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Abstract: Ancient poetry represents historical and cultural legacies accumulated by the Chinese nation for thousands of years and underpins the strong cultural confidence of the Chinese people. Tang poetry distinguishes itself from other literary works with its beautiful rhyme and symmetry. Previous studies of English translations of Tang poetry mostly focused on appreciation, analysis, and critics of different translation versions. Few researchers have delved into the specific translation methods for achieving the rhyming and symmetrical effects of Tang poetry in the target text. This paper examined Professor Xu Yuanchong’s English translation of 300 Tang Poems as the research object, and elaborated on how to retain the rhyming and symmetrical effects of Tang poems. This paper also summarized some practical methods that can be applied to translating Tang poems. Rhyming can be realized by the addition of end rhyme words and changes in word or line order. Symmetry can be achieved by the omission of a modifier or predicate, the addition of function words, changes in word order, or parallelism with the original sentence structure.

Keywords: Tang poetry, rhyme, symmetry, Xu Yuanchong, 300 Tang Poems

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.19873/j.cnki.2096-0212.2022.03.006

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Project name: Empirical Studies on Translator’s Translation Process, a general project of the Department of Education (Project No. 16SB0054)
**Introduction**

With thousands of years of history, the Chinese nation boasts a rich and profound traditional culture, which is the cornerstone of our strong cultural confidence. As one of the most significant treasures in Chinese literature, the poetry of the Tang Dynasty (“Tang poetry”) has played a vital role at home and abroad. With unique literary features, their beauty and influence have never faded with the passage of time. Tang poetry features many allusions that have profound and lasting connotations, reflecting China’s deep cultural heritage. The rhyme schemes made up of level and oblique tones make Tang poems catchy and brilliant. Moreover, the concision and implicitness of Tang poems arouse abundant emotions, imaginations, and thoughts in readers. With such unique literary charm, they have attracted numerous scholars to annotate them. In the meantime, they have been translated into English by a number of famous translators and spread to Western countries, so that their charm can reach a wider audience.

In Chinese academia, studies on poem translations mainly focus on the application of the “Three-Beauty Principle” to poem translations and appreciation. Some studies have analyzed the translation of Chinese poems from a specific cultural perspective, such as costumes or wine culture, traditional festivals, or culture-loaded words. Other studies have explored the translations of rhetoric in Chinese poems or introduced a new theoretical perspective to guide and evaluate poem translations. Poetry uses a flexible and rhythmical language to intertwine rich imagination with sober reasoning and instinctive sensibility with explicit concepts (Lin, 2006). I hold that rhyming and structural symmetry constitute the two most prominent features of Tang poetry. Existing studies of these two features mainly analyze from a linguistic perspective, and few of them explore specific translation methods for realizing the two features. Centering on rhyming and symmetry, I examined 300 Tang Poems, translated by Professor Xu Yuanchong, as the research object, and summarized some translation methods that can be applied to achieving the rhyming and symmetrical effects of Tang poems.

**Rhyme**

Tang poetry is generally classified into **gutì shí** poems before Tang Dynasty and **jíntí shí** poems after Tang Dynasty by genre. **Jíntí shí**, also called **jínti** poems after Tang Dynasty, is the genre of poetry that is studied the most. It took shape in the early Tang, mainly including **jüeju** [quatrain] and regulated verses. Among them, five-character quatrains and seven-character-regulated verses were extremely popular. The greatest feature of **jíntí shí** lies in its strict rule on rhyme. That is to say, the same rhyme must be followed throughout the lines, and rhyme words are of level tones generally (Jiang, 2008). In addition, ancient poets must create poems according to the strict rhyming standard set by the imperial court.

