Chinese translation works before the founding of the People's Republic of China. Only six types can be located owning to the large and chaotic number of publishing organizations at that time, and it is not easy to find a full record of them. Another reason is that many translated

works have not been published. During this period, Chinese intellectuals focused their efforts on translating the classic works of *the Quran* and *Arabian Nights*. The translation of well-known works has always been a lifelong ambition of the translator, and these two masterpieces reflect the pinnacle of classical Arabic literature (Shasha, 2014).

The other period is the main research period of this thesis, 1970-2020.Specific to the history of translation of foreign literature, Zhili (2009) states that he tends to regard October 1976 as the starting point for the narrative of a new stage in the history of foreign literary translation in China. Some academics have differing viewpoints about this point in time. They think that the earliest translation of foreign works occurred in 1977. The People's Literature Publishing House was the first to publish some world literary masterpieces in November and December of 1977. This step was unquestionably historic in terms of the translation of foreign literary works into Chinese at that specific time period. However, the completion of any publishing work requires a process. Although the translation of English and American literature in China was still rare in 1976, and no British or American literary translation works were published, foreign translation works started from the end of the Cultural Revolution in October 1976. Since then, the translation of foreign literature into Chinese has been allowed to resume. In China, the month of October 1976 marked the transition from the old to the new. The downfall of the 'Gang of Four' marked the end of the 10-year-long 'Cultural Revolution'. China needed to bid farewell to the 'Cultural Revolution' and move towards a new historical period. Therefore, the starting point for the history of foreign literature translation in the new era was October 1976. Although this is Sun Zhili's (2009) summary of English and American translation works, English and American literature are the absolute main force in the translation and introduction of foreign literature in the new era, and English is also the first foreign language to break the ice (Zhili, 2009). This situation may be used to explain the overall trend in foreign literary translation, leading some Chinese academics to believe that the beginning of a new era in Arabic-Chinese translation might be established at this point (Weilie, 1986).

Between 1970-2020, Arabic-Chinese translation may be classified into three phases. One is from October 1970 to November 1978. This stage is the thawing stage of the Arabic-Chinese translation. A total of five literary translations were published in these eight years. Two of the more famous ones are *Biography of Faisal* and *Collection of Taymūr's Short Stories*. *The Biography of Faisal*, an outstanding leader of Saudi Arabia and a world-famous politician, was published by the Commercial Press in September 1977. In July 1978, People's Literature Publishing House published the *Collection of Taymūr's Short Stories* translated by Peking University's Arabic teacher, Wu Yuchi. Twenty-one short stories have been included in this retranslated version. A common thread running through all of the tales is a condemnation of the societal ills that plagued Egypt throughout the first half of the twentieth century (Yuchi, 1978).

The second period is from 1979 to 1989. This stage is the revival stage of foreign translation and foreign literary translation. Due to the new policy developed by the Chinese government in 1979, foreign literature translation was given official backing and protection. Periodicals dedicated to publishing Arabic-Chinese translation proliferated. The most well-known periodical, *The Arab World*, was founded in 1979. In addition, publishing houses specializing in the publication of translations of foreign literature were established. According to statistics from the *National Bibliography* (2020), 90 Arabic works were translated and published from 1979 to 1989, with 50 pieces appearing in periodicals during that time period.

The third period is from 1990 to the present, and it is considered to be the most prosperous time in the history of foreign literary translation. The number of Arabic-Chinese translations had continuously expanded over the preceding ten years and had taken on a new look after being affected by the market economy. In 1992, China's economic system had transitioned from a planned economy to a market economy. This political situation affected the publication of foreign literary translations. Many universities and city publishing houses could publish translations of foreign literature, which increased the number of Arabic-Chinese translation works (Fengmin, 2021).

3.2.   Issues and Causes

Table 1. Statistics of translated books from Arabic to Chinese (1680 to 1949).

Type of translated books	Number of translated books
Religious Scriptures	38
Classical Poetry	1
Folktales	25
Modern Prose Poetry	6
Fairy Tales	1
Autobiographical novels	1
Total	72
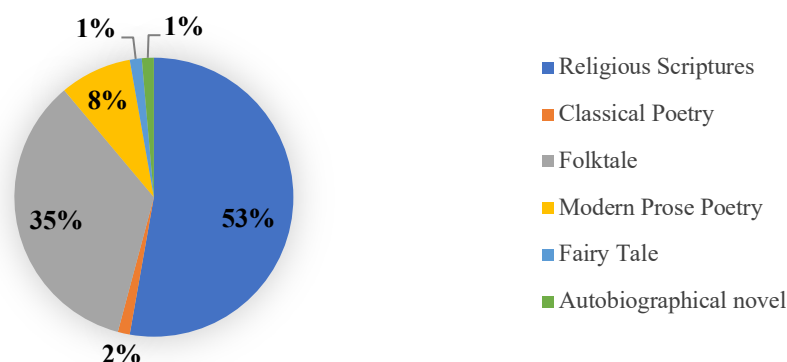
Figure 1: Statistics of of translated books from Arabic to Chinese (1680 to 1949).

From the publication of the first Arabic-Chinese translation work to the founding of the People's Republic of China, Arabic-Chinese translations were very uncommon. As previously stated, there are only six types of translation works available. The majority of the translation works are rich in religious, such as *the Quran* and *Qasidah al-Burdah* (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Among them, six Arabic-Chinese translation works were translated from English relay.

