

## **Some Crucial Issues On The Translation Of Poetic Discourse From Chinese To English**

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### **Abstract**

This paper introduces the concepts of poetic discourse, translation and poetic translation before exploring the theories and strategies involving the translation of poetic discourse. Most theories developed are supported by examples extracted from the English version of my Chinese poems. They are attached to this thesis as appendixes with the target-language text (TT), source-language text (ST) and the ST in Mandarin Pinyin form. Subsequent to the development of theories and strategies in the areas of word level equivalence and above word level equivalence, a thorough analysis of two translated poems of mine entitled 'A Butterfly in the Web' and 'A Dead Dove' and one line of 'A Cat's Meditation' is presented to display all the relevant theories and strategies in application. The paper hypothesizes that translation of poetic discourse from Chinese to English would involve metaphrasing, substitution, addition, omission, alteration, creation, re-creation, adoption of general words and prefixes and suffixes, rephrasing, restructuring and overall interpretation, transformation, transcreation and compensatory techniques. It is important to know whether the translation should be author-centered, reader-centered or translator-centered, and social and cultural matters thus become crucial in the process of translation. A good poetic translator needs to be a good mediator between the two languages and cultures, a psychologist and a poet at the same time.

### **Definition of Poetic Discourse and Translation**

#### **What is Poetic Discourse?**

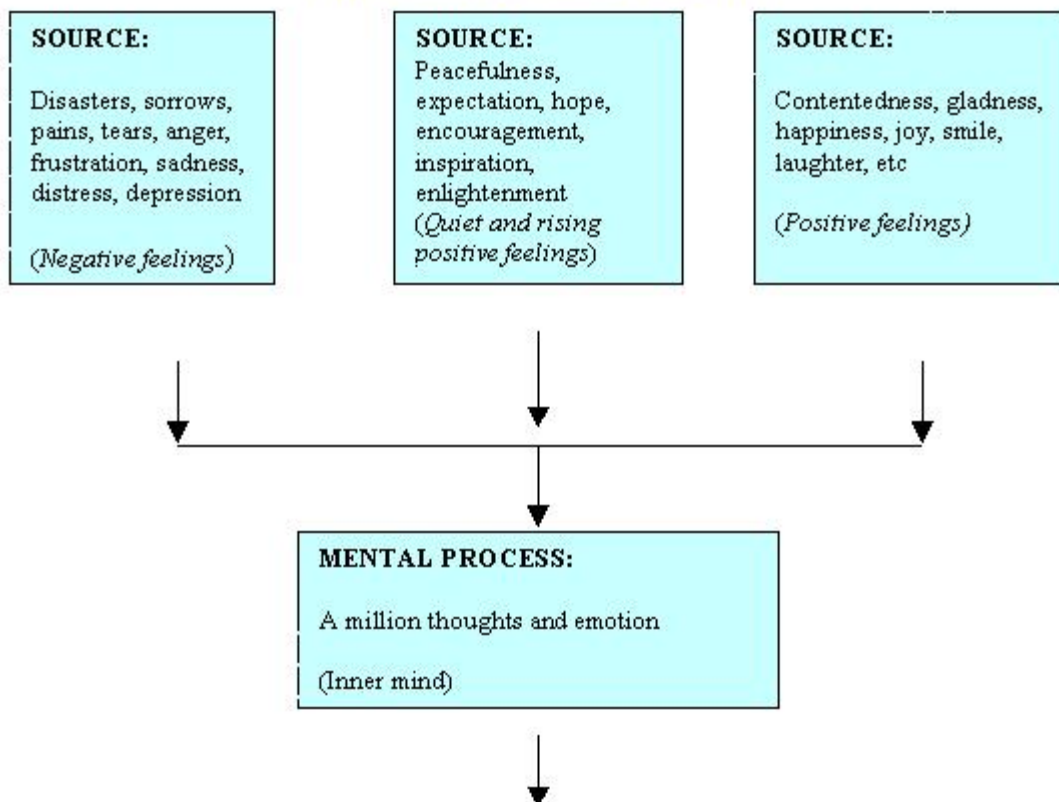
Poetic discourse is literary communication in which special intensity is given to the expression of feelings, thoughts, ideas or description of places or events by the use of distinctive diction (sometimes involving rhyme), rhythm (sometimes involving metrical composition), style and imagination. (Oxford, 2001: 1430).