Rhyme schemes of English poetry are different from those of Tang poetry. Comparatively
speaking, English schemes are simpler and less strict. English poetry also rhymes with the repetition of the same or similar syllables at the end of verse lines. Due to the different number of lines, a quatrain, a cinquain, and even a sonnet vary in the placement of end rhymes within the lines or stanzas. Poems with four lines as a stanza usually follow the rhyme scheme of aabbabab. Those with eight lines as a stanza adopt the pattern of aabbcd1ababcdd (Li, 1985). Compared to Chinese poetry, English poetry adopts freer and more diversified rhyme schemes. It is possible that an English poem has different end rhymes while Tang poems must strictly follow the rhyme scheme and use the same end rhyme throughout the lines. The freer English rhyme scheme offers poets more room for creation in that they are not bound by a strict rhyming pattern. Therefore, in the translation of Tang poems, we can use such freer rhyme schemes to achieve the sound and rhythmical effects of poetry with several end rhymes in a stanza or a change of end rhymes. Then how can we achieve these effects with end rhymes in our translation practice? Our study of 300 Tang Poems, translated by Professor Xu Yuanchong, summarizes his translation methods for rhyming into three types: addition of end rhyme words, change of word order, and change of line order.

**Addition of End Rhyme Words**

End rhymes refer to a verse line’s last word, which contains a syllable whose sound is identical or similar to that of the last word in the line above or below. If, after initial translation, the lines do not end in syllables that are rhymes, then some words may be added to obtain the rhyming effect. The addition does not affect the main idea of the source text (ST) since it is inferred from the context or used as a complement for what is omitted.

Example 1

ST: 羌笛何须怨杨柳, 春风不度玉门关。 (Wang Zhihuan, Out of the Great Wall)
TT: Why should the Mongol flute complain no willows grow?
     Beyond the Gate of Jade no vernal wind will blow.

Example 2

ST: 澹澹长江水, 悠悠远客情。(Wei Chengqing, Parting with My Younger Brother)
TT: The long, long river coolly flows;
     My parting sorrow endless grows.

Example 3

ST: 自君之出矣, 不复理残机;  
     思君如满月, 夜夜减清辉。 (Zhang Jiuling, Since My Lord from Me Parted)
TT: Since my lord from me parted;  
     I’ve left unused my loom. 
     The moon wanes, broken–hearted;  
     To see my growing gloom.

Example 4

ST: 生女犹得嫁比邻, 生男埋没随百草。(Du Fu, Song of the Conscripts)
TT: A daughter can be wed to a neighbor, alas!
A son can only be buried under the grass!

In Example 1, there is no mention of the “growth” of willows in the first line of the ST, but Professor Xu (hereinafter referred to as “the translator”) added a verb “grow” after “杨柳” [willows] to rhyme with and match the verb “度” [blow] in the subsequent line. The original poem depicts the scene when the general and soldiers heard the song titled Willows, a song of grievance, played by someone with a Mongol flute, and felt that their mood was fully expressed (Zhuge, 2010). The ST states that a spring wind was blowing, but it does not mention willows’ growing. Moreover, willows in the ST refer to the name of a song, but the translator creatively described them as real objects. In Example 2, with each line made up of nouns only, the two lines feature the nominal structure, which is commonly used in Tang poetry. Or we may take them as elliptical sentences, i.e., sentences without predicates. Obviously, when they are translated into English, we must add predicates. The translator selected “flow” and “grow” to collocate with “长江水” [the Yangtze River water] and “远客情” [emotion for a departing friend]. This choice complies with the context and logic of the ST, and provides the unrhymed two ST lines with a rhyming effect, reflecting the translator’s great originality. In Example 3, the translator intensified the heroine’s emotion of missing her husband into “broken-hearted” and translated the “减” [decreasing] into “增” [growing], further escalating the emotion to “gloom” and showing her anguish over the fact that the moon she saw was a full moon, but she still cannot reunite with her husband. The use of “broken-hearted” and “gloom” not only reflect the heroine’s sentiment of missing, but also rhyme with “parted” and “loom” in the first two lines, creating a beautiful sound effect. In Example 4, the translator added a modal particle “alas” at the end of the translated line of “生女犹得嫁比邻,” which rhymes with “grass” in the following line. Du Fu wrote the Song of the Conscripts to reflect the severe influence of the imperial court’s wantonly engagement in wars, so that families suffered from losing their sons in battles while their daughters could at least survive by marrying neighbors. The lines imply Du Fu’s deep sympathy for the miserable lives of the people. The addition of “alas” is therefore reasonable from an emotional perspective.

