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Unveiling the Nuances of 清 (qīng) in TCM Translation: A Corpus-Based Study of Heat-Clearing Function Statements in a Commercial Herbal Product Catalog

Membongkar Nuansa 清 (qīng) dalam Terjemahan Perubatan Tradisional Cina: Kajian Berasaskan Korpus tentang Pernyataan Fungsi Penghilang Haba dalam Katalog Produk Herba Komersial

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is consumed worldwide, yet its terminology travels poorly across languages. This study examines how commercial English renderings negotiate the polysemy of the verb 清 (qīng), which heads symmetrical four-character treatment expressions such as 清热解毒. A target-text-oriented, corpus-based design was adopted: all heat-clearing function statements were retrieved from the digital product catalog of Mayway Herbs, a major US supplier of Chinese herbal products, yielding 71 unique products coded for verb realisation, object specification, organ localisation, and co-occurring therapeutic actions. Formula overlap was measured with the Jaccard coefficient, and renderings were benchmarked against the WHO International Standard Terminologies (2022). Results show that the bare formula "Clears Heat" dominates; 93.0% of products use clear-family verbs, while 15.5% use other verbs (drain, remove, cool, subdue, neutralise, purge). Lexicalised pathogen compounds (damp-heat, wind-heat, phlegm-heat) are typically unpacked into coordinate verb phrases, and product pairs with identical English statements diverge considerably in formula composition. It argues that commercial translation compresses the systemic specificity encoded in the Chinese expressions. Its originality lies in bringing corpus evidence from commercial discourse to bear on terminology standardisation, recommending alignment with WHO-standard renderings while retaining unpacked glosses for ordinary readers.

Keywords: traditional Chinese medicine; terminology translation; four-character expressions; corpus-based translation studies; standardization

ABSTRAK

Perubatan Traditional Cina (TCM) digunakan di seluruh dunia, namun terminologinya sukar merentasi bahasa. Kajian ini mengkaji bagaimana terjemahan Inggeris komersial menangani

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polisemi kata kerja 清 (qīng) yang memimpin ungkapan rawatan simetri empat aksara seperti 清热解毒. Reka bentuk kajian berasaskan korpus yang berorientasikan teks sasaran telah digunakan: semua pernyataan fungsi penghilang haba dicerap daripada katalog digital Mayway Herbs, pembekal utama produk herba Cina di Amerika Syarikat, menghasilkan 71 produk unik yang dikodkan bagi realisasi kata kerja, spesifikasi objek, penempatan organ, dan tindakan terapeutik serentak. Pertindihan formula diukur dengan pekali Jaccard, dan terjemahan katalog dibandingkan dengan Terminologi Standard Antarabangsa WHO (2022). Keputusan menunjukkan formula asas "Clears Heat" mendominasi; 93.0% produk menggunakan kata kerja keluarga clear, manakala 15.5% menggunakan kata kerja lain (drain, remove, cool, subdue, neutralise, purge). Kompaun patogen yang terleksikal (damp-heat, wind-heat, phlegm-heat) biasanya diungkap kepada frasa kata kerja koordinat, dan pasangan produk dengan pernyataan Inggeris yang sama berbeza ketara dalam komposisi formula. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa terjemahan komersial memampatkan kespecifican sistemik yang dikodkan dalam ungkapan Cina. Keasliannya terletak pada penggunaan bukti korpus daripada wacana komersial bagi standardisasi terminologi, mengesyorkan penjajaran dengan terjemahan standard WHO yang khusus organ dan corak sambil mengekalkan glosan terungkap untuk pembaca awam.

Kata kunci: perubatan tradisional Cina; terjemahan terminologi; ungkapan empat aksara; kajian terjemahan berasaskan korpus; standardisasi

INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese Medicine (hereafter as TCM) is best described as a holistic medical system. It forms an integral part of China's cultural heritage, and in recent decades it has attracted growing international interest (Hao & Li 2025:32, Fu 2025, Su & Wang 2022), largely because of its distinctive understanding of health and well-being (Zhu & Zhou 2025, Jiang & Qi 2023; Liu 2021).

However, moving TCM knowledge beyond Chinese-speaking regions remains difficult, and translation is where the difficulty is most visible (Chen 2026; Li et al. 2026). The foundational doctrines of the discipline sit inside a linguistic and cultural framework of their own, so a faithful transfer into another language is never straightforward. Much of the terminology is metaphorical, and English often offers no direct counterpart or equivalence. Not surprisingly, current researches on translated TCM materials tend to show semantic imprecision (Chen 2026; Zhu & Zhou 2025; Hao & Li 2025; Li et al. 2023; Chen et al. 2023; Liu 2021), the lose of cultural nuance (Qiu & Cui 2026; Zhang & Hu 2025; Hao & Li 2025; Chen & Hu 2025; Wen & Liu 2024; Pan et al. 2024; Shen 2026), and terminological inconsistency (Tang 2025; Zhu & Zhou 2025; Pu & Zhou 2025; Shi & Yue 2025; Zhang 2024; Wen & Liu 2024; Jiang & Qi 2023; Jiang 2023). Grammar adds yet another obstacle, since Chinese and English differ in structure in ways that complicate the rendering of prescriptions, therapeutic methods, and diagnostic doctrines (Qiu & Cui 2026; Zhu & Zhou 2025;Wen & Liu 2024; Liu 2021).

The fundamental principles of TCM differ from English in linguistic and cultural aspects. If the terminology is rendered with precision and with cultural sensitivity, the tradition keeps its authenticity and its therapeutic value (Fu & Meng 2024). No single discipline can supply this on its own. A systematic framework that draws on linguistic, cultural, and medical expertise together to narrow the communicative distance between Chinese and Western audiences, and of letting the latter grasp TCM more comprehensively.

This study takes up those challenges through a lexical resource that is among the most characteristic TCM has to offer: the verb qīng (清), together with the symmetrical

four-character expressions built on it. Work on TCM terminology translation has so far relied mostly on dictionaries, standards, and classical texts. What happens to qīng-expressions in commercial discourse - the catalogs, labels, and packaging where most overseas consumers, and many practitioners, first encounter TCM terminology remains little known (Liu et al. 2026). To find out, this research carries a corpus-based case study of the digital catalog issued by Mayway Herbs, a long-established American supplier of Chinese herbal products. Three questions are to be explored in this study. RQ1: Which verbs, objects, and modifiers does the catalog realise qīng in its English function statements? RQ2: How far do these renderings keep the semantic specificity - the pathogen compounds and the organ localisation - encoded in the Chinese four-character expressions. RQ3: How the generic claim "Clears Heat" relates to the actual composition of the product formulas?

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE VERB QĪNG (清) IN TCM TREATMENT

In TCM usage, qīng 清 is the verb normally chosen to express treatment principles, to drive out pathogenic factors, restore internal balance, and improve bodily functions (Ding 2007; Tong 2011). Heat, toxins, and bodily fluids are its typical objects. The English verb "clear" usually means freeing something of obstruction or removing impurities. Qīng carries a wider load than that. Within TCM it is bound up with qi (气), literally "energy" in English, with Yin-Yang balance, and with the Five Elements, so its meaning is at once philosophical and functional. Wiseman and Feng (1998) and the WHO (2022) both settle on "clear heat" for qīng rè (清热). The same references, however, also record a larger family of compounds in which qīng attaches to a pathogen noun or an organ noun. Understanding what happens to this family in commercial text, the structure of the source expressions themselves has to be examined first.

