

# A Criticism of Translation of Wuti Translated by Xu Yuanchong from the Perspectives of Multi-modal

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**Abstract:** Whether it is translation in a broad sense or in a narrow sense, it includes the conversion and information transmission of multiple symbol systems. In other words, in the process of translation, whether it is language or other types of symbols, they participate in the construction of meaning, so as to achieve the purpose of information transmission.

**Keywords:** Criticism; Translation; Wuti; Xu Yuanchong; Multi-modal

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With the rapid development of modern science and technology, the theory of multimodal discourse analysis emerged in the West in the 1990s. Multi-modality regards all communication modalities as a source of meaning generation, and believes that in daily life, in addition to using language, people often use one or several other symbolic resources to participate in the construction of meaning to achieve the purpose of communication, that is, multi-modality refers to a variety of symbol systems, and the combination of multiple modalities of communication. Product or communication process. Hu Zhuanglin studied multi-modal and its meaning construction from the perspective of theory and practice. Concern for multimodal discourse analysis was first seen in Professor Li Zhanzi's article *Social Semiotic Analysis of Multimodal Discourse* published in the *Foreign Language Studies* in 2003.

The starting point of the translator's work is the original text, the end point is the translated text, and the process is the conversion of language and text, but this does not mean that the objects he has to consider and deal with are only language and text. For instance, when encountering the common visual, auditory, and tactile images in poetry translation, the vivid descriptions in novels and prose, etc., should be used the way of "multimodal content in mono -medium text" to show. At this time, the task of the translator is not only to convey the language information of the original text in the translation, but also to dig out the multi-modal information behind the language and text in the original text.

Tang poetry and Song poems, as the essence of ancient Chinese literature, have extremely high aesthetic value. Take the poem of *To One Unnamed*. for example, it is a poem of autumn, but it also embodies her sadness about love. This article analyzes the original poem and the English translation of Xu Yuanchong, and appreciates the translation from many aspects, including the beauty of sound (rhythm), the beauty of form (structure), the beauty of meaning (imagery), the reading experience of readers (feeling), and the background of the author(emotion), so as to better understand the deep level behind the translation.

## 1. The beauty of sound (rhythm)

The character of the language of the seven-character poem is varied, expressive, and musical, with four steps and four rows of rhythm, and rhyme at the end of the sentence.

English (Target Text)

To One Unnamed

Li Shangyin (Translated by Xu Yuanchong)

It's difficult for us to meet and hard to part.

The east wind is too weak to revive flowers dead.

The silk worm till its death spin silk from love-sick.

The candle burned to ashes has no tears to shed.

At dawn she'd be saddened to see mirrored hair grey. (diphthong)

At dusk she would feel cold while crooning by moonlight.  
To the three fairly hills it is not a long way. (diphthong)  
Would the blue bird oft fly to see her on the height?

Analysis:

As we all know that the ancients paid attention to the balance and alternation of Chinese tones to create the beauty of cadence in the language. It is easy to read. And the rhyme is simple. Meanwhile, there are various forms of rhyme in English poetry. Moderate and reasonable rhyme can well reflect the beauty and conciseness of poetry, so that readers can capture more auditory images from poems. And the rhyme becomes one of the foundations of aesthetic structure system of English poetry.

First, we can find the tone in the last words of every sentence, for instance, the Chinese words of “nan”, “can”, “gan”, “han”, “han” are expressed in rhyme with “an”; while in English version, the English words of “part”, “dead”, “heart”, “moonlight” and “height” are shown in rhyme with voice consonant “t” and voiced consonant “d”. Thus, whether in Chinese version or English version, they are all in the same rhyme structure.

What’s more, when reading both in Chinese version and English version, we can feel a sound rhyme with the level and oblique tones (“Pingze” in Chinese) in the Chinese version, and sense a good rhyme with iambic pentameter (particularly in stressed syllable and unstressed syllable). Hence, it is a wonderful translated script in rhyme.

Third, the application of diphthong located in the last letter of the whole sentence is easier to express the author’s feeling. In the English version, we can notice two significant words with diphthong, like “hair gray” and “the long way”. The phonic of “ay” is [eɪ] in its international phonetic sign. The pronunciation of double vowels is round, long and full. The use of double vowels at the end of the poem makes the artistic conception of the poem remote and the image beautiful, which makes us have a lot of rich associations and gives the readers the enjoyment of beauty.

## 2. The beauty of form (structure)

The sentence structure is neat and tidy, with seven-character in one sentence in the source text.

Analysis:

Seven-character poems in Chinese version, also known as the structure with eight lines poems, require the number of words in poems to be uniform. So it is very clean and tidy and easy to be read. The form in the poem is very symmetrical. While in English version, we also can find this symmetry in grammar.

Firstly, let’s take the Chinese version for instance, the above sentences contain the phenomenon in symmetry of structure, like the noun of “silk worm” and “candle”, “death” and “ashes”, “silk” and “tears”, “death” and “shed”, “dawn” and “dusk”, “hair grey” and “moonlight”. So, two words or phrases with same meaning symmetrical parts of poems are used to express similar or related implications.

