

# Contrastive Analysis of Graphological Deviation in Chinese and English Concrete Poetry

Bei Zhou

Peking University, Beijing 100871

**Abstract:** Concrete Poetry is a type of literature that still exists today but less known for people. This research focuses on the effects of graphological deviation in English and Chinese Concrete Poetry, thus compares the disparities produced by the violation of norm language. Furthermore, readers are expected to enhance the profound understanding and appreciation essence of poems by accessing this unconventional language style.

**Keywords:** Graphological Deviation; Concrete Poetry

## 1. Literature Review

### 1.1 Concrete Poetry

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines Concrete poetry as “verse in which the typography or lines are arranged in an unusual configuration, usually to convey or extend the emotional content of the words.” In other words, it is a type of visual poetry that relies on the arrangement or placement of words on a page, to form a visual image for the reader which strengthens the meaning and content of the work.

In Chinese literary history, Concrete Poetry does not yet have a proper place, as it has been ignored as a literary genre; however, it does originate from ancient times to the present under visual poetry name.

The language of Concrete Poetry is a real challenge to English, as well as Chinese readers. The violation of conventional usages or rules, out of its artistic or thematic motivation, can lead to the deviation of English and Chinese Concrete Poetry (Leech 2001). Therefore, the deviation constitutes an important part of the particular style of poetry.

There are also scholars, who study literary language, and have conducted vast research in this field. For example, Wang (2002), discussed poetic language in Chinese, as well as in English. In Wang’s book, he regards Graphological Deviation as the external feature of poetic language, and believes that the function is to serve and reflect a feature of poetic language.

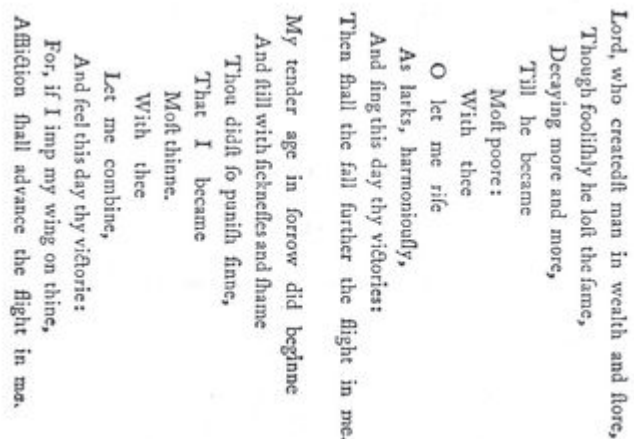
### 1.2 Graphological Deviation

Wang (2002) indicated that written has some relationship to pronunciation. To some extent, the phonological deviation reflects the graphological deviation. For example, in Pygmalion, George Bernard Shaw used graphological deviation language to embody the dialectal characteristics of dramatis personae such as e’s (=he is), bo-oots (=boots).

## 2. Theoretical Background

Wang (1990), he divided deviation into surface structure and deep structure, and emphasises that the former include phonological, graphological, syntactic, and lexical deviation; the latter include rhetorical devices, such as metaphors.

From Wang’s study, Graphological Deviation can be



Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,  
Though foolishly he lost the same,  
Decaying more and more,  
Till he became  
Most poore:  
With thee  
O let me rise  
As larks, harmoniously,  
And sing this day thy victories:  
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begiune  
And fill with fecknesse and shame  
Thou didst so punish finne,  
That I became  
Most thinne.  
With thee  
Let me combine,  
And feel this day thy victorie:  
For, if I imp my wing on thine,  
Affliction shall advance the flight in mee.

Easter Wings (George Herbert, 1633:174)

classified as a sub-area of graphology, as can be the shape of the text, the type of print, grammetrics. Here, we will focus on the three sub-areas.

The shape of text, especially the shape of the poem strikes us as unusual, due to its unconventional shape. The shape of literary poetry can be designed in an unconventional way, so that it may be suggestive of a certain literary theme. Let us look at the poem below:

If we look closely, we will find that the last letter of each line is e. Sometimes, the expression of this type of poem depends much on what the poem looks like.

Writers choose to express their ideas by way of manipulation of the type of print, which includes italics, bold print, capitalization and decapitalization. In the following sentence of a poem, the features of capitalization and decapitalization could be recognized as a kind of graphological deviation.

Me up and does  
Me up at does  
out of the floor  
quiet Stare  
a poisoned mouse  
still who alive  
is asking what  
have i done that  
You wouldn't have  
(E. E. Cummings, 1958:32)

Grammetrics is the way to divide grammatical units into lines and stanzas, to achieve an intended effect. Let us use the same poem to illustrate grammetrics.