SYMMETRICAL FOUR-CHARACTER EXPRESSIONS HEADED BY QĪNG

TCM makes frequent use of symmetrical four-character expressions. They state treatment principles, disease patterns, and describe therapeutic actions. A great deal of meaning is packed into very few characters, and translators have long found the compact grammar troublesome (Ma et al. 2019). Qīng occurs productively in this format, mostly in expressions concerned with clearing heat, restoring balance, resolving toxins, and regulating bodily fluids (Cheng 2021; Mu et al. 2006; see also Wu 1993). Eight representative cases are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Representative symmetrical four-character expressions headed by qīng (清)

Expression	Function	Example usage
清热解毒 (qīng rè jiě dú) — clear heat and resolve toxins	Eliminates excessive internal heat and toxins; commonly used for inflammatory conditions and infections.	Honeysuckle flower (金银花, jīn yín huā) is used to qīng rè jiě dú in treating colds, fevers, and skin infections. Roughly comparable to detoxification or antimicrobial treatment, although TCM construes "toxins" differently from biomedicine.
清肝泻火 (qīng gān xiè huǒ) — clear the liver and drain fire	Reduces excessive liver heat (肝火, gān huǒ), which may cause irritability, red eyes, dizziness, or elevated blood pressure.	Chrysanthemum flower (菊花, jú huā) is used to qīng gān xiè huǒ, particularly for eye strain and headaches. Roughly comparable to stress-relief or blood-pressure regulation, but grounded in liver-fire theory.
清肺化痰 (qīng fèi huà tán) — clear the lungs and transform phlegm	Clears lung heat, reduces phlegm, and improves respiratory function; often used for coughs and lung congestion.	Fritillaria bulb (川贝母, chuān bèi mǔ) is used to qīng fèi huà tán in treating dry coughs and lung congestion. Roughly comparable to expectorant and anti-inflammatory respiratory treatments.
清心安神 (qīng xīn ān shén) — clear the heart and calm the spirit	Clears excessive heart fire, promotes relaxation, and treats insomnia, palpitations, and anxiety.	Lotus seed embryo (莲子心, lián zǐ xīn) is used to qīng xīn ān shén to reduce restlessness and sleep disturbance. Roughly comparable to sedatives or calming adaptogens.
清热利湿 (qīng rè lì shī) — clear heat and drain dampness	Eliminates excess heat and dampness; often used for digestive and urinary disorders such as diarrhea, jaundice, and urinary discomfort.	Gentian root (龙胆草, lóng dǎn cǎo) is used to qīng rè lì shī for urinary discomfort and damp-heat conditions. Roughly comparable to diuretic and anti-inflammatory treatment, but grounded in damp-heat theory.
清胃泻火 (qīng wèi xiè huǒ) — clear the stomach and drain fire	Reduces excess stomach heat, which may cause bad breath, mouth ulcers, acid reflux, and gum inflammation.	Gypsum (石膏, shí gāo) is used to qīng wèi xiè huǒ, especially for stomach inflammation and ulcers. Roughly comparable to antacid or anti-inflammatory treatment of gastric conditions.
清热凉血 (qīng rè liáng xuè) — clear heat and cool the blood	Reduces excessive heat in the blood; used for skin rashes, nosebleeds, and inflammatory fevers.	Rehmannia root (生地黄, shēng dì huáng) is used to qīng rè liáng xuè in skin inflammation and bleeding disorders. Roughly comparable to anti-inflammatory treatment, although TCM construes "heat in the blood" differently.
清头明目 (qīng tóu míng mù) — clear the head and brighten the eyes	Relieves headache, dizziness, and eye strain caused by excessive internal heat or wind-heat patterns.	Chrysanthemum flower (菊花, jú huā) is used to qīng tóu míng mù, including for eye strain from prolonged screen exposure. Roughly comparable to ocular-health supplements or anti-inflammatory eye treatments.

Note. Renderings in the first column follow common dictionary practice; the third column glosses approximate biomedical analogies for orientation only.

The examples in Table 1 point to a simple fact: qīng covers considerably more ground than the English "clear." Its uses vary from cooling and draining to detoxifying, purging, and regulating. Translate it literally - "clear heat," "clear toxins" - and the result often sounds odd or vague to an English ear, and the cultural-philosophical nuance is easily lost (Chen & Wan

2016; Xie 2020). Biomedical English works differently. It talks about treatments in terms of concrete physiological effects - anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, expectorant - not abstract ideas like “clearing heat” or “removing fire.” A reader who lacks the cultural background may therefore take qīng to mean little more than “removing impurities,” when what it really denotes is to balance the body systems in TCM terms.

Parallel studies have explored the four-character expressions in particular. Ma et al. (2019) show that the choice between metaphrase, paraphrase, and combined strategies turns on the expression’s grammatical pattern and its internal logic, as the Chinese language scholar categorised, whether the relation is coordination, verb-object, or modifier-head. Commercial and regulatory genres have received less attention. One exception is Liu et al. (2026), who looked at packaging information for Chinese herbal products sold in Malaysia and documented systematic translation variation shaped by legal constraints. Product function statements, the genre this study addresses here, fall squarely between these two worlds: they draw on standardised professional terminology but speak to a market audience.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretically, this study draws four perspectives that to address the research questions, each supplying a different piece of the puzzle. Theoretically, this study draws on the classical view of terminology theory, which regards terms as designations of concepts in specialised domains (Sager 1990), a view later revised by the communicative approach, which treats terms as multidimensional units of knowledge, language, and communication (Cabré 1999). Sociocognitive scholars take a different view: terms are units of understanding, and different epistemic communities may legitimately categorise them in different ways (Temmerman 2000). Sociocognitive scholars take a different view: terms are units of understanding, and different perspectives and intentions may lead to legitimate variation in how they are categorised (Temmerman 2000). Functionalist translation theory adds that translation choices are determined by the skopos, that is, the purpose of the target text and its addressees (Nord 2018). Finally comes explicitation, the well-attested tendency of translations to spell out what the source text leaves implicit (Blum-Kulka 1986; Baker 1996), which is adopted to frame how compact Chinese compounds are redistributed syntactically into coordinate English verb phrases. Taken together, the four perspectives explain why a commercial catalog may part company with international standards, and what is lost when it does.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The design is target-text-oriented, corpus-based, and descriptive. The unit is the function statement that comes with each product - the “Functions ...” rubric that printed for each herbal product in the catalog. Therefore, this study combines description and explanation. On the quantitative side, this research profiles how heat-clearing actions are verbalised. On the qualitative side, it compares pairs of products whose English function statements are identical or very similar. Finally, the catalog’s realisations are benchmarked against an authoritative international standard issued by WHO (2022).