Secondly, another view from the English version, the first two sentences above sentences involve the symmetrical feature in the grammar. Such as, the subject with the noun “the silk worm” and “the candle”, the attributive composition to modify the subject with the structure of preposition of “till its death” and with the structure of participle of “burned to ashes”, the same part of predicate “spin” and “has”, the same part of object with the noun of “silk” and “no tears”, and the last part of object complement with the structure of preposition of “from love-sick” and the infinitive structure of “to shed”. In the last sentences, the first symmetrical part is the preposition structure of “At dawn” and “At dusk”, the second one is the same part of subject and predicate with “she’d be saddened” and “she would feel”, the last part is “hair grey” and “moonlight” as object complement. When reading, the target readers can have a better reading experience.

Thirdly, compared both the Chinese version and English version, the words and sentence structure are in a tune with similarity. For instance, “Chuncan” matched with “the silk worm”, “Laju” matched with “candle”, “Si” matched with “death”, “Hui” matched with “ashes”, “Xiao” matched with “At dawn”, “Ye” matched with “At dusk”, “Chouyun” matched with “hair grey” and “Yueguang” matched with “moonlight”. Thus, the Chinese version makes the equivalence and symmetry with the English version. So, the similar parts look neat and eye-catching, and sound sonorous and pleasant to the ear. They are easy to remember and recite. And it makes people feel pleasant in reading both Chinese and English versions.

## 3. The beauty of meaning (imagery)

Chinese (Source Text)

Static Objects: Dongfeng, Baihua, Laju

Yueguang, Pengshan

Dynamic Objects : Chuncan, Qingniao

Time: Xiao, Ye

English (Target Text)

The east wind, flowers, The candle, moonlight, three fairly hills

The silk worm, blue bird

At dawn, At dusk

Analysis:

Image is the objective scene with poet's subjective emotion in poetry. If we want to appreciate the poems, we can not separate from the image, but as a means of poet's expression. Image helps the author or render the atmosphere, and create artistic conception and blend feelings and scenes. Both in Chinese version and English version, there are some objects to express the author's feeling. Then we can divide them into three categories, for instance, the still life, animals and time.

Firstly, the still life, we know "the east wind" ("Dongfeng" in Chinese) and "flowers" ("Baihua" in Chinese). In the face of late spring, the author felt very sad, "the east wind" was powerless, "flowers" were falling, and the beautiful spring was about to die. However, people had no choice. It was connected to her own misfortune, just like the flower in front of me that was withering with the passing of spring. The "candle" was a metaphor.

Secondly, for the animals of "the silk worm" and "blue bird", the "silk" in the phrase of "the silk worm" had the euphony with "thinking or missing"(the meaning in Chinese). The whole sentence meant that she missed her husband like a spring silkworm spinning silk and stopped until she died. "The blue bird" referred to the messenger who delivered information or letters for the queen mother lived in the western place in Chinese mythology. The author wanted to use "the blue bird" to convey the lovesickness frequently.

Thirdly, for time phrases "At dusk"("Ye" in Chinese) and "At dawn"("Xiao" in Chinese), the phrase of "At dusk" meant that she speculated that her husband would probably not be able to sleep at night. She thought that he would be as miserable as herself. The phrase of "At dawn" meant that the author can't sleep all night, get up early, wash and dress up in front of the mirror, and suddenly found that her hair turned gray.

#### **4. The reading experience of readers (feeling)**

Analysis:

Xu Yuanchong always thinks that "beauty of meaning", "beauty of sound" and "beauty of form" are important standards in translation. He also supposes that only his own poetry translation is a strict verse. Knowing, being good and being happy represent the three realms that can be achieved in the translation. "Knowing" is to make the reader know the content of the original text, which is the minimum requirement; "good" is to make the reader like the translation "; and" happy "is to make the reader feel happy.

Thus, when translating, he tries his best to find something in English to match in Chinese. In his translation, he should take the promotion of Chinese culture as an ideal and pursuit, hoping that foreigners can also appreciate and feel the unique charm of Chinese poetry. If foreigner would understand and know Chinese culture, then they can feel the emotions and affections better.

#### **5. The background of the author (emotion)**

In the Tang Dynasty, people believed in Taoism, and Li Shangyin was sent to Yuyang Mountain to learn Taoism, met Song Huayin, and fell in love. But the love between them, they can cannot be known to outsiders. However, the author's heart is full of irresistible love. Thus, it can only be remembered feelings in poems. And the title should be hided So the poems appear obscure and melodious, with infinite love.

All in all, this paper analyzes the poem "Unnamed" written by Li Shangyin translated by Xu Yuanchong from the perspective of cognitive multimodality theory. Particularly, this thesis analyses the poem in the beauty of sound (rhythm), the beauty of form (structure), the beauty of meaning (imagery), the reading experience of readers(feeling) and the background of the author(emotion). So readers can accept and feel the aesthetics in the process of translation.

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