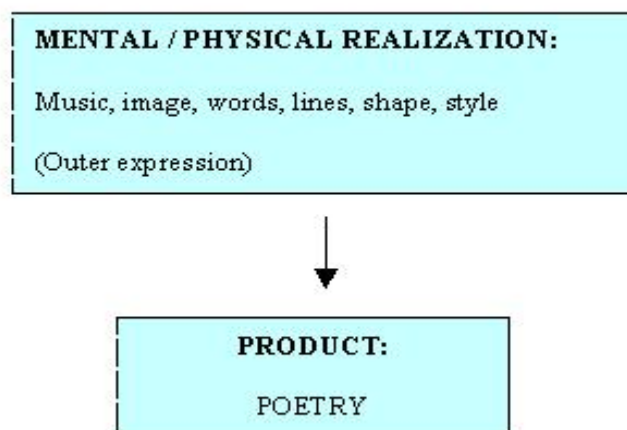
Newmark (1988: 163) states that poetry is a personal and concentrated form of writing with 'no redundancy, no phatic language, where, as a unit, the word has greater importance than in any other type of text,' and 'poetry presents the thing in order to convey the feeling, in particular, and however concrete the language, each represents something else – a feeling, a behavior, a view of life as well as itself.'(Newmark, 1988: 164).

In support to the above, King (1998: 14 & 15) points out: ‘Poetry uses powerful words and phrases to convey ideas, moods and emotions. The words may be rare or difficult, but more usually they are ordinary words used in an unusual or striking way. Sometimes the results are very concentrated, and you have to add your own thoughts, ideas and reactions to get the full sense of what the poet is trying to say – like diluting concentrated fruit squash with water so you can drink it. Some words in a poem may work very hard to achieve that concentrated effect,’ and ‘a few words can create a very rich, complicated mental picture.’ Further, he reveals the process of poetry formation, stating that in poems, we ‘choose words for their meanings, for the emotions they create, and for the sound they make’ (King, 1998: 16). We can see onomatopoeia, alliteration, sonnet, assonance, rhyme, rhythm, and various shapes and styles. We can also see metaphors. ‘Poems are usually set out in regular short lines, making a distinctive shape on the page,’ (King, 1998: 19) and ‘their regular rhythm produces a musical effect.’ (King, 1998: 27), ‘Some poems have extra lines which are there simply to keep a regular musical rhythm going’. (King, 1998: 37). [All this is viewed in my translation of Poem 1, Paragraph4, Line5, 6&7 of the TT].

I, as a poet, define poetry as multi-faceted and condensed expression in certain forms that carry styles, images and music as a reflection of the innermost emotion and thoughts of a poet’s inner mind resulted from all kinds of events, feelings and passions including disasters, sorrows, pains, tears, anger, frustration, sadness, distress, depression; peacefulness, expectation, hope, encouragement, inspiration, enlightenment; contentedness, gladness, happiness, joy, smile, laughter, etc. The formation of poetry is depicted by the following chart:

### THE FORMATION OF POETRY





Thus poetry are yells or laughs from the innermost hearts, songs chanted from the souls, pictures drawn from imagination, utterances displayed in languages with words and lines in shapes and styles. Poetry are arts and art; reality, philosophy and ideology. Poems originate from feelings and emotion. Therefore, poetry is presentation of feelings in words and forms and musical rhythm.

### **What is Translation and Poetic Translation?**

#### ***Translation***

Mechanically speaking, translation is a process of putting the 'sense of words or text' (Oxford, 2001: 1969) of one language into another language, the product of which is the result of translation. To dig deep, 'the sense of words or text' is multi-dimensional and has various levels of depth depending on context, which may include cultural, social and linguistic factors. As in some texts, cultural and social difference are not involved. Thus linguistic factors are the most common factor a translator confronts.