Change of Word Order

This is mainly achieved by the change of word order in a verse line, or the change of the normal sequence of a modifier and the modified word, usually by inversion, for instance, putting the adverbial at the front or the adjective after the noun. Rhyming is thus realized by changing the word order. After the new arrangement, the sentence pattern differs from the conventional usage, but moderate inversion can highlight displacement—an original feature of Tang poetry. Displacement, or inversion, is common in Tang poetry. The frequent practice is to place a predicate before a subject, preposition an adverbial, or put an adjective after a noun. Sometimes a word needs to be placed at the end of a line for the purpose of rhyming.

Example 1

ST: 纵使晴明无雨色，入云深处亦沾衣. (Zhang Xu, To a Guest in the Hills)
TT: Even on a fine day when the sun’s shining bright;
Your gown will moisten still in the thick of clouds white.

Example 2
ST: 自君之出矣，不复理残机。
思君如满月，夜夜减清辉。(Zhang Jiuling, Since My Lord from Me Parted)
TT: Since my lord from me parted;
I’ve left unused my loom.
The moon wanes, broken-hearted;
To see my growing gloom.

Example 3
ST: 即此羡闲逸，怅然吟式微。(Wang Wei, Rural Scene by River Wei)
TT: For this unhurried life I long,
Lost in singing “Home-going song.”

In Example 1, the translator reversed the phrase “白云” [white clouds] and put “white” after “clouds” to echo “bright” in the “shining bright” of the previous line through reasonable deliberation. As the word “cloud” actually implies “being white,” the addition of “white” here seems redundant, but it is for the purpose of making the couplet rhyme to create the beautiful sound effect of poetry. From this perspective, we may think that the translator added an end rhyme. But from another perspective, we see that it makes sense for him to translate “白云” into “white clouds” for emphasis and the post-position of the adjective shows his effort for rhyming. Example 2 was mentioned in the analysis of the first method, but here what is involved is the first two lines, which relate to the change of end rhymes. By normal word order, “自君之出矣” should be translated as “since my lord parted from me” literally. But the translator put the preposition at the front and formed an inversion. Such a sentence pattern is rarely used conventionally since the predicate is put at the end of the sentence. Generally speaking, predicates are placed at the front in inverted sentences. Although such a rendition does not comply with the general practice of inversion, it is not frequently used by the translator and shows his effort for the rhyming effect. In this way, the word “parted” in the first line becomes a rhyme for the word “broken-hearted” in the third line. Example 3 and Example 2 are similar. Both feature the preposition of the prepositional phrases, so that the rhyme words can be placed at the end of the lines. For the English translation of Tang poems, we often see translators put prepositional, participial, or adjective phrases at the front of lines. Sometimes, a single adjective may be placed after a noun for the rhyming effect. This changing of word order approach, however, does not apply to all kinds of words. Translators should still adjust the order by English grammatical rules and the actual context. Otherwise, the English translation would be grammatically wrong.

Change of Line Order

This is done by changing the sequence of the adjacent two lines or part of the words in the lines
for rhyming with a previous line without changing the original meaning of the verse. The premise is that the described thing is complete and retains its wholeness even after the change of the sequence.

Example 1
ST: 山光忽西落, 池月渐东上;
散发乘夕凉, 开轩卧闲敞。 (Meng Haoran, Longing for Xin the Elder)
TT: Suddenly daylight fades o’er western hill;
Gradually climbs the moon o’er eastern pool.
With window open, at ease I lie still;
With hair unloosed, I enjoy evening cool.