MATERIAL: THE MAYWAY DIGITAL PRODUCT CATALOG

Mayway Herbs, a supplier based in California, publishes its catalog digitally (Mayway Herbs 2022). Several hundred products are listed in it, including teapills and tablets, extract powders, instant beverages, which are grouped under therapeutic headings like Clear Heat, Dispel Wind, Transform Phlegm, and Tonify. A typical entry gives the product name in

pinyin, sometimes with a marketing subtitle attached (“Sinus Function Support” is one), the item number and how it is packaged, the formula composition, again in pinyin, with Latin botanical names, and an English function statement made up of third-person verb phrases chained together. The catalog carries no Chinese characters at all. Any Chinese expression quoted below is therefore our own reconstruction, made from the standard nomenclature (Wiseman & Feng 1998; WHO 2022); This also is included in the limitation section.

SAMPLING AND RETRIEVAL PROTOCOL

All product entries in the catalog were screened by program. The original catalogue in PDF format was first converted to plain text, so that titles and function statements could be matched by position on the page; each automatic match was then checked against the printed catalog. Earlier attempts at counting by hand gave different results on different passes, so an explicit, fully reproducible protocol was adopted instead (See Appendix B).

Inclusion Criterion. A product is selected whenever its function statement named a heat-clearing action, such as a verb phrase headed by clear or clears, or by one of the verbs remove, drain, cool, subdue, neutralise, purge, with heat or fire as the direct object, in either order and with or without modifiers (as in “Clears Heat,” “Expels Toxic-Heat,” or “Removes Heat from lungs and liver”). Simple objects (heat, fire) qualified, and so did compound ones (toxic-heat, damp-heat, wind-heat, phlegm-heat, deficiency heat/fire).

Exclusion Criteria. Products were excluded when that heat or fire appearing only in a caution section, or otherwise outside the functional description. Another was a heat-related verb with a different object - “Purges Accumulation, Clears Heat,” for instance, where what gets purged is accumulation, not heat. Lastly, duplicates were excluded. Whenever there were the same products listed in more than one catalog section, only the first occurrence was kept for research. All in all, the retrieval produced 73 records, and duplication removed 2 repeated products, yielding a final corpus of 71 unique products, all listed with its verbatim function statement in Appendix A.

CODING SCHEME

Each entry received codes on four dimensions. The first was related to verb realisation. Whether heat-clearing appeared as the bare “Clears Heat,” as clear with a specified object (a body region, an organ system, a pathogen compound), or as some non-clear verb, chosen from remove, drain, cool, subdue, neutralise, purge, with heat or fire as its object. These codes were not mutually exclusive, since a single statement can contain several heat-related verb phrases at once. The second dimension was object specification: the heat object might show up as a lexicalised compound (deficiency heat/fire, damp-heat, phlegm-heat, wind-heat, toxic-heat), or it might be spread over separate coordinate verb phrases, as in “Clears Heat, Drains Dampness.” Thirdly, the verb phrase itself contains an organ system (“Clears Heart Fire” and “Drains Kidney Fire” are cases in point). Finally, any co-occurring therapeutic actions were chained into the same statement: promoting urination, cooling the blood, releasing the exterior or dispelling wind, draining dampness, calming the shen, resolving or transforming phlegm, or nourishing/tonifying yin and blood.

For product pairs whose function statements are identical or near-identical, the formula compositions (the pinyin herb lists) were compared using the Jaccard similarity coefficient:

$$J = |A \cap B| / |A \cup B| \qquad (1)$$

where A and B are the sets of herbs in the two formulas. The coefficient quantifies how far an identical English claim corresponds to an identical prescription.

RELIABILITY AND LIMITATIONS

All retrieval and coding was done by script, then checked against the printed catalog. Where a case was borderline, the rule for selection is that the noun heat or fire had to be the verb's direct object. "Purges Accumulation, Clears Heat" therefore does not count as purge-heat; "Purges Accumulation due to Yang Ming Heat" does, because there heat is part of the object itself. Since the coded data appears in full in Appendix A, every figure below was worked out again from that data and can be checked against the catalog.

A few limitations should be specified. First, the corpus comes from a single company, and other vendors may of course write differently. It is also English-only: the Chinese expressions discussed below are our reconstructions from standard nomenclature, not drawn from a parallel corpus, so what we compare is catalog usage against codified TCM terminology, not against a verified source text. Thirdly, function statements are shaped by marketing and compliance needs; they are not literal translations, and their divergence from the standards says as much about the genre as about any individual translator's choices. Finally, the statement is the unit of analysis. The internal hierarchy of formulas (the jūn-chén-zuǒ-shǐ arrangement of sovereign, minister, assistant, and courier) is not explored, so when several heat-clearing herbs occur together in one formula, the English statement tells us nothing about their respective roles.

RESULTS

VERB REALISATION OF QĪNG

Table 2 summarises how the corpus describing heat-clearing actions with selection of words. The single formula "Clears Heat," with no modifier and no organ specification, dominates the corpus: it occurs in 46 of the 71 products (64.8%). Another 14 entries (19.7%) attach clear to a specified object: a body region, as in "Clears Heat from the Interior"; a pathogen compound ("Clears Damp-Heat"); or an organ system ("Clears Heart Fire"). The remaining 11 products (15.5%) reach for verbs outside the clear family. Remove, drain, cool, subdue, neutralise, and purge all appear, as Table 2 illustrates; "Cools Liver Fire," "Drains Kidney Fire," and "Purges Accumulation due to Yang Ming Heat" are representative.Overall, 66 products (93.0%) use at least one clear-family verb somewhere in the statement, and only 5 (7.0%) verbalize heat-clearing exclusively through other verbs. Six products (8.5%) mix both strategies in a single statement; Huang Lian Jie Du Teapills, for example, is glossed as "Drains Fire, Expels Toxic-Heat, Clears Damp-Heat, Cools the Blood."

Two things are revealed though this corpus. One is that "clear" serves as the unmarked default for qīng in this commercial register, in keeping with lexicographical usage and the standards (Wiseman & Feng 1998; WHO 2022). The other is that the vocabulary is richer than a one-to-one mapping. Approximately, every sixth product has recourse to drain, cool, remove, subdue, neutralise, or purge. These verbs carry the distinctions of manner, direction, and intensity that Chinese packs into compounds such as xiè (泻/泄 literally drain/purge in English), liáng (凉 literally cool), and jiě (解 literally detoxify).

TABLE 2. Verb realisation of heat-clearing actions in the corpus (N =71; categories non-exclusive)

Realization type	n	%	Illustrative catalog examples
Bare "Clears Heat" (no modifier, no organ)	46	64.8	"Clears Heat, Transforms Dampness, Expels Toxic-Heat" (Huang Lian Su Wan); "Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Cools the Blood" (Chuan Xin Lian Tablets)
clear + specified object (pathogen compound, organ, or region)	14	19.7	"Clears Damp-Heat" (Yu Dai Wan); "Clears Lung Heat" (Qing Qi Hua Tan San/Wan); "Clears Heart Fire" (Dao Chi Wan); "Clears Heat from the Interior" (Si Ni Wan)
Non-clear verb governing heat/fire	11	15.5	"Removes Heat from lungs and liver" (Qing Fei Yi Huo Tablets); "Drains Kidney Fire" (Er Xian San/Wan); "Cools Liver Fire" (Jiang Ya Pian); "Subdues Deficiency Fire" (Zhi Bai Di Huang San/Wan); "neutralises toxic heat" (Huang Lian Shang Qing Tablets); "Purges Accumulation due to Yang Ming Heat" (Da Chai Hu Wan)
Any clear-family verb in the statement	66	93.0	—
No clear-family verb in the statement	5	7.0	Huang Lian Shang Qing Tablets; Guan Jie Yan Wan; Er Xian San/Wan; Jiang Ya Pian; Luo Bu Ma Tablets

Note. Percentages are calculated on computer (N = 71 products). The first three rows overlap, that is, a statement may contain several heat-related verb phrases (six products combine clear and non-clear verbs). The last two rows are mutually exclusive.