Table 1 and Figure 1 reveal that the Arabic-Chinese translation of religious works dramatically exceeds that of other types. Religious scriptures accounted for 53% of all

translated works, while classical poetry, modern prose poetry, and fairy tales each have only one Arabic-Chinese translation work.

There were four factors that contributed to the creation of this issue. One of the reasons for the difficulties that exist within the Chinese translation business is that the elder generation of Arabic language experts in China all had religious education. Most of their translation activities are limited to Islamic academic culture, and there are few translators engaged in literature and other types of books. The second reason is that the number of publishing organizations before the founding of the People's Republic of China was large and chaotic, making it difficult to document any book in its entirety. The political reason is the unstable situation in the past in China, and the lack of Arabic talent is another reason for the small number of Arabic-Chinese translation works.

The external reason is that the Arabic novel had a late start. Egypt was the first nation in the Arab world to see the emergence of the New Literature Movement. Muhammad Husayn Haykal did not publish his first more prominent work until 1914. It was regarded by the Arabic literary community as a significant achievement. In the 1940s, and especially after the Second World War, many excellent works came out and spread to China later. The case in Egypt is similar, and the situation in other Arab nations is mostly identical (Ru, 1994).

From 1970 to 2020, Arabic-Chinese translation works went from thawing to a resurgence in popularity. However, a number of issues were brought to light during this period.

First of all, there were essentially no Arabic-Chinese translation works published between 1970 and 1978. In effect, only four translated works were published because China was going through its 'Cultural Revolution' at this stage. The 'Cultural Revolution' was a political movement in the history of the People's Republic of China which caused considerable damage to the people and the country (Weilie, 1986, p. 55). The development of Arabic-Chinese translation was likewise hampered by this factor.

Then, although the Arabic-Chinese translation works have improved significantly since the 1980s, there are also the following issues:

- The translation and publishing situation of Arab modern and contemporary literary works is quite complicated. Many Chinese translators and publishers have turned their attention to classical works that do not have copyright issues, which has aggravated the clustering of *Arabian Nights* translations (Shasha, 2014).

- The fresh works of Arabic-Chinese translation has decreased. Sometimes it is difficult to find new translations in any given year. A large number of retranslated works appear, especially of the *Arabian Nights*, works by the Lebanese poet, Gibran Kahlil Gibran, and Naguib Mahfouz (Jikun, 2010, p. 22).

This phenomenon is unfavorable for getting rid of the stale and taking in the fresh, and it seriously damages the regular progress of the translation and introduction of Arabic works in China. There are several reasons for this:

- Due to the regulatory role of the market economy and China's joining the 'Universal Copyright Convention' and the 'Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works' in 1992, the publishing industry has felt intimidated by copyright issues (Shasha, 2014).

- The translation of Arabic-Chinese works is complicated by the fact that it involves not only a language but also a cultural aspect. It necessitates the knowledge of Arabic and Chinese cultures among translators, resulting in a significant scarcity of translators. Coupled with the death and retirement of many qualified Arabic-Chinese translators, the number of available talents has decreased.

- At different times throughout history, several Arabic-Chinese translators have assisted in political and economic interactions between nations, but both corporate executives and government officials have merely utilized language as a communication tool. Their work is not limited to translation; it also contributes to the scarcity of the translation of Arabic-Chinese works (Yuewen, 2012).

- Translators and readers lacked interest in the culture of Arab countries (Yan, 2013).

According to the information provided above, there are fewer Arabic-Chinese translation works available compared with British and American translation works.

However, after 1978, translation between Arabic and Chinese substantially increased; the number reaches into the hundreds, but it is still far from the number of translated English or American works. According to *National Bibliography* (2020), China has produced no more than 400 different types of Arabic writings since the 18th century, when an abbreviated translation of *the Quran* was first published. In the 17 years between1949 to 1966, there were 460 varieties of translated works in Britain and the United States alone.

Table 2 below illustrates the disparity in the number of translations between Arabic and American and English work during 1949-1966.

Table 2. Statistics of translations between Arabic-Chinese and English-Chinese (1949 to1966).

	Number
Arabic-Chinese translation works	58
English-Chinese translation works	460

It can be seen from Table 2 that in the same period, there were far fewer Arabic-Chinese translation works than English-Chinese translation works. This is also a primary reason for China to vigorously develop Arabic-Chinese translation in the 21st century, and it is also a prerequisite for the two subsequent Arabic-Chinese translation projects.

3.3.　　Translation Project of Ancient Codes and Records of Arabic and Chinese

The translation project of the Arab-China ancient codes and records originated from the 3rd Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum on May 21, 2008. In the communique of the meeting, the two sides proposed to support the Sino-Arab civilization dialogue under the framework of the 'China-Arab Cooperation Forum'.