From Wang's classification, the reader has a clear view of the sub-area of graphological deviation. Based on this study, graphological level can be regarded as the realization of language in its written form. Graphological variation is the chief means of producing 'eye-catching' effects.

### **3. Justification of this study**

From this research, we can find there are numerous studies on this topic; however, few have made a comparison between effects of English and Chinese Concrete Poetry from the perspective of Graphological Deviation; therefore, it will be of some academic value to explore this field.

#### **3.1 Effects of graphological deviation in English and Chinese concrete poetry**

##### **3.1.1 Foregrounding**

The word, "foregrounding" originates from a Czech word, and was first used by the Prague school. In the 20th century, the concept of foregrounding was widely used.

When we discuss foregrounding and deviation, we must consider what may cause them. In this study, we can find poets use unconventional expressions to achieve this certain effect.

According to (Leech 2001), he declares that the unique creative innovations of poetry are what we must chiefly have in mind, when discussing foregrounding. From the study, it is evident that through using the graphological deviation in English and Chinese concrete poems, foregrounding can be achieved.

##### **3.1.2 Create imagery**

Wang (2002) has stressed that the most important function of poetry is to help create imagination in people, as well as to explore intelligence.

When we think about the 20 Chinese and English Concrete poems, we clearly outline, from the graphological deviation form, that the creation of complex and multi-layer images is achieved. The words and sentences in poems have composed a picture of animals, as well as have broadened the power of imagination.

##### **3.1.3 Create Ambiguity**

Leech (2001) has said, "The whole significance of poem pivots on this ambiguity, which of course could not have arisen if the poem had used conventional capitalization and punctuation."

Based on his view and analysis in this study, we can conclude when the poet suggesting a feeling of being unsure about something or to make the reader wonder about the true meaning (but not really be sure about the true meaning), ambiguity produced.

### 3.2 The similarities and differences in English and Chinese concrete poetry which produced by graphological divation

From the perspective of psychology and linguistics, a process of human minds to reflect objective reality. To be specific, it is a process of our minds to do analysis, synthesis, and judgment. People of different cultures have similar ways of perceiving the world, for example, through visuals.

On the other hand, if we make a closely research, we will discover that the traits of Chinese characters can explain the deficiency in type of print.: From Wang (2002), the graphological deviation in Chinese characters should conform two regulations, which are originated from ancient times: reflect of reality world and for the convenience of handwriting.

### 4. Methodology

This paper is based on Wang (1990) classification of graphological deviation. He emphasises that graphological deviation can occur in any sub-area of graphology, such as in the shape of the text, the type of print, or in the grammetrics.

The English poems are mainly chosen from the works of E.E.Cumming, William Carlos Williams, Roger McGough, and John Hollander. The Chinese Concrete Poetry is mainly taken from the works of Zhan Bing, Li Qingsu, Wen Kai, and Bai Ling. The data comprises a total of 10 English Concrete Poetry and 10 Chinese ones. The selection of research materials is based on the following principles: each poem has at least one type of graphological deviation; the length of each poem is less than 200 words or characters.

To achieve the purpose of the research, this paper will take a quantitative approach to make an analysis. The data analysis in this study will follow 2 steps:

- 1.Quantify the sub-classification of graphological deviations in the selected English and Chinese Concrete poems, using the theory of Wang Shouyuan.
- 2.Quantify the effects in sub-classification of graphological deviation of selected English and Chinese Concrete poems.

Table 1: Graphological deviation in English and Chinese concrete poetry

	English poetry	Chinese poetry
Shape of text	7 (Figure 11/12/13/14/15/18/20)	9(Figure 1/2/3/5/6/7/8/9/10)
Type of print	3 (Figure 12/17/20)	0
Grammetrics	7 (Figure 11/12/13/14/18/19/20)	8 (Figure 1/2/3/5//7/8/9/10)

Table 2: The effects of sub-classification of graphological deviation in English concrete poetry

	Shape of text	Type of print	Grammetrics
Foregrounding	7	3	7
Create images	7	3	7
Create ambiguity	0	3	7

Table 3: The effects of sub-classification of graphological deviation in Chinese concrete poetry

	Shape of text	Type of print	Grammetrics
Foregrounding	9	0	8
Create images	9	0	8
Create ambiguity	0	0	8

### 5. Conclusion

From the data, it is evident that none of type of print be used in Chinese concrete poetry; the shape of text cannot create ambiguity in both English and Chinese concrete poetry. To achieve the purpose of the research, this paper will also take a qualitative approach to ensure that the research is objective. This paper contains statistics of the three sub-areas of Graphological Deviation in English and Chinese Concrete Poetry and the three types of effects. A qualitative analysis can make it clearer: the possible reasons of the results, to explore the poets' intention behind the effects.

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