Example 2
ST: 独在异乡为异客, 每逢佳节倍思亲;
遥知兄弟登高处, 遍插茱萸少一人。 (Wang Wei, Thinking of My Brothers on Mountain-Climbing Day)
TT: Alone, a lonely stranger in a foreign land,
I doubly pine for my kinsfolk on holiday.
I know my brothers would, with dogwood spray in hand,
Climb up the mountain and miss me so far away.

In Example 1, the sequence of the original lines “开轩卧闲敞” and “散发乘夕凉” were switched to make “hill” and “still,” “pool,” and “cool” rhyme in the pattern of “abab,” which is very common in English poetry. Through the two lines, the poet described the scene in his house. The change of the sequence does not affect the atmosphere of a relaxed lifestyle that the poem was intended to express. Therefore, it is feasible to switch the sequence of certain lines for rhyming. In Example 2, the English translation of the words “登高” [climb up the mountain] and “遍插茱萸” [with dogwood spray in hand] switched places in the original verse. The poem describes that the poet, who lived somewhere far away from his home, recalled the days when he and his kinsfolk climbed up a hill with dogwood worn on their heads to have fun together. It goes on to show that on that special day, the locals still went climbing, but the poet could not join them (Zhuge, 2010). The last two lines depict his sadness as a man wandering about, far from his family. Though the English translation splits them into two sections, what is rendered has the same meaning. In this way, “land” and “hand,” “holiday” and “away” rhyme with each other. Compared with Example 1, the translator only switched the positions of a few words instead of two whole lines. But the underlying approach is the same. It is to switch two sentences or parts of the sentences for the rhyming effect without affecting the conveyance of the original meaning.

For the English translation of Tang poems, rhyme schemes such as aabb or abab are often followed deliberately to match the tradition of English poetry and retain the rhyming feature of Tang poetry. Methods such as the addition of end rhyme words, and change of word or line order, are applied for rhyming. Rhyming must be taken into consideration when translating such poems into English to keep the beauty of the sound effects of Tang poems.
Symmetry

Antithesis or antithetical parallelism is a common rhetoric method in Chinese and an important feature of poems after Tang Dynasty, which, however, does not require that each couplet be antithetic. Generally speaking, the two middle couplets in a regulated verse should be antithetic. For instance, four-couplet regulated verses, a common form in Tang poetry, generally have antithetic lines in the second and third couplets. There are a variety of antithetical forms and criteria for classification. Take the accuracy of antithesis as an example. There are antithetic forms requiring exact pairs of words, opposite words of the same category, words of a different category, and extraordinary antithesis. Classified by position, antithetical forms include same-line antithesis, antithesis one line apart, antithesis in the following line, antithesis in different places in two lines, corresponding repetition of the same word in the same place in two lines, and a run-on couplet (Jiang, 2008). Antithesis in Tang poems features symmetry in meaning and form, like a noun corresponding to a noun, a verb to a verb, words with similar or opposite meanings in the same number of words and with an identical structure. The antithetical form in Tang poems should be maintained as much as possible during translation to realize the poetic beauty of the form. Professor Xu held that translators must think hard about the way to translate antithesis in Tang poems to convey their beauty. If the translation is merely equivalent to the original poem in meaning without rhyme and symmetry, it cannot retain the style and charm of the original poem (Xu, 1983). Therefore, the beauty in rhyme and symmetry in Tang poems should also be rendered as much as possible in English. Symmetry in form is mainly reflected in the exact number and order of words. Attention should be paid to the adjustments of word number and order. In the following text, examples were taken from 300 Tang Poems, translated by Professor Xu, to elaborate on the methods for realizing symmetry in translation, which include: the omission of a modifier or predicate, the addition of function words, change of word order, and parallelism with the original sentence structure.

Omission of a Modifier or Predicate

In certain cases, the modifier before a noun in the ST can be omitted, so that the English couplet can achieve equivalence in the number of words and structure. It is well-known that Tang poetry features concise language expression. Sometimes, if modifiers in the ST are completely retained, the translation would be redundant, undermining the succinctness of the ST. Therefore, on the premise that the holistic meaning of the ST is unaffected, some modifiers can be omitted for concision.