The General Administration of Press and Publication of China and the Secretariat of the League of Arab States signed a memorandum of cooperation on Arabic-Chinese

translation and publication. This was the first major Arabic-Chinese translation project. The project included the mutual translation of historical and cultural classics, modern and contemporary literary works, and children's works. Five kinds of mutual translations were to be done each year, and the publication of the work was to be completed in the same year. This project began in 2010 and is still ongoing. The first phase of the project aimed to complete 25 varieties for each of the two parties, with a total of 50 different types within five years. In 2020, the two sides of the project had completed the translation and publication of 45 books. China has completed the translation and publication of 22 books, including *Emir of the book: The iron gateway* (Chinese version), *Al-Muʿallaqāt (The Hanging Poems)*, *The Granada Trilogy*, and more. On the otherhand, Arab countries' Arabic-Chinese translations are lower than Chinese-Arabic translations. At this point, Arab nations have finished the translations of 24 books from Chinese to Arabic. This information can be viewed in Figure 2 below.
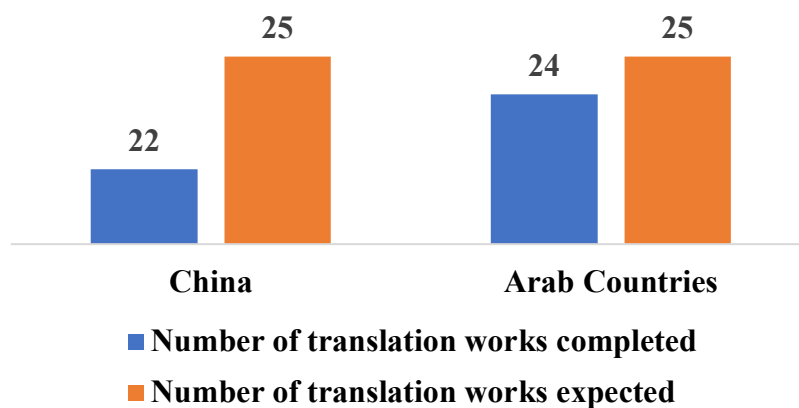
Figure 2. Comparision of translations under the 'Translation and Publication Project of Ancient Codes and Records of Arabic and Chinese' between China and Arab countries.

This translation project demonstrates that China and Arabs still need to boost its number of translators. Nevertheless, up to now, the number of translations produced by both sides has not yet reached the levels anticipated by either party (See Figure 2). According to Figure 2, the two parties should have completed the translation of 50

books in 2015, but the goal has still not been reached. This results might also demonstrate that both sides have shortcomings in this area.

On the other hand, according to Figure 2, China and Arab countries have published more than 20 books which had never been translated before. As a result of this initiative, there has been significant advancement and improvement in Arabic-Chinese translation.

For this project, according to the Chinese government's website (2010), China established a 10-member special committee composed of representatives from government departments, publishers, and relevant scientific research institutions to implement the project jointly. The selection of committee members included experts with outstanding achievements in language, translation, and publishing. The formation of this committee has resulted in more accurate Arabic-Chinese translation work than was previously possible.

Additionally, whereas earlier Arabic-Chinese translation efforts have focused mostly on Egypt and Lebanon, this initiative brought additional works from other Arab nations to the Chinese market. The implementation of this project has prompted other Arab countries to recommend works from their respective countries, such as Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, and others. Chinese readers will also have a better understanding of the culture and history of Arab nations as a result of this initiative.

3.4. Translation and Publication Project of Chinese and Saudi Arabia Classics and Contemporary Literary Works

The State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed the 'Translation and Publication Project of Chinese and Saudi Arabia Classics and Contemporary Literary Works' in Beijing on August 30, 2016. The goal was for the two parties to translate and publish at least 25 works from each others' country, or a total of at least 50 works, within five years. According to the result releases of the project (2019), only nine Arabic-Chinese translation works have been completed and published in China thus far. (See Figure 3).

According to Figure 3, the number of Arabic-Chinese translations still has not reached the level that was anticipated. Given that this project is mainly translated by the Department of the Arabic language at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, the number of translators is small, and most of them are the new generation of Arabic-Chinese translators. As previously stated, there are many factors that prevent the number of translations from increasing.
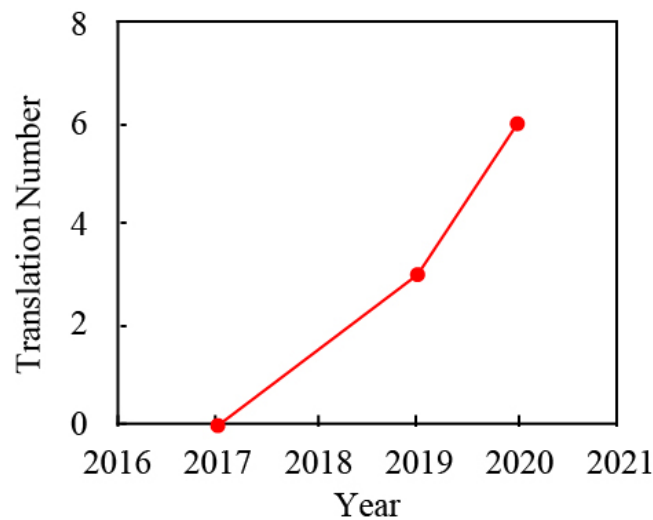
Figure 3. The Arabic-Chinese translation numbers of 'Translation and Publication Project of Chinese and Saudi Arabia Classics and Contemporary Literary Works' (2016 to 2020).

However, this Arabic-Chinese translation project still shows distinct advantages compared to the previous translation project mentioned before. Figure 3 shows that although the number is not large, translations have been on an upward trend, and the number has increased significantly compared with previous years. It also demonstrates that the number of translators of the new generation is rising. In contrast to the previous initiative, which relied only on professionals, this represents the future trend in terms of enhancing Arabic-Chinese translation.

This project broke through the discipline. The previous project continued to concentrate on translating literary works, but this initiative expanded its scope to include works on politics, economics, culture, and history, among others. The latest

published Arabic-Chinese translation works included: *History of Currency Development in Saudi Arabia*, and *10 Circumstances for the Future Development of Saudi-China Relations* , among others.