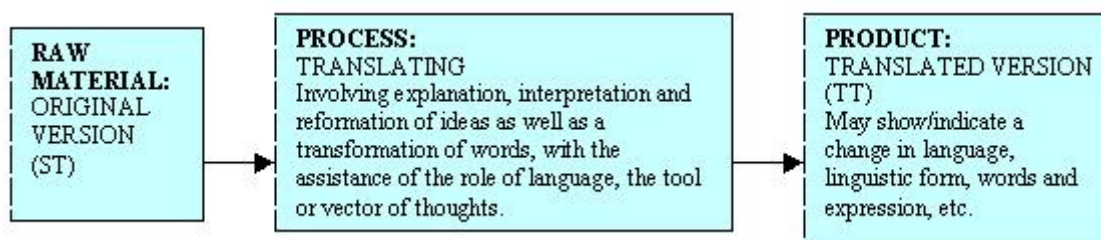
Nida and Taber (1982:12) believe that 'translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style'. Hatim and Mason (1990: 15) also point out that translation involves relaying lexical meaning, grammatical meaning and rhetorical meaning, including implied or inferable meaning for potential readers. Further, they state that 'translation involves the negotiation of meaning between the producer of the source-language text (ST) and the reader of the target-language text (TT)' and 'the resulting translated text is to be seen as evidence of a transaction, a means of retracing the pathways of the translator's decision-making procedures' (Hatim and Mason, 1990: 3-4).

Therefore, translation is description and prescription, a process and product, a production and reproduction. Above all, Bell (1991:4) categorizes translations into scientific translation and artistic translation, noting that the former seeks to create some kind of 'objective' description of the phenomenon whilst the latter tries to express in the TL with subjective perspectives.

### Poetic Translation

In poetic translation, more weight is put on the artistic and subjective side. Transcreation, transformation and transposition, therefore, form a significant role in it. The consequence of it is that not only the semantic information of the original poem is conveyed but also its aesthetic information including the shape, the construction and the aesthetic state of it.

Many translators frown on poetic discourse and claim that poems are not translatable. I argue that all poems are translatable as long as translators recognize that translation is not only a product but also a process and even more a process than a product. This is clearly indicated by the following chart. If we look at the ST as raw material and the TT as product, the translated version involves change in language, linguistic form, words, expression, etc., all of which are reflection of the process of translation. As Newmark points out: 'Many theorists believe that translation is more a process of explanation, interpretation and reformulation of ideas than a transformation of words; that the role of language is secondary, it is merely a vector or carrier of thoughts,' and 'Consequently, everything is translatable, and linguistic difficulties do not exist' (Newmark, 1988: 72). In my analysis of the poems and their translated version, these theories are further proved.



Poetic discourse tends to carry metaphors. 'Occurrences of metaphor have a cumulative effect, which suggests a particular perception of reality'. This is what the translator seeks to capture (Hatim and Mason, 1990: 4). In theory of preference of procedures for translating metaphor, Newmark (1988: 88-91) suggests the following:

- Reproducing the same image in the TL;
- replace the image in the SL with a standard TL image;
- translation of metaphor by simile;
- translation of metaphor (or simile) by simile plus sense;
- conversion of metaphor to sense;
- deletion, and
- same metaphor combined with sense.

As 'each language articulates or organizes the world differently' (Culler, 1976: 21), the translator, according to Newmark (1988: 164), has to 'reproduce scrupulously' the 'original metaphors' and needs to 'boldly transfer the image of any metaphor' including 'creating a culturally equivalent TL metaphor, or converting the SL metaphor to sense.' 'Translators cannot make any concession to the reader such as transferring the foreign culture to a native equivalent.' Further, Newmark (1988: 70) states that 'the translation of poetry is the field where most emphasis is normally put on the creation of a new independent poem, and where literal translation is usually condemned.' An example of this is that whereas 'original poetry itself has no

redundancy, no phatic language’, the translated version sometimes ‘relies on redundancy’ for meter and musical effect (Newmark, 1988: 167). [This is discussed further in my translation of Poem 1, Paragraph 4 where the original ‘pu-shuo’, literally meaning ‘flickering’ becomes ‘shining and glowing, appearing and disappearing’ in addition to ‘flickering’ in the TT (target text).] Newmark (1988: 165) describes poetry translation as the selection of a TL poetic ‘form’, reproduction of the figurative meaning, ‘the concrete image of the poem’ and reproduction of the setting, ‘the thought-words’ and the various sound-effect; and ‘a successful poem is always another poem.’ Paragraph 4 of Poem 1 is an example of this. I therefore stress that re-creation plays an important role in the translation of poetic discourse.

