Research on Reproduction of the Musicality in the Translation of Shengshengman

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Abstract
Li Qingzhao’s Shengshengman enjoys a high status in classic Chinese poetry. Much research has been carried out on its English translations from different perspectives, such as aesthetics, pragmatics, hermeneutics and culture. This paper, however, conducts a contrastive study on Shengshengman’s five English translations from the viewpoint of musicality reproduction. The five selected versions are from Chinese translators Xu Yuanchong, Lin Yutang, Zhun Chunshen, a foreign translator John Turner and also one from online with an unknown identity. By a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, this paper attempts to make an objective evaluation on each translator’s gains and losses in musicality transference from five aspects: form construction, rhyme scheme, tonality, reduplicated words reproduction and onomatopoetic words representation. After data analysis and discussion, the results demonstrate that Xu’s translation tops others in rhyme scheme, tonality and reduplicated words. Lin’s and Zhu’s translations are better in form construction and onomatopoetic words. John Turner brings his own creativity into full play, but his translation is more like writing than translating. The online one presents no other strength except in the tonality reproduction. Final conclusions are drawn as follows. First, translators should translate verse into verse in which the original musicality is better preserved. Second, translators should be creative to generate similar sound effect instead of keeping strict adherence to the original metrical rules. This paper is of great significance in tapping the feasibility of musicality reproduction in English translation of Chinese poetry as well as enlightening translators to produce better poetry translation works.

Keywords
musicality reproduction, Shengshengman, Chinese poetry translation

1. Introduction
Li Qingzhao’s Shengshengman is a representative masterpiece of Song poetry whose sound beauty poses great challenge to translation. Many great translators home and abroad have made arduous efforts to reproduce the original musicality. Ever since these translation versions came into the public view, researchers have carried out numerous studies on them from different angles, such as aesthetics, pragmatics, hermeneutics and culture. Studies involved include research on the translation of the original images, cultural-loaded words, and femininity reproduction etc. However, as most of their studies are qualitative in nature, their conclusions are subjective and lack strong persuasive power.
This paper, however, by a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, provides tentative and contrastive research on *Shengshengman's* five English translation versions from the viewpoint of musicality reproduction, since a notable feature of it is its sound beauty. The five selected versions are from Chinese translators Xu Yuanchong, Lin Yutang, Zhun Chunshen, a foreign translator John Turner and also one from online with an unknown identity. The reason for choosing them is because they bear different backgrounds and have different translating levels so that their differences or features in translating the poem can be easily grasped, and thus an objective evaluation on each translator’s gains and losses in musicality transference can be clearly made and final rules can be concluded from their endeavour. The evaluation criteria are based on the agreement reached by great translators home and abroad in expounding how to transfer the sound beauty during translation. The paper desires to shed some light on tapping the feasibility of musicality reproduction in English translation of Chinese poetry, enlightening translators to produce better poetry translation works as well as deepening studies on Chinese poetry translation, making it more specific, objective and scientific.

The whole thesis is comprised of four parts. The first part is an introduction. The second part lays a theoretical foundation in evaluating musicality reproduction in translating Li Qingzhao's *Shengshengman*. The third part as the main body of the paper makes an analysis on the five translation versions from five aspects: form construction, rhyme scheme, tonality, reduplicated words reproduction and onomatopoetic words representation. The fourth part is the conclusion.

2. **Criteria of evaluating musicality reproduction in poetry translation**

Although there is no unified standard on how to translate classical Chinese poetry at present, many influential translation masters at home and abroad do reach a lot of agreements in dealing with the issue of musicality reproduction in poetry translation. Their consensuses comprise the paper’s criteria of evaluating musicality reproduction in poetry translation.

In the west, Herbert A. Giles (1845-1945), professor of Chinese in the University of Cambridge, published his *Chinese Poetry in English Verse* in London in 1898. He stated that almost all classical Chinese poems can be sung, so rhyme is a very important part of its sound system (Herbert A. Giles, 1898). From his statement, it can be seen that he advocates a preservation of rhyme to produce the sound beauty. W.J.B. Fletcher, as a follower of Herbert A. Giles, maintained that the original form should be kept and the original meter should be respected. His ideas are reflected in his work *Gems of Chinese Poetry*, published in Shanghai in 1919. John Turner published his *A