Table 3. Statistics of foreign language translation projects approved by the State and Statistics of Arabic-Chinese translation projects (2015 to 2019).

Year	Statistics of foreign language translation projects	Statistics of Arabic-Chinese translation projects
2015	113	1
2016	130	2
2017	165	3
2018	185	5
2019	154	4

For the purposes of this thesis, just two representative projects were chosen for examination. Starting from 'Translation and Publication Project of Ancient Codes and Records of Arabic and Chinese', China has started a number of initiatives involving the translation between Arabic and Chinese. According to the National Social Science Fund of China, Table 3 above shows the number of foreign language translation projects approved by the state and the number of Arabic-Chinese translation projects between 2015 and 2019. This information shows that the Chinese government's promotion of Arabic-Chinese translation is still insufficient.

3.5. Conclusion

The context, issues, and causes for Arabic-Chinese translation are discussed in detail in this chapter. The situation of Arabic-Chinese translation has been challenging, regardless of whether it was before or after the founding of the People's Republic of China. According to the results of the aforementioned investigation, the number of

Arabic-Chinese translations is much lower than that of English-Chinese translations. Aside from the disparity in quantity, the sort of translation works produced in China is considerably less diverse then that of British and American works. Political and policy concerns in China, instability in the country's internal affairs, bad policies, and a scarcity of translators are all examples of internal factors contributing to this problem. These have led to China's current lack of translation projects from Arabic.

The current Arabic-Chinese translation initiatives, on the other hand, have their merits, and they have also helped to advance the field of Arabic-Chinese translation in general. First of all, according to the result release of the translation projects (2019), the accuracy of the translation works of Arab countries has been improved, and more works from different Arab countries have been added. Secondly, a new generation of Arabic-Chinese translators has gradually been cultivated, which is also an essential step in the development of Arabic-Chinese translation. Finally, the translated works are not limited to one literary category; books on politics, economics, history, and more have been added.

When compared to the earlier Arabic and Chinese translations, translation projects represent a major advance. The next chapter utilizes data to specifically analyze the situation of Arabic-Chinese translation and relay translation via English.

Chapter 4: Bibliometrics of translation production from Arabic to Chinese and relay translation via English (1970-2020)

4.1. Introduction

The preceding three chapters give an overview and general analysis of Arabic-Chinese translation. This chapter will investigate precise details via the use of data. This chapter is comprised of two parts. The first is the bibliometric study of Arabic-Chinese translation production from 1970 to 2020. The other looks at relay translation production from Arabic to Chinese via English from 1970 to 2020. There are very few studies on the amount of Arabic-Chinese translation works.

Meanwhile, obtaining accurate data is difficult. There are currently only two sources with a comprehensive list of Arabic-Chinese translations. One is the *National Bibliography* published by the Chinese Version Library, dating from 1949 to the present; the other is a list of works published on the website of Relationship between Chinese and Muslims from 1890 to 2020.

In order to investigate this situation also required is the searching and comparing of hitherto undiscovered translation work on the Internet, in libraries, or in other formats. For the bibliometric study of relay translation, acquring statistics through the above websites and inquiries is also necessary.

4.2. Methodology and Data Analysis
4.2.1. Methodology

This chapter employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The use of quantitative analysis may help make results more precise and universal. Then, qualitative analysis methods will be used to analyze the external factors that produce such results at each stage. The 50 years between 1970 to 2020 are separated by decades into five sections for examination.

4.2.2. Bibliometric of translation from Arabic to Chinese (1970-2020)

National Bibliography, which the Chinese Version Library published, presented the book-list of Arabic-Chinese translations from 1949 to 2020, Website of Relationship between Chinese and Muslim and Website of National public service platform for publishing and distribution information, these two sources of information provided

statistics on the number of translated books and magazines to the author of this article, see results in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4. Numbers of Arabic-Chinese translation books published in China (1970 to 2020).

Time range	Number of translated Books
1970-1980	21
1981-1990	152
1991-2000	176
2001-2010	329
2011-2020	304
1970-2020	982

Table 5. Numbers of Arabic-Chinese translation magazines published in China (1970 to 2020).

Year	Number of translated magazines
1970-1980	0
1981-1990	56
1991-2000	28
2001-2010	19
2011-2020	10
1970-2020	113

Tables 4 and 5 show a total of 982 books and 113 magazines were published between 1970 to 2020. This figure greatly exceeds the number of books published between 1680 and 1949, which was just 72 volumes, as previously noted in Chapter 3.

This information evidences that the number of Arabic-Chinese translation books is increasing, whilst the number of periodicals is dropping. The decade with the most significant number of Arabic-Chinese translation books was 2001-2010; in terms of magazines, it was 1981-1990. The tables also show that the Chinese government is vigorously fostering Arabic-Chinese translation initiatives. As previously noted in Chapter 3, the government has undertaken a large number of translation projects. Meanwhile, the number of Arabic-Chinese translation books has stabilized from 21 in the 1970s to about 300 at the two stages during 2000-2020. On the other hand, in terms of magazines, except for the ten-year heyday when the Arabic-Chinese translation magazines were first developed in the 1980s, there was a cliff-like decline. Even in the last ten years of 2011-2020, only a handful of publications are left.