OBJECT SPECIFICATION: LEXICALISED COMPOUNDS VERSUS SYNTACTIC UNPACKING

Table 3 compares two ways specifying what kind of heat is cleared. TCM theory treats damp-heat, wind-heat, and phlegm-heat as unitary patterns, and Chinese encodes them as compact compounds (湿热, 风热, 痰热). The catalog lexicalises only some of them. Toxic-heat is the one compound used systematically: 19 products (26.8%) "Expel" or "neutralise" toxic-heat, a wording that corresponds to the resolve-toxins half of qīng rè jiě dú (清热解毒). By contrast, although 21 products (29.6%) engage dampness somewhere in the statement, only 7 (9.9%) use the fused compound damp-heat; the remaining unpack the pattern into coordinate actions, as in "Clears Heat, Transforms Dampness" (Huang Lian Su Wan) or "Clears Heat, Drains Dampness, Promotes Urination" (Ba Zheng San/Wan). The same asymmetry holds for wind (4 of 19 mentions use the compound wind-heat) and for phlegm (2 of 18 mentions use the compound phlegm-heat). Deficiency heat behaves like toxic-heat: all 7 products that address it use the compound form ("Clears Deficiency Heat," "Subdues Deficiency Fire"). Finally, 9 products (12.7%) state the action to a specific organ system in the verb phrase itself.

The pattern is quite regular. Chinese fuses pathogen and process into a four-character whole; the catalog takes that whole apart and spreads it over separate verb phrases. "Clears Heat, Drains Dampness" still carries most of what qīng rè lì shī (清热利湿) says, but shī rè (湿热) stops being one pattern - the diagnosis fuses what the coordinate syntax now presents as two independent factors. This shift, in which a fused structure is unpacked into overt coordination, can be analysed as syntactic explicitation.

TABLE 3. Specification of the heat object in the corpus (N = 71)

Pathogen / target	Lexicalised compound, n (%)	Any mention in statement, n (%)	Typical unpacked realization
Toxic-heat	19 (26.8)	19 (26.8)	compound preferred: "Expels Toxic-Heat"
Dampness / damp-heat	7 (9.9)	21 (29.6)	"Clears Heat, Transforms Dampness"; "Clears Heat, Drains Dampness, Promotes Urination"
Wind / wind-heat	4 (5.6)	19 (26.8)	"Dispels Wind, Clears Heat"; "Disperses Wind, Clears Heat"
Phlegm / phlegm-heat	2 (2.8)	18 (25.4)	"Clears Lung Heat, Resolves Phlegm"; "Clears Heat, Transforms Phlegm"
Deficiency heat/fire	7 (9.9)	7 (9.9)	compound preferred: "Clears Deficiency Heat"; "Subdues Deficiency Fire"
Organ-localized heat/fire	9 (12.7)	9 (12.7)	"Clears Lung Heat"; "Clears Heart Fire"; "Drains Kidney Fire"

Note. "Lexicalised compound" counts statements that when the introductions in the catalog use two elements to form one noun phrase using hyphen (e.g., damp-heat); "any mention" covers all the function statements that include the pathogen in any verb phrase. Categories overlap across rows.

CO-OCCURRING THERAPEUTIC ACTIONS

No statement in the corpus stops at heat-clearing; each one strings several actions together. Table 4 counts what accompanies the clearing. Nourishing or tonifying yin and blood turns up in 21 products (29.6%), which makes sense as in TCM heat injures yin and that clearing should be paired with replenishment. Phlegm is resolved or transformed in 16 (22.5%); dampness drained in 14 (19.7%); releasing the exterior or dispelling wind in 12 (16.9%); cooling the blood in 11 (15.5%); calming the shen in 8 (11.3%); and promoting urination in 5 (7.0%). These coordinate chains are the syntactic signature of the genre. Each compact Chinese compound is redistributed into a series of simple English verb phrases in headline register; the result reads as an inventory of actions rather than as the name of a single treatment principle. How much of the source meaning survives this redistribution is the question that is analysed in the remaining part of this section.

TABLE 4. Actions co-occurring with heat-clearing in the corpus (N = 71)

Co-occurring action	n (%)	Illustrative catalog examples
Nourishes / tonifies yin or blood	21 (29.6)	"Nourishes Kidney Yin, Subdues Deficiency Fire" (Zhi Bai Di Huang San/Wan); "Nourishes Blood ... Clears Heart Heat" (An Mien Pian)
Resolves / transforms phlegm	16 (22.5)	"Clears Lung Heat, Resolves Phlegm" (Qing Qi Hua Tan San/Wan)
Drains / transforms dampness	14 (19.7)	"Clears Heat, Drains Dampness, Promotes Urination" (Ba Zheng San/Wan)
Releases the exterior / dispels wind	12 (16.9)	"Dispels Wind, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat" (Gan Mao Ling)
Cools the blood	11 (15.5)	"Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Cools the Blood" (Chuan Xin Lian Tablets)
Calms the shen	8 (11.3)	"Tonifies Heart and Kidney Yin, Nourishes Blood, Calms the Shen, Clears Deficiency Heat" (Tian Wang Bu Xin San/Wan)
Promotes urination	5 (7.0)	"Clears Heart Fire, Nourishes Yin, Promotes Urination" (Dao Chi Wan)

Note. Percentages computed on N = 71; categories overlap, since one statement typically chains several actions.

IDENTICAL STATEMENTS, DIVERGENT FORMULAS: THREE PRODUCT PAIRS

The Nasal Pair. The clearest sign that "Clears Heat" under-specifies a prescription comes from pairs of products whose English statements are word-for-word identical. Bi Yan Pian (Sinus Function Support), along with Pe Min Kan Wan (Seasonal Nasal Support), are one such pair: both print the claim "Disperses Wind, Clears Heat, ... Benefits the Nose," but the formulas themselves differ substantially (Table 5). Seventeen distinct herbs appear in the pair; only three are shared - Fang feng (Saposhnikovia root), Cang er zi (Xanthium fruit), and Xin yi hua (Magnolia flower) - for a Jaccard overlap of 17.6%. These three herbs do the same job in both formulas: they open the nasal orifice, and modern pharmacology credits them with anti-inflammatory and decongestant action. The clearing and toxin-resolving work, by contrast, is divided differently - Ye ju hua, Lian qiao, and Zhi mu in Bi Yan Pian, but Bo he, Ban lan gen, and Ju hua in Pe Min Kan Wan. Same sentence indicates two different prescriptions behind it. The claim "Clears Heat" does not specify which herbs do the clearing, where in the body the action lands, or what clinically distinguishes the two products. Nor is the split confined to whole formulas. Jie geng (Platycodon root), a herb known for ventilating the lungs and shifting phlegm and pus, recurs across several heat-clearing products in the corpus - Qing Fei Yi Huo Tablets, Yin Qiao Jie Du Pian/San, and Bi Yan Pian among them, they are distributed consistently with the clearing function of qīng.