The translation of poetic discourse also involves other significant factors. Hatim and Mason (1990: 15) suggest that translation should take into account differences in the basic orientation of the translator. There are three kinds of translating: Author-centered translating, text-centered translating and reader-centered translating.

Creation of translation itself is based on the original meaning and should be faithful to the original spirit. This leads to the question of whether the translation should be text-centered (including meaning-centered, rhythm-centered, rhyme-centered and/or style-centered), author-centered or reader-centered. Whatsoever, all outcomes are eventually translator-centered for the translator is the one that makes the decision.

Stressing the importance of the ‘spirit of the original’ in meaning, style and unity, Hatim and Mason (1990: 11) state that ‘it is a fact recognized by all translators that familiarity with the ideas and underlying meaning of the writer of a SL text is a vital aid to translating, whereas unfamiliarity breeds lack of confidence, or at least the inability to anticipate meaning when a text is in some way defective, obscure or just elliptical. The best translators of works of literature are often said to be those who are most ‘in tune’ with the original author. The translator must ‘possess’ the spirit of the original, ‘make his own’ the intent of the SL writer: ‘such are the frequently used terms.’ And they suggest ‘to recover what is *meant* in a text from the whole range of possible meanings’ as ‘a text is a whole entity, to be translated as a whole,’ ‘the style is an indissociable part of the message to be conveyed,’ and omissions, additions and alterations can happen for conveyance of the intended meaning (Hatim and Mason, 1990: 9-12).

I value Nida’s (1964: 164) basic requirements of translation, which are summarized as the following:

- Making sense;
- conveying the spirit and manner of the original;
- having a natural and easy form of expression, and
- producing a similar response.

It can be concluded that translation of poetic discourse involves lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, functional, social and cultural elements. It is not merely a translation but also transposition, transformation and transcreation. ‘In the course of poetic translation, correspondence of meaning should, in the last resort, have priority over correspondence of style’ (Hatim and Mason, 1990: 15). Of all these elements, however, linguistic consideration, i.e., the consideration of the language elements including morphemes, words, meanings and the forms of conveyance, is the most

significant part and sometimes the only considerable factor when we translate poems written by poets who are already deeply involved in the target language (TL) environment, able to consider cultural variance in the process of writing and whose works only carry contents reflecting the TL genre and register and targeting at readers of the same world. The three chosen poems for analysis are of such a background. I therefore talk about linguistic issues rather than social or cultural issues in this essay.

In this essay, I aim at analyzing author-centered translation without neglecting readers and texts. The topic issues will include semantic and lexical aspects where we explore into the theories and strategies in coping with equivalence at word level, non-equivalence problems and equivalence above word level.

## **Theories and Strategies That Apply to Poetic Translation**

As we have explored, poetic translation is a search for equivalence of the sense of words or text in which process we tour around the semantic and lexical areas with cognition and skills to work on the equivalence at word level, non-equivalence and above word level equivalence. I stretch my exploration into these areas as the following:

### **Equivalence at word level**

In regard to equivalence at word level, we need, first of all, to work out what 'word' means and what the relationship between words is like. Is a word the smallest unit? Can it be broken into smaller elements? What kind of meanings can a word hold? What to do if non-equivalence at word level happens? These will be discussed below.

Basing on Baker's theories (Baker, 1992: 10-42), we know that morpheme is the minimal element in a word and words can have propositional meaning, expressive meaning and evoked meaning. There are various strategies to translate non-equivalents. These will be explored as we go along in the discussion and analysis that follow.