Example 1
ST: 山花如绣颊, 江火似流萤。 (Li Bai, Passing by the Triumphal Tower at Night)
TT: The flowers blow like cheeks aglow,
And lanterns beam as fireflies gleam.

Example 2
ST: 空外一鸷鸟, 河间双白鸥。 (Du Fu, Alone I Stand)
TT: A falcon hovers in the sky;
A pair of gulls on water glide.

In Example 1, “山花” refers to wildflowers in a mountain forest. In the ST, “山花” corresponds to “江火” [literally, flame on the river], which actually means lanterns at the riverside. The ST states that the glimmering light in the lanterns was just like light produced by fireflies. If the word “江火” is translated into lanterns at the riverside, then the TT would be too long, losing the concise linguistic feature of a five-character quatrain, a typical form of Tang poems. Likewise, in order to match the single word “lantern,” the best way is to delete the modifier “山” from “山花.” The translation without such modifiers looks more symmetrical and concise, meeting readers’ expectations for Tang poems—a terse and indirect language style. Example 2 is also an antithesis with “鸷鸟” corresponding to “白鸥.” Originally, “鸷鸟” refers to a kind of fierce bird while “白鸥” means white gulls. Here the translator omitted both modifiers for the terseness of the sentence pattern. “一” [one] and “双” [two] are both numerals, but the translator changed them into “a” for the effect of an equivalent structure. In addition, the translator omitted the predicate which is the same as that in the first line when he translated the second line “河间双白鸥.” This choice is in line with English grammar and syntax, which do not favor repetition. In English, if the predicates in a compound sentence are the same, the second predicate is often omitted in the subsequent part of the sentence. If nouns are to be repeated, pronouns are often used to refer to a word mentioned above. Therefore, “glide” was used in the second line to avoid repeating the word “hovers,” and the English rendition can also rhyme.

**Addition of Function Words**

This means adding the same kind of words to antithetical lines for unity in form. Such function words are generally placed at the beginning of the lines, including articles, pronouns, or conjunctions. The addition of the same type of words highlights the beauty through the form of couplets. In addition to this method, the same sentence structure or tense can also be used to achieve formal equivalence in an obvious way.

**Example 1**

ST: 来如春梦几多时, 去似朝云无觅处。(Bai Juyi, *A Flower in the Haze*)

TT: She comes like vernal dreams that cannot stay;
She goes like morning clouds that melt away.

**Example 2**

ST: 草露亦多湿, 蛛丝仍未收。(Du Fu, *Alone I Stand*)

TT: The dewy grass may wet the wing,
The spider’s nest may trap the weak.

**Example 3**

ST: 抽刀断水水更流, 举杯消愁愁更愁。(Li Bai, *Farewell to Uncle Yun, Imperial Librarian, at Xie Tiao’s Pavilion in Xuancheng*)

TT: But when we cut water with sword, still it will flow;
When we drink to lighten grief, heavier it will grow.

Example 4

ST: 魂来枫叶青, 魂去关塞黑。(Du Fu, Dreaming of Li Bai)

TT: When it came, green would maple forests loom;
When it went, dark mountains were left in gloom.