The Lung Pair. The lung pair indicate that even products targeting the same organ, they will differ in wording and prescription. Qing Qi Hua Tan San/Wan (marketed as Clean Air Teapills) is described as clearing lung heat, resolving phlegm, then descending and dispersing Lung Qi; the entry for Qing Fei Yi Huo Tablets removes heat from lungs and liver, goes on in lowercase prose about phlegm heat and toxic heat, and adds the moistening of lungs and throat. Both are lung-heat products, but the nine-herb formulas share just two components - Xing ren (apricot seed) and Huang qin (Scutellaria root), which shows a Jaccard overlap of 12.5% (Table 5). They differ along three axes: the verb (clears versus removes), the scope (lung only, versus lung and liver together), and the granularity of the pathogen (a fused "phlegm heat and toxic heat" against the unpacked "Resolves Phlegm"). The first reads like a product for cough, wheezing, and chest congestion, where the task is to clear lung heat and

resolve phlegm; the second ranges wider, into liver-heat symptoms - irritability, red eyes, a bitter taste - with moistening to offset the dryness heat leaves behind. Even the register splits: the catalog's house style is headline-like, but this entry drops into lowercase descriptive prose, an inconsistency within a single catalog that in itself shows how little terminology standardization commercial discourse enforces.

The Heart Pair. Both products here claim to clear heart heat or fire, but they work on quite different therapeutic logic. Take Dao Chi Wan (The Red Door Teapills): four herbs in all, and described as clearing heart fire, nourishing yin, and promoting urination; An Mien Pian (Restful Sleep Support), with six, calms the shen, nourishes blood, then clears heart heat, transforms phlegm, and relieves food stagnation. The two formulas have only one herb in common, that is, Gan cao (licorice), showing a Jaccard value of 11.1% (Table 5). What each product is really doing becomes clear from its leading herbs. Dao Chi Wan drains heart fire downward: Mu tong (Akebia stem) gets urination going, carrying damp-heat out through the lower jiao, which fits presentations with urinary discomfort. An Mien Pian rests on calming the shen and nourishing blood: Yuan zhi (Polygala root) and Suan zao ren (sour jujube seed) deal with insomnia, restlessness, and blood deficiency; Shen qu (medicated leaven), meanwhile, takes care of the food stagnation that can disturb sleep. Two points follow for terminology. "Heart Fire" and "Heart Heat" alternate freely within the same catalog, although TCM theory treats huǒ (火, fire) as the more intense, exuberant form of rè (热, heat), and the WHO standard keeps the two apart with separate terms (WHO 2022). Second, the heat-clearing action occupies very different positions in the two formulas' internal organisation: in Dao Chi Wan every herb participates in draining heart heat, whereas in An Mien Pian the "Clears Heart Heat" claim rests essentially on one minor herb, Zhi zi (Gardenia fruit), while the sovereign herbs nourish and calm. The English statements register the presence of a heat-clearing action but not its weight or rank within the sovereign-minister-assistant-courier (jūn-chén-zuǒ-shǐ) organisation of the formula.

TABLE 5. Formula overlap in three product pairs sharing (near-)identical heat-clearing claims

Pair	Product	Function statement (verbatim)	Herbs (n)	Shared herbs; Jaccard
Nasal	Bi Yan Pian	Disperses Wind, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Transforms Phlegm, Benefits the Nose	11	Cang er zi, Xin yi hua, Fang feng (3/17 = 17.6%)
Nasal	Pe Min Kan Wan	(identical statement)	9	—
Lung	Qing Qi Hua Tan San/Wan	Clears Lung Heat, Resolves Phlegm, Descends and Disperses Lung Qi	9	Huang qin, Xing ren (2/16 = 12.5%)
Lung	Qing Fei Yi Huo Tablets	Removes Heat from lungs and liver, clears phlegm heat and toxic heat, moistens lungs and throat	9	—
Heart	Dao Chi Wan	Clears Heart Fire, Nourishes Yin, Promotes Urination	4	Gan cao (1/9 = 11.1%)
Heart	An Mien Pian	Calms the Shen, Nourishes Blood, Clears Heart Heat, Transforms Phlegm, Relieves Food Stagnation	6	—

Note. Formula compositions as printed in the catalog (pinyin herb lists). Jaccard = |shared| / |union| of the two herb sets.

BENCHMARKING AGAINST THE WHO (2022) STANDARD TERMINOLOGY

The WHO International Standard Terminologies on Traditional Chinese Medicine (WHO 2022) has outlined standard English version for the whole qīng family, from the general therapeutic method ("heat-clearing methods" for 清热法) to the organ- and pattern-specific terms. Table 6 lists representative catalog realisations beside the corresponding standard terms. Three systematic divergences emerge. First, unpacking: the standard keeps 清热解毒 as one coordinated term ("clear heat and remove toxins"), whereas the catalog splits it into two independent actions ("Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat") that can then be distributed unevenly across statements. Second, there are differences in verb selection. the standard applies "clear (and reduce)" consistently throughout the 清/泄/泻 family, whereas the catalog moves freely among clear, drain, cool, remove, subdue, neutralise, purge even where the source expressions overlap. Third, the object has been renamed: the catalog's default "toxic-heat" (a single hyphenated compound for 热毒 departs from the standard's "toxins," quietly turning the resolution of toxicity into a single concrete pathogen. From a functionalist perspective (Nord 2018), the specialist terms are being adjusted for lay Western readers, who cannot be expected to unpack compact Chinese compounds, and the unpacked coordinate phrases are easier to scan, more clearer word by word. What suffers is consistency between texts. A product ends up talking a different terminological language from the standards its practitioners, educators, and regulators rely on and, as the register split noted above shows, even from its own wording elsewhere in the same catalog.

TABLE 6. Catalog realisations benchmarked against WHO (2022) standard terms

Catalog realization (example product)	WHO (2022) standard rendering	Chinese term
"Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat" (Bi Yan Pian)	clear heat and remove toxins	清热解毒 qīng rè jiě dú
"Clears Stomach Heat, Drains Fire" (Qing Wei Teapills)	clear heat and reduce fire	清热泻火 qīng rè xiè huǒ
"Clears Heart Fire" (Dao Chi Wan)	clear and reduce heart fire	清心泻火 qīng xīn xiè huǒ
"Clears Lung Heat" (Qing Qi Hua Tan San/Wan)	clear and reduce lung heat	清热泻肺 qīng rè xiè fèi
"Clears Stomach Heat" (Qing Wei Teapills)	clear and reduce stomach heat	清胃泄热 qīng wèi xiè rè
"Cools Liver Fire" (Long Dan Xie Gan San/Wan)	clear and reduce liver fire	清肝泄火 qīng gān xiè huǒ
"Clears Deficiency Heat" / "Subdues Deficiency Fire" (Liu Wei / Zhi Bai Di Huang San/Wan)	clear and reduce deficiency heat	清泄虚热 qīng xiè xū rè
"Clears Heat, ..., Cools the Blood" (Xiao Feng San/Wan)	clear heat and cool blood	清热凉血 qīng rè liáng xuè

Note. Standard terms from WHO (2022), heat-clearing methods section (terms 2329-2358); Chinese terms are the standard's headwords.