### **Word**

According to Baker (1992: 11), in the process of translating, the smallest unit that possesses individual meaning is the 'word'. Inexperienced translators tend to seek an exact word in the target language (TL) that share the exact meaning of a word in the source language (SL). Unfortunately, there is hardly any one-to-one relationship between words and elements of meaning (Baker, 1992:11). Elements of meaning which are represented by one word in English such as the article 'a' are often represented by two words in Chinese such as 'yi ge', 'yi zhi' etc. (meaning: 'a' + classifier that makes no sense grammatically when it stands alone until it is joined by a numeral, e.g. 'yi-ge ping-guo' equals 'an apple' and 'yi-zhi niao' equals 'a bird'). Thus while the 'a' in English equals 'yi' in Chinese, a classifier is often added to the Chinese version in context. Contradictorily, translation from Chinese to English tends to omit the classifier that follows 'yi' when 'yi' equals 'a' of the TL. In English, there is no measuring word. In some cases, it uses nouns (n.) or prepositional noun phrases (prep. NP) to show quantity such as *10 'tons', one 'kilo'; 'a pair of' trousers* and *'a piece of' paper*. This is discussed in the translation of Poem 1 where in the first line

'yi hang' (meaning 'a line') is represented by a prep. NP 'a flock of ' and in line 3 where 'zhi' is omitted. 'Zhi', is a classifier in Chinese. It does not make sense (grammatically) to stand alone in this context though it lexically means 'individual' by itself. Yet when it joins 'yi' to make 'yi-zhi', the combination means 'a' but its use is restricted to a smaller scope than the general English article 'a'. For example, you cannot say 'yi-zhi yizi' but 'yi-ba yizi' where 'yizi' means 'chair' and 'ba' is another classifier that needs to combine with 'yi' to make sense.

Certain words in English may have two distinct elements of meaning in it such as 'disappear' that is composed of 'dis' and 'appear' and the equivalent in Chinese cannot be just one word. The grammatical element 'dis' influences lexical meaning in this respect.

Knowing that words can be broken into their smaller units that can carry meanings independently, we come to the exploration of morphemes.

### ***Morphemes***

Basing on Baker (1992:11), morpheme is 'the minimal formal element of meaning in language'. It 'cannot contain more than one element of meaning and cannot be further analyzed'. Morphemes in English and Chinese however are expressed differently. For example, 'idiots' in Line7 of the TT, Paragraph 1 of Poem 2 has only one morpheme in English, but its equivalent in Chinese consists of two morphemes to read as 'yong-min' (stupid-people). 'Yong' and 'min' can stand by the self independently with 'yong' meaning 'ordinary and stupid' while 'min' meaning 'people'. Another example can be found in Line6 of the TT, Paragraph 2 of Poem 1: the word 'endless' with two morphemes 'end' and 'less' can be expressed in four words/morphemes as 'wu-bian-wu-ji' (meaning 'no-edge-no-boundary') in the ST.

Now that a word or a morpheme has its individual meaning(s), I extend the research into the nature of meanings, namely, propositional meaning, expressive meaning and evoked meaning.

### ***Propositional meaning***

'The propositional meaning of a word or an utterance arises from the relation between it and what it refers to or describes in a real or imaginary world, as conceived by the speakers of the particular language to which the word or utterance belongs', 'we can judge an utterance as true or false' (Baker, 1992:13). With this feature, the propositional meaning of a word or utterance can rarely cause trouble in translation. For example, the propositional meaning of 'cloud' (Line7 of the TT, Passage 1, Poem 1) is 'the stuff gathered by vapor in the sky'. It is not hard to convey this meaning from Chinese to English and vice versa.

### ***Expressive meaning***

Words can have the same propositional meaning but differ in their expressive meanings. (Baker, 1992: 13). An example in English is 'famous' and 'notorious' where both meaning 'well-known', the former conveys positive expression but the latter negative. Another example is 'unkind' and 'cruel'. They are inherently

expressive ‘showing the speaker’s disapproval of someone’s attitude’. Yet they vary in the degree of disapproval with ‘cruel’ being stronger than ‘unkind’. (Baker, 1992: 14) As poems are a means to express feelings, the choice of words with appropriate expressive meaning is crucial to the approaches to translation of poetic discourse. An example is found in Line6 of the TT, Paragraph 1 of Poem 2: The word ‘tramped’ is much stronger than its synonym ‘stepped’. This expressive action word delivers properly the full meaning of the ‘jian-ta’ (step rudely-step) in the ST, which shows the rudeness of the ‘idiots’ and the anger of the poet.

Highly expressive interjections such as ‘Oh’ (in Line5, Paragraph 3, Poem 1) have only expressive function. ‘Removing it would not alter the information content of the message’ but would tone down its forceful emotion (Baker, 1992:14). However, as poems express feelings, the existence of such words in the TT to correspond with the ST is significant.