The number of Arabic-Chinese translation works completed at each stage varies, as do the sorts of translation tasks completed. This thesis examines the types of translated works produced between 1970 and 2020. Table 6 shows the total number of Arabic-Chinese translation books published during 1970-2020 classified by types.

The data in Table 6 shows that in the four decades from 1980 to 2020, the translated bibliographies in the tales category have outpaced other categories of books by a significant margin. Secondly, there is a disproportionately greater number of translated books of novels and poems. Especially since 1991, there were 95 books from 1991 to 2000, and the number rose rapidly to 261 from 2001 to 2010. From 2011 to 2020, the number remains in the vicinity of 200. This result, which was mentioned in the third chapter, is due to the re-translation of the classic, *Arabian Nights*.

Table 6. Numbers of Arabic-Chinese translated books belonging to different types (1970 to 2020).

Type of translated books	Books number during 1970-1980	Books number during 1981-1990	Books number during 1991-2000	Books number during 2001-2010	Books number during 2011-2020

Religious scriptures	0	12	2	10	9
Poetry (classical, modern)	1	11	30	27	12
Prose	0	2	9	3	4
Tale (fairy, myth, fable, folk…)	4	62	95	261	229
Modern drama script	1	1	0	0	0
Modern novel	10	54	27	20	30
Modern biography	2	4	1	1	0
Travel notes	0	2	0	1	0
Field of discipline (policy, economics, cultures, history…)	3	0	3	0	10
Others	0	4	9	6	10

As mentioned earlier, the number of translated books from 1970 to 1980 was scarce owing to the political and socioeconomic conditions that prevailed in China at the time. However, there was a significant rise in the number of books published between 1981 and 1990. The number of translated works relating to poems rose from 1 to 11, novels from 10 to 54, and the number of tales also rose from 4 to 62; the caculation includes re-translated works as well. The situation in the two phases of 1991-2000 and 2001-2010 was almost the same, except that there were more re-translations of *Arabian Nights* after 2001, which increased the total number of Arabic-Chinese translation books.

This thesis focuses on analyzing the two periods from 1991 to 2000 and from 2011 to 2020 because the period 2001-2010 is the same as the period 1991-2000.

First of all, Table 6 reveals that there were 95 storybooks published between 1991 and 2000, and 261 storybooks released between 2001 to 2010. On the basis of this information, each category can be thoroughly examined. Among the 95 storybooks, 71 are retranslations of *Arabian Nights*, or part of a chapter or a story in it, accounting for 75% of all translated storybooks during 1991-2000. Among 261 storybooks, 235 are translated books-- *Arabian Nights*, accounting for 90% of all translated storybooks during 2001-2010, see Figure 4 and Figure 5.
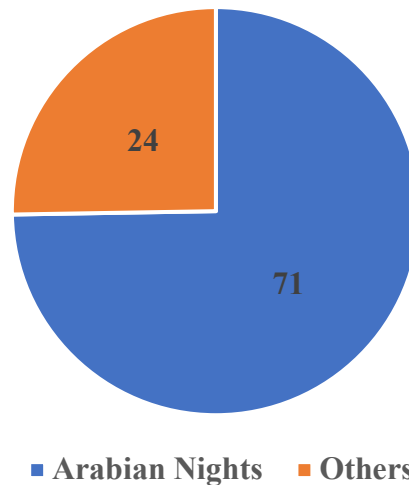

Figure 4. The number of translated books-*Arabian Nights* as a percentage of the number of all translated storybooks (1991to 2000).
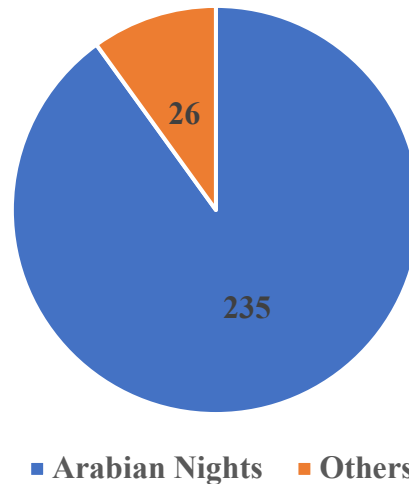
Figure 5. The number of translated books-*Arabian Nights* as a percentage of the number of all translated storybooks (2001 to 2010).

Figures 4 and 5 above demonstrate that of the total number of translated books, *Arabian Nights* accounted for three-quarters of the total. In the two phases of 1991-2000 and 2001-2010, although the total number of Arabic-Chinese translations has increased, the growth in categories and bibliographies is still limited.

Additionally, the writers of the translated works are relatively concentrated. Take the poetry genre as an example. Poetry ranked second in the number of Arabic-Chinese translation publications, in the two stages of 1991-2000 and 2001-2010, with 30 and 27 books respectively. The amount of publishing of Arabic-Chinese translations of poetry is not as high as the volume of publication of stories, but it is still several times higher than the volume of publications of other categories, as shown in the figure. On the other hand, in the decade from 1981 to 1990, the number of poems published lagged substantially behind the number of books published.

In these thirty years, almost all the translations of poems and prose came from one writer, Kahlil Gibran. Three Arabic language specialists collaborated on the translation and publication of *A Tear and a Smile* by Gibran, which was released in June 1984. It is the first Chinese translation of Gibran's portfolio from the Arabic language. Later, in 1986, an anthology of Gibran's youth, *The Wanderer,* was translated. The translation mania for Gibran's writings reached its zenith around the year 1991.