DISCUSSION

Sociocognitive terminology (Temmerman 2000) provides a perspective to see what is at stake. The catalog's renderings are not simple equivalence choices; each one has categorised the source knowledge of TCM for a different epistemic community. Consider the four-character qīng-expression: it works as a gestalt, that is, pattern, treatment principle, and a fixed place in the TCM classification system all in one. The English coordinate chain takes that gestalt apart into separately analysable actions.Thus a non-Chinese speaker can work through "Clears Heat, Transforms Dampness" word by word. But something is lost at the same time. Damp-heat is no longer one fused pattern; it reads as two factors that happen to co-occur. Fire no longer marks the exuberant grade of heat; it becomes a stylistic alternative. Organ compounds no longer point to addresses on the body's functional map; they become loose anatomical allusions. In Sager's (1990) terms, terminology is what condenses such a system - and commercial explicitation lets part of that condensation evaporate.

The second formula-overlap findings add a second, empirical layer. Take two products whose statements match word for word - "Disperses Wind, Clears Heat, ... Benefits the Nose" - while sharing a mere 17.6% of their herbs. There the sentence is doing something other than translating a particular prescription: it works as a genre label attaching to a therapeutic area. Seen this way, the generic "Clears Heat" holds two jobs at once. It renders qīng rè as a piece of terminology, and it brands a product family for the market. The two jobs pull against each other - one toward pattern-specific precision, the other toward interchangeable claims - and the corpus suggests the commercial side is winning comfortably (64.8% bare "Clears Heat"). For translators and terminologists: where a standardised source term exists, render it according to the WHO organ- and pattern-specific standards; unpacked phrasing should serve as an explanatory gloss, not replace the term. As for TCM education, the corpus supplies authentic material for showing how general clearing differs from organ-specific clearing. For regulators and vendors: consistency within one catalog is itself a marker of quality - the register drift and the free fire/heat variation documented above reproduce, on a small scale,

the variation Liu et al. (2026) trace to the lack of binding terminology requirements in herbal-product labeling.

A few limitations bound the scope of these implications. The corpus comes from one vendor; the Chinese expressions are our reconstructions, not a parallel text; function statements follow genre conventions rather than literal translation; and the analysis stays at the level of the statement. Likely next steps include corpora spanning several vendors, tests of consumer comprehension, and alignment studies against labeling regulation.

ETHNIC STUDIES IMPLICATION

These findings also speak to the journal's focus on ethnic and diversity studies. TCM is not just a medical system; for Chinese communities in Malaysia, North America, and elsewhere, it is a living heritage. Herbal products carry that heritage - a whole cosmology of the body compressed into shared terminology. When commercial translation reduces qīng to a generic "Clears Heat," something more than language is simplified. The diagnostic categories through which the tradition is understood and taught begin to change. And the loss is uneven. A heritage speaker who reads Chinese can still reach the pattern-specific expressions.

Chinese-Malaysians are a substantial community of TCM producers, sellers, and users, and herbal products move through a multilingual marketplace shaped by state regulation on one side and the community's own practice standards on the other (Liu et al. 2026). The same study documented how legal constraints produce translation variation in packaging information; the present catalog shows the tendency at work in a commercial genre. In both cases, compliance and marketing pull terminology away from the standards that practitioners and teachers actually use.

English renderings that follow the WHO (2022) standard, with organ- and pattern-specific terms as the anchor, would keep the substance of a minority medical tradition preserved, and give non-Chinese-speaking consumers and health professionals a genuine way into that tradition; and most importantly, to sustain dialogue across cultures instead of absorption into a biomedical frame.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to see how the TCM verb qīng (清) is rendered in the English-language function statements of a leading commercial herbal catalog. The character names an action, a treatment principle, and the cooling medicinals that carry the principle out, all at the same time; that three-in-one character is what makes it worth studying. From a self-built corpus of 71 heat-clearing products, a clear picture emerges. The bare formula "Clears Heat" dominates at 64.8%; clear-family verbs appear in 93.0% of the products, with the remaining 15.5% handled by other verbs. Pathogen compounds fare unevenly: toxic-heat and deficiency heat keep their compound forms, while damp-heat, wind-heat, and phlegm-heat are usually taken apart into coordinate verb phrases, and a mere 12.7% of statements name the organ involved. The three product pairs drive the point home: statements that are identical or nearly so correspond to formulas with Jaccard overlaps of just 17.6%, 12.5%, and 11.1%. A generic "Clears Heat" plainly cannot carry the prescription-level detail that the Chinese four-character expressions encode.

The comparison with the WHO (2022) standard reveals three habits behind the divergence: codified compounds are unpacked, near-synonymous verbs vary across texts, and standard objects are renamed. Any one of these can be defended on functionalist grounds - lay readers were never going to parse compact Chinese compounds - but taken together they trade away consistency, and with it compatibility with professional terminology. None of this

means qīng defies translation. Its nuance is structured polysemy, and what commercial practice currently does is flatten that structure. Therefore, this study would argue for a two-layer policy: standardised, pattern-specific terms as the anchor, with unpacked phrasing kept on as scaffolding for lay readers - a policy that serves clarity, education, patient safety, and the fair handing-on of a minority medical heritage in one move. How far such alignment can go before it starts to cost the accessibility that makes commercial catalogs the place where TCM first meets the English-speaking public remains for future work to settle, through multi-vendor, cross-genre research and comprehension testing with consumers and practitioners..

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APPENDIX A

CORPUS OF HEAT-CLEARING FUNCTION STATEMENTS (N = 71)

All 71 unique products retrieved by the protocol described in the Methodology, with catalog page (PDF pagination of the 2022 digital catalog) and the verbatim function statement. Cautionary notes (e.g., pregnancy warnings) are omitted as they fall outside the functional description.