### ***Evoked meaning***

In addition to possible propositional and expressive meanings, there is ‘evoked meaning which arises from dialect and register variation.’ (Baker, 1992: 15).

A dialect can be geographical, temporal and social. Geographically speaking, translation needs to consider the reader’s geographical background to choose suitable words. For example, whereas the English say ‘lift’, the Americans say ‘elevator’. Temporally speaking, we need to consider the words and structures used by members of different age groups within a community. For example, young people like to use ‘cool!’ to express ‘wonderful’ but not older people. Socially speaking, we need to consider the social classes of the targeted readers. For example, whereas the high-class Australians say ‘throw it’, the lower-class Aussies say ‘chuck it!’

Register as a situational context varies from field of discourse, tenor of discourse and mode of discourse. In poetic discourse, the same as in many other discourses, words tend to have ‘blurred edges’. ‘Their meanings are, to a large extent, negotiable and are only realized in specific contexts’(Baker, 1992:17). An example of this is found in Line1, the last paragraph of Poem 3 where ‘guang-mang-si-she’ in the SL which originally means ‘lights radiating in four directions’ can only mean ‘very bright’ and ‘radiating’ in this poem. The word ‘radiating’ is chosen to fit in this context in the TT. Different groups within each culture have different expectations about what kind of language is appropriate to particular situations. For example, ‘dove’ in Poem 2 is a proper word rather than ‘pigeon’ in a situation when we talk about peace, as it is in the poem. Yet in the Chinese version, the word ‘ge’ can mean ‘dove’ and ‘pigeon’. When I translate it, I have to choose ‘dove’ to match the TL receivers’ expectation. Translation needs to match the register expectations of its prospective receivers (Baker, 1992:17). We thus need to have a good command of strategies to deal with multi-equivalence and non-equivalence at word level.

### ***Strategies to deal with non-equivalence at word level***

‘Non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text.’ ‘Different kinds of non-equivalence require different strategies’ (Baker, 1992:20). Palmer (1976:21) believes



that 'the words of a language often reflect not so much the reality of the world, but the interests of the people who speak it.' This is extremely true with poetic discourse given that it is the kind of text that carries heavy subjective elements. It is important for the translator to adopt proper strategies to deal with non-equivalence at the word level by basing them on semantic translation. According to Baker (1992: 21-26), common problems of non-equivalence include:

a) **Culture-specific concepts** where 'the source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture (Baker, 1992: 21). An example of this is found in Line2, Paragraph1 of Poem 1 where 'qing-yun' (meaning 'green cloud' or 'blue cloud') of the SL presents a concept unknown to the TL readers who are unimaginative if not properly interpreted. The 'qing' (green) in the classical Chinese expression can represent 'blue' and 'qing-yun' is a fixed expression to represent cloud in the distant high sky. But in English, they never say 'green cloud'. The translator hence needs to know the culture and linguistic collocation of the TL, uses imagination and creation to find the equivalent **substitution** for 'qing'. In my translation, I have adopted 'blue' that is acceptable to the TL readers. This is explained further in the analysis of poems (Part 4).

b) **The SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL**, a situation where the SL may express a concept which is known in the target culture but not allocated a TL word to express it (Baker, 1992: 21).

c) **The SL word is semantically complex**, where 'words do not have to be morphologically complex to be semantically complex', 'a single word which consists of a single morpheme can sometimes express a more complex set of meanings than a whole sentence' and 'we do not usually realize how semantically complex a word is until we have to translate it into a language which does not have an equivalent for it' (Baker, 1992: 22). An example for b) & c) is found in Line1, Paragraph 2 of 'A Butterfly in the Web' where 'feng-qing' (meaning: wind-love, representing flirtation) can deliver a concept understandable to the TL readers but for its semantic complexity, can find no equivalent lexis for it. The translation needs to rephrase it using **transformation technique**. This process has caused the **addition and deletion of a few related words** in the sentence. Please refer to the full analysis of the poem in Section 4.1 of this essay for details.