The publishing craze has inspired experts in Arabic language and literature to retranslate and adapt Gibran's works, which has resulted in an increased level of competition. Major publishing houses are vying to publish, with some releasing multiple volumes every year. Among the more outstanding translation works, two complete works of Gibran were released in 1994. One was published by Hebei Education Publishing House, which is an edition of the new translation, no matter from translation or typesetting and binding. Another is *The Complete Works of Gibran,* launched by Gansu People's Publishing House, a compilation that includes all of Gibran's works, as well as his correspondence and drawings. Since the layout is very detailed, it contains a lot of background, introduction, and comments on Gibran, so it is very popular with Chinese readers, and it has been republished several times since then. After entering the 21st century, the Literary Publishing House published another volume, *The Complete Works of Gibran*, which contains new translations of many works and some of the offprints that had already been published. The following table (Table 7) will tally the number of Gibran's works published and the number of publishers in these three stages from 1980 to 2010.

Table 7 reveals that in the past 30 years, Gibran's Arabic-Chinese translation works have steadily increased, and the number of publishing houses publishing Gibran's works has steadily increased as well. Table 7 also reflects favorably on the translation frenzy for Gibran's writings that has swept China. According to Ru (1994), Gibran's Arabic-Chinese translation works have the highest reprint rate in China, and publishers could not print more because of legal limits, but once they are on the market, they often sell out rapidly. Meanwhile, according to a recent summary and evaluation by Mr. Zhu Weilie (1986), a renowned Chinese expert in the Arabic language, almost all of Gibran's works in the Arabic language, including novels, prose, and poems have been translated into Chinese.

Table 7. Numbers of works of Gibran issued and numbers of producers publishing Gibran's works (1980 to 2010).

Year	Numbers of Arabic-Chinese translation works of Gibran published	Numbers of producers
1981-1990	6	4
1991-2000	25	14
2001-2010	36	30

The novel is also one of the genres that has seen a significant amount of translation. The writer whose novels have been translated the most into Chinese is Naguib Mahfouz. Although the name Gibran has captivated people's attention for a long time, it was not until the Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz (1911-2006) was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988 that this situation fundamentally changed. Table 8 shows the number of translations of Naguib Mahfouz's works during the three phases from 1981 to 2010.

Table 8. Numbers of translations of Naguib Mahfouz's works during the three phases (1981 to 2010).

Year	1981-1990	1991-2000	2000-2010
Numbesr of translations of Naguib Mahfouz's works	9	12	8

Table 8 and Figure 6 (below) show that the number of publications of Naguib Mahfouz's works occupies a considerable position in the translation of novels. Especially in the two periods of 1991-2000 and 2001-2010, Mahfouz's novels accounted for about half of all translated novels. This is about the same as the total number of books translated from other authors.
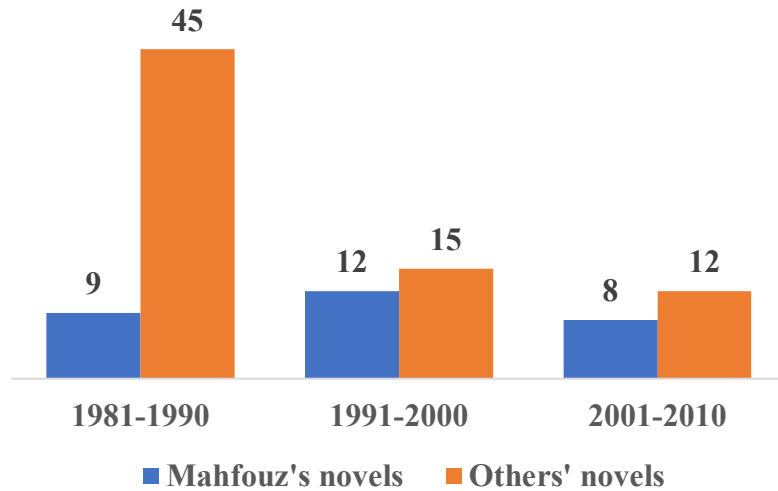
Figure 6. Comparison of translated novels by Naguib Mahfouz and other writers.

Despite the fact that Mahfouz was already well-known in the Arabic literary world in the 1950s and 1960s, the translation of his works in China did not start until the 1980s. This is mostly due to the political situation. Despite the fact that it is late, several well-known translators in the Arabic translation profession have been translating his writings for more than three decades, demonstrating the importance of his works. His pieces *Cairo Trilogy* and *History Trilogy* have been translated many times, and the translators are all Arabic professionals in China. According to Shuhong (2009), as of 2009, there are 26 Chinese translations of Mahfouz's works, about one-third of Mahfouz's complete works, and he is the Arab writer with the most Chinese translations of his work. There are 110 articles and dissertations on Naguib Mahfouz authored by Chinese scholars and ten master's and doctoral dissertations written by Arabic literature and non-Arabic literature majors.

Meanwhile, the period 2011 to 2020 represents a new era of progress in the field of Arabic-Chinese translation. Despite the fact that there are still numerous retranslations and fresh layouts of *Arabian Nights*, more than 200 storybooks have been published, but much new works has been added to other genres. As previously indicated in Chapter 3, China and Arab countries have collaborated on a large number of Arabic-Chinese translation projects during the last ten years. With the development of these projects, the Arabic-Chinese translation efforts did not   stop at the well-known writers

or blindly retranslate the works, but there have been many new Arab writers introduced to Chinese readers. Table 6 reflects the most published books in the field by discipline are from 2011 to 2020.