Subjectless sentences are typical in Chinese, especially in Tang poems. In Example 1, the subject “she” was added by the translator to the couplet, so that the structure of the two lines looks symmetrical and unified. If “comes” or “goes” had been used to start the sentence, the couplet would not have been so symmetrical. In addition, the translator restored predicates that seemed to be missing in the ST intentionally and used attributive clauses to justify them. In this way, the couplet looks symmetrical both in structure and meaning. In Example 2, the definite article “the” was used to lead the couplet and makes readers feel that the sentence patterns are quite orderly. In fact, “dewy grass” and “spiders’ nest” differ in forms because the former is an adjective-plus-noun phrase while the latter is the possessive case of a noun. Using “the” to create a unified sense of structure is a smart and effortless way to achieve the beauty of symmetry, which is essential to Tang poems. Moreover, in the following lines, the same modal verb and sentence structure were used so that two symmetrical couplets were created for readers. In Example 3, the conjunction “when” was used to connect the main clause and the subordinate clause so that even at first glance, the couplet looks unified in form. For the main clauses in the following lines, a sentence pattern of “it will...” was used. The touching couplet “抽刀断水水更流, 举杯消愁愁更愁” strikes a sympathetic chord in audiences so that it has been recited and eulogized for thousands of years. The reiterative locution in “水水” [water] and “愁愁” [grief] touches readers’ hearts and souls, showing the self-evident benefit of repetition in Tang poetry. The translator kept this style of narration and used “when” and “it will” twice to echo the strengthening effect of the ST. Therefore, the translation of the two lines makes the grade that the translator has always pursued—beauty in a form which brings poetic beauty to readers. In Example 4, conjunctions were also used to unify the entire sentence pattern of the poem. The consistent use of “it” as the subject and the match between the adjectives “green” and “dark” make the sentence pattern look more symmetrical. In the ST, both “青” and “黑” are placed at the end of the sentences, but it is grammatically unusual to put them this way in English. Therefore, the translator changed the sequence of “green” to make it correspond to the position of “dark.” It is also worth noting that although English does not favor repetition, this preference is often shown in the omission of a repeated noun or verb. For other parts of speech, such as conjunctions, articles, and pronouns, repetition is quite common in English. Such words are thus often repeated in the translation of Tang poems to achieve beauty through the form of the poetry.

**Change of Word Order**

This means adjusting the order of certain ST words in the TT for formal equivalence. Generally speaking, the sentence structure of an antithesis and the parts of speech should be consistent. Partial
adjustments may be made, especially at the beginning or the end of lines, for symmetry. Adjustments at the beginning of lines give readers a sense of visual symmetry, while those at the end of lines are usually for rhyming.

Example 1
ST: 上有青冥之长天, 下有绿水之波澜。 (Li Bai, Endless Longing)
TT: Above, the boundless heaven spreads its canopy screen;
Below, the endless river rolls its billow green.

Example 2
ST: 草枯鹰眼疾, 雪尽马蹄轻。 (Wang Wei, Hunting)
TT: Keener over withered grass his falcon’s eye,
Lighter on melted snow his steed trots by.

Example 3
ST: 分野中峰变, 阴晴众壑殊。 (Wang Wei, Mount Eternal South)
TT: Peaks vary in north and south side;
Vales differ in sunshine or shade.

In Example 1, “青冥” means blue sky. According to the rule for symmetry in Tang poetry, “青冥” should correspond to “波澜” [waves] while “长天” [long sky] should echo “绿水” [green water]. In English, “long sky” and “blue sky,” “green water” and “waves,” have an overlapping or inclusive relation. In the ST, the order of “绿水” and “波澜” was deliberately switched, so that “天” (tian) and “澜” (lan) could rhyme. The translator restored the proper order, so that the translation presents a consistent sentence pattern and an exact symmetry, in which “the boundless heaven” corresponds to “the endless river” and “canopy screen” echoes “billow.” As for the translation of the couplet in Example 2, “疾” [keen] and “轻” [light] were placed at the beginning of the lines and changed to a comparative form. In this way, the two adjectives look more coherent in form, and the sentence structure is more symmetrical. A method can be drawn from Example 2 that when we translate Tang poems, we can preposition words of a similar form (such as participle, comparative, or superlative adjectives) to create the beauty of symmetry, a unique aesthetic effect of Tang poetry. In Example 3, the couplet actually has displaced parts which are mainly for an aesthetic effect or sometimes for rhyming. Likewise, the translator switched the original order of words and restored the normal order for symmetry as the ST has, and made “side” and “shade” rhyme. Therefore, proper adjustments to sentence structure can make the sentence look balanced and symmetrical. This is a method adopted by the translator consciously to enhance playfulness and the symmetry of the lines.