No.	Product	Code	Page	Function statement (verbatim)
1	Bi Yan Pian (Sinus Function Support)	#3959E / #83959	11	Disperses Wind, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Transforms Phlegm, Benefits the Nose
2	Fang Feng Tong Sheng Wan (Ledebouriella Sagely Unblocks Teapills)	#3310	12	Releases the Exterior, Disperses Wind-Heat, Clears Heat, Purges Accumulation
3	Gan Mao Jie Du Chong Ji	#3735	11	Disperses Wind-Heat, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Drains Dampness
4	Gan Mao Ling (Winter Defense)	#83955	12	Dispels Wind, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat
5	Pe Min Kan Wan (Seasonal Nasal Support)	#3951 / #83951	11	Disperses Wind, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Transforms Phlegm, Benefits the Nose
6	Yin Qiao Jie Du Pian/San (Yin Chiao Chieh Tu Pien/San)	#3166	12	Dispels Wind, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat
7	Bai Xing Shi Gan Teapills	#3375	14	Clears Heat, Dissolves Phlegm, Descends and Disperses Lung Qi
8	Ban Lan Gen Tablets (Southern Ban Lan Gen)	#3733 / #3734	13	Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Benefits the Throat, Invigorates the Blood
9	Chuan Xin Lian Tablets	#3910	13	Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Cools the Blood
10	Huang Lian Jie Du Teapills	#3321	13	Drains Fire, Expels Toxic-Heat, Clears Damp-Heat, Cools the Blood
11	Huang Lian Shang Qing Tablets	#3950	13	Dispels Wind Heat, neutralizes toxic heat, purges internal heat in the stomach and lungs
12	Huang Lian Su Wan (Coptis Teapills)	#3708	13	Clears Heat, Transforms Dampness, Expels Toxic-Heat
13	Lian Qiao Bai Du Tablets	#3927	14	Dispels Wind, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Cools the Blood
14	Margarite Acne Pills (Zhen Zhu An Chuang Wan)	#3952	14	Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Cools the Blood, Softens Hardness, Benefits the Flesh
15	Pu Ji Xiao Du Wan (Universal Benefit Teapills)	#3377	14	Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Disperses Wind-Heat, Cools the Blood, Benefits the Throat
16	Wu Wei Xiao Du Wan (Five Flavor Teapills)	#3332	14	Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Cools the Blood
17	Zhong Gan Ling Tablets	#3962	13	Dispels Wind, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Cools the Blood, Releases Pathogenic Influences from the Muscle Level
18	Da Chai Hu Wan (Major Bupleurum Teapills)	#3323	16	Harmonizes the Shao Yang, Soothes the Liver, Clears Liver and Gallbladder Heat, Purges Accumulation due to Yang Ming Heat
19	Da Huang Jiang Zhi Wan (Rhubarb Teapills)	#3188	15	Purges Accumulation, Clears Heat, Invigorates the Blood
20	Dao Chi Wan (The Red Door Teapills)	#3363	15	Clears Heart Fire, Nourishes Yin, Promotes Urination
21	Long Dan Xie Gan San/Wan (The Snake & the Dragon Teapills)	#3375	15	Clears Damp-Heat from the Liver and Gallbladder Channels, Clears Damp-Heat from the Lower Jiao, Cools Liver Fire
22	Ma Zi Ren Teapills	#3374	16	Moistens the Intestines, Clears Heat, Regulates Qi, Nourishes Blood
23	Qing Fei Yi Huo Tablets	#3917	15	Removes Heat from lungs and liver, clears phlegm heat and toxic heat, moistens lungs and throat
24	Qing Gu Wan (Cool Bones Teapills)	#3378	15	Clears Deficiency Heat and Fire, Alleviates Steaming Bone Syndrome
25	Qing Wei Teapills	#3398	15	Clears Stomach Heat, Drains Fire, Cools the Blood, Protects the Yin
26	Xiao Chai Hu San/Wan (Minor Bupleurum Teapills)	#3326	16	Harmonizes the Shao Yang, Moves Liver Qi, Tonifies Qi, Disperses Phlegm, Clears Heat, Harmonizes the Middle Jiao

No.	Product	Code	Page	Function statement (verbatim)
27	Jia Wei Xiao Yao San/Wan (Free & Easy Wanderer Plus Teapills)	#3370	18	Softens the Liver, Regulates Qi, Nourishes Blood, Strengthens the Spleen, Clears Heat
28	Si Ni Wan (Four Pillars Teapills)	#3360	18	Moves Liver Qi, Regulates Liver and Spleen, Clears Heat from the Interior
29	Qing Zao Jiu Fei San (Extract Powder)	#3342	20	Clears Heat, Eliminates Dryness, Moistens the Lungs, Restores the Downward Flow of Lung Qi
30	Wu Mei San (Extract Powder)	#3346	19	Warms the Intestines, Clears Heat, Moves Qi, Strengthens Qi
31	Ba Zheng San/Wan (Eight Righteous Teapills)	#3325	21	Clears Heat, Drains Dampness, Promotes Urination
32	Bi Xie Sheng Shi Wan (Subdue the Dampness Teapills)	#3331	21	Clears Damp-Heat from the Lower Jiao, Cools the Blood, Separates Turbid from Pure, Promotes Urination
33	Hua Zhi Ling Wan (Fargelin Pills)	#3938	21	Clears Damp-Heat from the Intestines, Cools the Blood, Invigorates the Blood
34	Kai Kit Wan	#3956	22	Invigorates the Blood, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Drains Dampness, Tonifies Qi
35	Li Dan Pian	#3912	22	Clears Heat, Drains Dampness, Expels Toxic-Heat, Regulates the Gall Bladder, Moves Qi
36	Si Miao San/Wan (Four Marvel Teapills)	#3625	22	Clears Heat, Resolves Dampness
37	Stone-K Formula (Jie Shi Ling)	#3836	22	Promotes Urination, Drains Dampness, Clears Heat, Breaks Up Qi & Phlegm Accumulation
38	Xiang Lian Wan (Aucklandia & Coptis Teapills)	#3612	22	Clears Heat, Transforms Dampness, Moves Qi
39	Yu Dai Wan	#3658	22	Clears Damp-Heat from the Lower Jiao, Restrains the Leakage of Fluids, Nourishes Blood
40	Guan Jie Yan Wan (Joint Obstruction Teapills)	#3617	23	Expels Wind-Damp, Drains Damp-Heat, Unblocks the Luo Channels and Joints
41	Xuan Bi Teapills	#3356	23	Dispels Wind-Damp, Clears Heat, Unblocks the Channels and Collaterals, Promotes Urination
42	Jiao Gu Lan (Panta Teapills)	#3963	26	Strengthens Zheng Qi, Enhances Yin, Supports Yang, Moistens the Lungs, Nourishes Body Fluids, Expels Phlegm, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Invigorates the Blood
43	Zi Sheng Wan	#3652	28	Tonifies Spleen Qi, Regulates Qi in the Middle Jiao, Drains Dampness, Eliminates Food Stagnation, Harmonizes the Stomach, Clears Heat, Calms the Fetus
44	Fu Ke Zhong Zi Wan (Fertile Fields Teapills)	#3655	29	Nourishes Blood, Strengthens the Kidneys, Warms the Uterus, Invigorates the Blood, Clears Heat, Calms the Fetus
45	Er Long Zuo Ci Wan	#3679	31	Nourishes Liver and Kidney Yin, Clears Deficiency Heat, Calms the Liver, Subdues Liver Yang, Benefits the Ears
46	Liu Wei Di Huang San/Wan (Six Flavor Teapills)	#3620	32	Tonifies Liver and Kidney Yin, Clears Deficiency Heat, Secures the Jing-Essence
47	Ming Mu Di Huang Wan	#3611	33	Tonifies Liver and Kidney Yin, Nourishes Liver Blood, Clears Heat, Subdues Liver Yang, Extinguishes Wind, Benefits the Eyes
48	Yu Quan Wan (Jade Spring Teapills)	#3754	33	Nourishes Body Fluids, Tonifies the Qi, Tonifies Yin, Clears Heat
49	Zhi Bai Di Huang San/Wan (Eight Flavor Rehmannia Teapills)	#3630	34	Nourishes Kidney Yin, Subdues Deficiency Fire, Clears Damp-Heat from the Lower Jiao
50	Er Xian San/Wan (Two Immortals Teapills)	#3364	35	Warms and Tonifies Kidney Yang, Tonifies Yin, Nourishes Jing-essence, Nourishes Liver Blood, Drains Kidney Fire, Regulates the Chong and Ren Channels
51	Yue Ju San (Extract Powder)	#3116	36	Regulates Qi, Invigorates the Blood, Drains Dampness, Expels Phlegm, Clears Heat, Resolves Food Stagnation, Releases Constraint
52	An Mien Pian (Restful Sleep Support)	#3919	40	Calms the Shen, Nourishes Blood, Clears Heart Heat, Transforms Phlegm, Relieves Food Stagnation
53	Gu Jing San (Extract Powder)	#336C	40	Tonifies Yin, Clears Heat, Stabilizes the Menses
54	An Shen Bu Xin San/Wan	#3666C	42	Tonifies Yin, Nourishes Blood, Calms the Hun and Shen, Subdues Liver Yang, Clears Deficiency Heat, Regulates Qi and Blood