Among the more outstanding works is *History of Modern Arab Egyptian Literature* translated by Professor Li Zhenzhong of the Department of Arabic at Beijing Language and Culture University, and *The History of Currency Development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* translated by Li Shijun. There have also been new works published in the form of novels and poetry, such as *The Book of Amir: The Way of the Iron Gate*, *Sunset Oasis*, and *Hanging Poems*.

Several Chinese scholars have studied and commented on the Arabic-Chinese translation of this period. Fengmin (2021) states that some Arabic-Chinese works still represent the literary level of the contemporary Arab world, such as the *Lover from Palestine: Selected Poems by Darwish* by the Palestinian poet, Darwish, and Egyptian writer, Gamal al-Ghitani's novel, *Al-Zaynī Barakāt* and Baha Tahir's novel, *Sunset Oasis*, and Algerian writer, Wasini al-A'raj's novel, *The Book of Emir: The Iron Gate.* Each of these authors allows Chinese readers to understand the social kaleidoscope of Arab modern times. Through research, in addition to the several works mentioned by Professor Lin Fengmin, other Arabic-Chinese translations of poems or novels by Arab writers from countries, like Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Bahrain have been published or will be published soon.

Table 6 shows that, despite a rise in the number of books in the gentre of discipline, there are still only 10 books available. Despite the fact that the number of translated books in the gentre of discipline has significantly improved when compared with the previous 40 years, the genre selected in the translation projects promoted by China and Arab countries still has more literary works from 2011 to 2020. This is also an issue that continues to exist in the Arabic-Chinese translation process.

4.2.3 Relay translation of Arabic to Chinese via English (1970-2020)

Only a few relay translation of Arabic to Chinese via English works are available due to internal and external considerations. There were 15 works published before 1970,

and only three were published between 1970-2020. All relay translation work of Arabic to Chinese via English will be attached in Appendix 1.

Available information shows that the earliest relay translation of Arabic to Chinese via English occurred in 1904. It was a story *The History of Ali Baba and the Forty Robbers* in *Arabian Nights* translated by Mr. Zhou Zuoren. In the 50 years between 1970 and 2020, most of the Arabic-Chinese translation works were directly translated from Arabic to Chinese. Figure 7 below compares the number of relay translation works of Arabic to Chinese via English before 1970 and the number of relay translation works of Arabic to Chinese via English from 1970 to 2020.
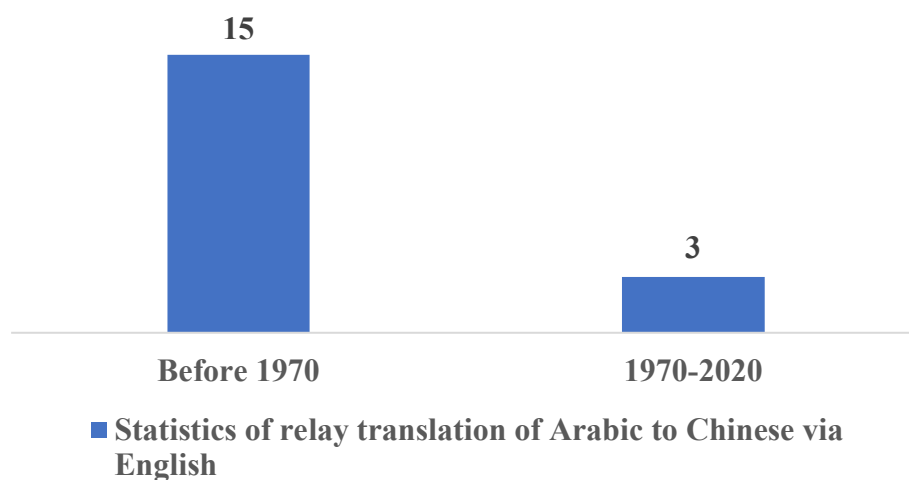

Figure 7. Comparison of the number of relay translation works of Arabic to Chinese via English before 1970 and the number of relay translation works of Arabic to Chinese via English (1970 to 2020).

Figure 7 shows that the amount of English relay translation is drastically decreasing. The number of this type of translations has decreased by 80%.

However, this count excludes Gibran's works, which were originally written in English. The above figure reveals that the number of relay translation works via English, undertaken before 1970, was more than five times higher compared with the timeframe of 1970 to 2020. But generally speaking, whether it was before 1970 or the 50 years from 1970 to 2020, there were not many relay translation works via English. These relay translation works were practically all from the *Arabian Nights* and *the Quran*.

More than half of the Chinese translations of *Arabian Nights* are translated from English relay translation, but only the stories were extracted. For example, *The Magic Lamp* and *Footman's Amorous Trips* were translated by Nuo Ji (1948), according to R.F. Burton's English translation version. According to Jikun (2010), Chinese readers' understanding of Arabic literature began with the *Arabian Nights* translated from English relay before the founding of the People's Republic of China. The relay translation in English helped Chinese readers understand the Arab world and Arab culture and piqued their interest.

However, in the last 50 years, from 1970 to 2020, there has been almost no relay translation works of Arabic to Chinese via English that have been published, except for Gibran's original works in English. Only three works using English relay translation have been published by the World Chinese Publishing House in Hong Kong: *Zombie*, *The Notes of the Quran*, and *The Thousand and One Nights.* According to the previous two projects mentioned before, this also demonstrates that China's policy is actively pursuing direct Arabic to Chinese translation to enable a greater number of Chinese to study and comprehend the Arabic language and Arabic culture.