Parallelism with the Original Sentence Structure

This refers to completely literal translation according to the structure of the original poem, just like copying the structure and sequence of the ST. This method is simple and direct. It can be done just by matching the symmetrical structure and conveying the basic meaning of the ST lines. It can retain the meaning and structural form of the ST to the greatest extent. Since the lines of a Tang poem
are quite symmetrical, a translator does not need much effort to adjust the structure and only needs to imitate it.

Example 1
ST: 大漠孤烟直, 长河落日圆。 (Wang Wei, On Mission to the Frontier)
TT: In boundless desert lonely smokes rise straight;
     Over endless river the sun sinks round.
Example 2
ST: 无边落木萧萧下, 不尽长江滚滚来。 (Du Fu, On the Height)
TT: The boundless forest sheds its leaves shower by shower;
     The endless river rolls its waves hour after hour.
Example 3
ST: 在天愿做比翼鸟, 在地愿为连理枝。 (Bai Juyi, The Everlasting Regret)
TT: On high, we’d be two birds flying wing to wing;
     On earth, two trees with branches twined from spring to spring.

In Example 1, both the ST and the TT adopt a sentence structure featuring the preposition of an adverbial modifier, then followed by a subject and a predicate. Such a sentence structure complies with both Chinese and English grammar. In comparison with other sentence patterns in Chinese, this sentence structure does not require many conversions in the TT and can be rendered with a linear translation. The sentence pattern in Example 2 resembles that in Example 1. In Example 2, the couplet adopts a subject-predicate-object-adverbial modifier pattern, which is quite common in both Chinese and English. Therefore, a literal translation can be applied with general consistency in the parts of speech and the number of words. Example 3 is of a similar structure as Example 1, i.e., adverbial modifier-subject-predicate-object, except that the translator highlighted the adverbial modifiers by isolating them from the main clauses with commas. This generates formal beauty in symmetry, making the two opposite words “在天” [on high] and “在地” [on earth] rejuvenate the ST effect. Therefore, if the TT can be made by corresponding directly to the ST, it is the best way to retain the beauty in both the meaning and the form of the original poem.

Antitheses play an important role in the longstanding popularity of Tang poetry. Although Chinese and English poetry differ dramatically in their forms, it is a critical issue in translation to retain symmetry. I selected a number of examples from 300 Tang Poems, translated by Professor Xu, to summarize four methods for realizing the symmetry of Tang poetry, including omission of a modifier or predicate, the addition of function words, change of word order, and parallelism with the original sentence structure.

Conclusion

Rhyming and symmetry are two key features of the everlasting popularity of poetry. Poetic Chinese language developed from the condensation of writings in classical Chinese. Poem
translation is, therefore, never a simple task. Instead, it features creative subversion. Among literary translation, creative subversion in poem translation is prominent. The concise language yet unlimited connotations of poems often put translators in a dilemma. If they put their emphasis on retaining the meaning, then the form may be ruined, and vice versa (Xie, 2014). There are some opinions in academia criticizing the translation of 300 Tang Poems by Professor Xu, claiming he focused too much on rhymes and failed to reproduce the soul of Tang poetry, so his translations can hardly be regarded as Tang poems in the true sense (Liu & Yang, 2014). But I think that considering the unique linguistic features of poetry, we obviously need to lay more emphasis on its form, even at a certain cost to the meanings. Moreover, poem translation is by no means a simple project and cannot be easily accomplished. It requires translators to hone their translation skills, so they can convey not only the emotions of the original poems, but also the beauty of the poetry in tones and forms. Based on the above analysis of the translation of 300 Tang Poems by Professor Xu, I conclude that the following practical methods can be applied to reflect the features of Tang poetry. The rhyming effect can be realized by the addition of end rhyme words and changes in the word or line order. Symmetry can be achieved by the omission of a modifier or predicate, the addition of function words, changes in word order, and parallelism with the original sentence structure. It is hoped that more translations of Tang poems can be spread globally, and that more Western readers can have access to the charm of Tang poems.

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(Editor: Yan Yuting)