No.	Product	Code	Page	Function statement (verbatim)
55	Chai Hu Long Gu Mu Li San/Wan (Bupleurum Dragonbone Oyster Shell Teapills)	#3371	42	Moves Liver Qi, Clears Heat, Subdues Liver Yang, Dissolves Phlegm, Calms the Shen, Tonifies Righteous Qi, Unblocks the Three Yang Stages
56	Suan Zao Ren Tang San/Tablets	#3935	41	Nourishes Liver and Heart Blood, Clears Deficiency Heat, Calms the Shen
57	Tian Wang Bu Xin San/Wan (Emperor's Teapills)	#3660	42	Tonifies Heart and Kidney Yin, Nourishes Blood, Calms the Shen, Clears Deficiency Heat
58	Dan Shen Huo Xue Wan (Quell the Surface Teapills)	#3322	43	Invigorates the Blood, Regulates Qi, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Expels Wind
59	Du Zhong Pian (Eucommia Combination Tablets)	#3920	44	Strengthens Liver and Kidneys, Calms Internal Wind, Clears Heat, Drains Dampness, Calms the Shen
60	Jiang Ya Pian	#3918	44	Sedates Liver Yang, Cools Liver Fire, Calms Internal Wind, Nourishes Liver & Kidney Yin, Tonifies & Moves Blood
61	Luo Bu Ma Tablets	#3960	44	Calms the Liver, Drains Fire, Extinguishes Wind, Sedates Liver Yang, Drains Dampness, Transforms Phlegm, Calms the Shen
62	Tian Ma Gou Teng San/Wan	#337C	44	Calms the Liver, Extinguishes Wind, Clears Heat, Subdues Liver Yang, Tonifies Liver and Kidneys, Invigorates the Blood
63	Xiao Feng San/Wan (The Great Windkeeper Teapills)	#382C	43	Dispels Wind, Drains Dampness, Clears Heat, Cools the Blood
64	Bei Mu Gua Lou San (Extract Powder)	#333C	45	Moistens the Lungs, Clears Heat, Regulates Qi, Transforms Phlegm
65	Ding Chuan Wan (Clear Mountain Air Teapills)	#3317	45	Descends and Disperses Lung Qi, Clears Heat, Dissolves Phlegm, Restores the Downward Flow of Lung Qi
66	Nei Xiao Luo Li Teapills	#3794	46	Dissolves and Disperses Phlegm, Softens Hardness, Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat
67	Ning Sou Wan (Quiet Cough Teapills)	#3634	45	Descends and Disperses Lung Qi, Resolves Phlegm, Clears Heat, Moistens the Lungs
68	Qing Qi Hua Tan San/Wan (Clean Air Teapills / Pinellia Root Teapills)	#3745	46	Clears Lung Heat, Resolves Phlegm, Descends and Disperses Lung Qi
69	Wen Dan San/Wan (Rising Courage Teapills)	#393C	45	Regulates Qi, Clears and Transforms Phlegm-Heat, Harmonizes the Gallbladder and Stomach, Calms the Shen
70	Zhi Ke Pi Pa Chong Ji	#3736	46	Clears Lung Heat, Resolves Phlegm, Restores the Downward Flow of Lung Qi
71	Ban Lan Gen Chong Ji (Southern Ban Lan Gen Instant Herbal Beverage)	#3734	51	Clears Heat, Expels Toxic-Heat, Benefits the Throat, Invigorates the Blood

APPENDIX B

RETRIEVAL AND CODING PROTOCOL

B.1 RETRIEVAL

The catalog PDF was converted to text with layout coordinates preserved. Product titles (set in the catalog's display typeface) were extracted line by line, adjacent title lines were merged into full product names, and each function statement was associated with the nearest title in the same column; every association was checked manually against the catalog page. A record was retrieved when the function statement matched either of the following patterns (case-insensitive): (1) a verb of the set {clear*, remove, drain, cool, subdue, neutralize, purge} followed within one clause by heat or fire; or (2) heat or fire followed within one clause by one of those verbs (e.g., "Expels Toxic-Heat").

B.2 DROP DUPLICATION

Products listed in more than one therapeutic section of the catalog were retained once, at their first occurrence. The retrieval returned 73 records; 2 duplicates were removed, leaving N = 71 unique products.

B.3 CODING DIMENSIONS AND DECISION RULES

Verb realization. "Bare Clears Heat" requires the exact two-word phrase with no modifier and no organ or region specification. "clear + specified object" covers pathogen compounds (Clears Damp-Heat), organ systems (Clears Lung Heat), and regions (Clears Heat from the Interior). "Non-clear verb" requires heat or fire to be the direct object of remove, drain, cool, subdue, neutralize, or purge; thus "Purges Accumulation, Clears Heat" is not counted as purge-heat, whereas "Purges Accumulation due to Yang Ming Heat" is, because heat is encoded in the purged object itself.

Object specification. A compound is counted as lexicalised only when it appears as a hyphenated or two-word noun phrase (damp-heat, wind-heat, phlegm heat, toxic-heat, deficiency heat/fire); separate verb phrases engaging the same pathogen (Clears Heat, Transforms Dampness) count as mentions, not compounds.

Organ localisation. Counted when the heat-clearing verb phrase itself names an organ system (lung, heart, stomach, liver, kidney, intestines, gallbladder, spleen), in either order (Clears Heart Fire; Removes Heat from lungs and liver).

Co-occurring actions. Counted per statement, not per verb phrase; synonyms were grouped (nourishes/tonifies/protects yin or blood; resolves/transforms/dissolves phlegm; drains/transforms/eliminates dampness; releases the exterior/dispels/disperses wind; cools the blood; calms the shen; promotes urination).

Formula overlap. Jaccard coefficient over the pinyin herb sets printed in the catalog, computed as $|A \cap B| / |A \cup B|$ for each product pair (see Equation 1 in the text).

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