Relay translation is a unique form of translation. Compared with general translation, relay translation has an intermediate text. It has to cope with three distinct cultures, which makes it more complex. Therefore, Arabic-Chinese translation via relay translation through English requires translators who understand the three languages to achieve better works.

Meanwhile, relay translations are unable to convey the sense and character of the original text owing to the lack of translator talent. However, English also helps Chinese translators understand some difficult Arabic words and phrases to a large extent, since, in comparison to English, China has a scarcity of books for learning and understanding Arabic. Therefore, English relay translation is still indispensable for Arabic-Chinese translation. It is hoped that Chinese translators can learn about the Arabic language and literature from English relay translation and not give up this method.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter looked at the state of Arabic and Chinese translations during the last 50 years, from 1970 to 2020.   The fifty years are divided into decades allowing five stages for comparative analysis. After analyzing the collected data, it was discovered that the years 1970 to 1980 were a low point for ArabictoChinese translation. Few works were released due to political factors. Between 1981 and 2010, the number of publications of Arabic-Chinese translations had expanded dramatically, with a particular concentration on the retranslation of *Arabian Nights* and the translation of works by Gibran and Naguib Mahfouz. From 2011 to 2020, the translation project implemented by the Chinese government has enabled more writers from Arab countries to have their writing translated. The genre of Arabic-Chinese translation works and the translation of books in various fields and disciplines has also increased.

This chapter also analyzed relay translation of Arabic to Chinese from 1970 to 2020. There are not many relay translations in English, and there have not been many in the last 50 years. Compare this 50 years to before 1970, from 15 before to three now. Currently, there are few trilingual talents, as a result, many relay translations in English are inadequate for conveying the original idea.   However, the Figure 7 demonstrates that the Chinese government is working on the literal translation of Arabic to Chinese. Finally, this thesis expresses the necessity of relay translation for Arabic-Chinese translation via English.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Translation across languages is a cultural transfer process. In this process, translation works from Arabic and relay translation from Arabic through English into Chinese have improved to a certain extent compared to the occasional publishing of select works earlier.

This thesis set out to investigate the situation of Arabic-Chinese translations and English relay translations during the period from 1970 to 2020. It began by reviewing and summarizing the prior literature on Arabic-Chinese translation, cultural translation, the historiography of translation, and relay translation. It was found that there was essentially no historiographical bibliometric study about Arabic-Chinese translation, including relay translation via English. This thesis fills the gap that ignored by Chinese and Arab scholars which reflects the significance of this thesis.

In addition, the current state of Arabic-Chinese translation was examined. The translation of Arabic to Chinese can be divided into three stages, namely 1970-1978, 1979-1989, and 1990 to present. Each stage is influenced by a particular set of circumstances. This thesis also analyzed external factors such as economics and politics, internal factors such as cultural issues, and the translators' situations. Then, this thesis introduced how the translation projects carried out by the governments have aided in the promotion of Arabic-Chinese translation. Two critical projects, 'Translation and Publication Project of Ancient Codes and Records of Arabic and Chinese,' and 'Translation and Publication Project of Chinese and Saudi Arabia Classics and Contemporary Literary Works' were analyzed. Moreover, this thesis outlined the benefits of each project as well as areas for development.

Finally, quantitative studies were carried out to measure the specific development of Arabic-Chinese translations and English relay translations. According to the statistics and bibliometrics, the number of publications of Arabic-Chinese translations, as well as the categories of translated works, has grown in recent years. However, the output of English relay translation works has drastically decreased.

This thesis also put forword the recommendations of study. First, it is hoped that translators would limit the number of re-translations of *Arabian Nights* and add more translations of contemporary Arabic literary and non-literary works. Second, it is also hoped that scholars and translators would pay more attention to diversity of Arabic literature being translated into Chinese to represent the rich and diverse literary traditions of the Arab world. Finally, it is essential to expand the number of relay translations via English, to increase the amount of Arabic literature in Chinese, and provide more resources for studying Arabic in China.

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Appendix 1. All relay translation works of Arabic to Chinese via English

The title of the book	Translator	Year
The History of Ali Baba and the Forty Robbers	Zuoren Zhou	1904
Arabian Nights	Nuo Xi	1906.04
Preface to the Quran	Shuren Yin	1925.12
The Quran	Zheng Tie	1927.12
Arabian Nights (Translation based on A.L.Lane's English translation version)	Yansheng Qi & Xiaosheng Tian	1928.06
Arabian Nights (Translation based on A.L.Lane's English translation version)	Yuanfang Wang	1930.04
The Quran	Juemi Ji	1931.03
Arabian Nights	Zheng Fang	1936.05
The Magic Lamp (Arabian Nights）(Translation based on R.F.Burton's English translation version)	Nuo Ji	1948.11
Footman's Amorous Trips	Nuo Ji	1948.11

(Translation based on R.F.Burton's English translation version)		
Arabian Nights (Translation based on R.F.Burton's English translation version)	Quan Fan	1948.04
Ancient Egyptian Stories	Luo Ni	1957.01
Translation of the Quran in Mandarin	Zizhou Shi	1958
Zombie	Quan Ren	1981
The Thousand and One Nights	Naigui Yang	2001
The Notes of the Quran	Jingyuan Li	2005

Vita

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