d) **The SL and TL make different distinctions in meaning** where the TL may make more or fewer distinctions in meaning than the SL (Baker, 1992: 22). In Line3 of the ST of Poem 1, the word 'luo-xia' (meaning: falling-cloud, representing 'evening clouds') carries some depressing feeling in Chinese but its equivalent in English makes fewer distinctions and only means the object 'evening cloud'. The translator here has to interpret it resulting in an increase of words and lines in the TT. Again, **transformation by rephrasing, addition and creation techniques** is adopted. Although words are sometimes untranslatable, 'texts can always be translated' (Newmark, 1988: 79).

e) **The TL lacks a superordinate** where the TL may have specific words (hyponyms) but no general word (superordinate) to head the semantic field (Baker, 1992: 22). Interpretation with the skills of **rephrasing**, **addition** and **omission** may be involved in such cases of translation.

f) **The TL lacks a hyponym where the TL has general words (superordinates) but lack specific ones (hyponyms)** . ‘English has many hyponyms under *article* for which it is difficult to find precise equivalents in other languages’ (Baker, 1992: 23). For example, ‘review’ has no exact hyponym in Chinese. It has to be represented by two words to express all. However, sometimes we can choose one word that applies to a particular context. In other words, when we translate from Chinese to English, some specific words can be **translated to a general word** in English.

g) **Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective** . ‘Physical perspective has to do with where things or people are in relation to one another or to a place, as expressed in pairs of words such as come/go, take/bring, arrive/depart, and so on.’ ‘Perspective may also include the relationship between participants in the discourse (tenor)’ (Baker, 1992: 23). For example, in a business letter, the Chinese will never address the other party as ‘Dear...’ but in English, it is a must. Such notion calls for attention in translation of poetry discourse too. Very often, **deletion or addition or alteration of words** happens in the translation of such non-equivalence.

h) **Differences in expressive meaning** . There may be a TL word which has the same propositional meaning as the SL word, but it may have a different expressive meaning. ‘The difference may be considerable or it may be subtle but important enough to pose a translation problem in a given context. It is usually easier to **add expressive meaning** than to subtract it.’ (Baker, 1992: 23). For example, the word ‘white’ in English and Chinese both mean the nature of a color propositionally. Some Chinese describe Caucasians as ‘bai-ren’ (meaning: white-men) which is a neutral word without expressive meaning. But if it is translated into English directly, the TL readers find it discriminative. So the translation cannot go word for word but choose an **alternative word** such as ‘Caucasian’ that is semantically equivalent. Another example is that in Chinese, when the morpheme ‘er’ (meaning ‘son’ or ‘child’) follows a noun to make an NP such as ‘mao (cat)-er’, it sometimes does not mean ‘son’ or ‘child’ but conveys the feeling of ‘lovely’ in the expression. [Clearer examples are ‘hua (flower)-er’ and ‘chuan (boat)-er’]. Not having an exact word to describe ‘lovely’ in the Chinese version, the translated version in English needs to **add the word for expressive meaning** .

i) **Differences in form** . There is often no equivalent in the TL for a particular form in the ST (Baker, 1992: 24). Every language has its ‘peculiar grammar’ (Newmark, 1988: 72). Restructuring is common in the translation between Chinese and English due to the vast different linguistic structure between these two languages. For example, Chinese has no suffixes and prefixes which convey propositional and other types of meaning as English does. Chinese does not have couplets that are exactly like English either. In the course of the translation of poems from Chinese to English, we need to recognize the advantage and disadvantage in **paraphrasing and adopting the English prefixes and suffixes**. The adoption may mean a more precise and natural effect but may influence the length of the line, the shape of the poem and thus cause an overall need of rephrasing and hence restructuring of other lines, as Baker (1992: 24) describes it: ‘Their subtle contribution to the overall meaning of the text is either lost altogether or recovered elsewhere by means of **compensatory techniques**’ . This happens with the translation of Line6 of the TT in paragraph 4 of Poem 1. Please note the word ‘disappearing’ which has been discussed before. (For further details, refer to the analysis in Section 4.1 of this essay).

j) **Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms, which include the difference in the use of active and passive voices** . In the Chinese language, words do not change forms. Temporal or personal and active or passive voice status is described by concrete words rather than the change of verb or noun forms. English, on the other hand, has inflectional verbs and verbs that vary for temporal, personal and active or passive voice reasons and many nouns that change forms for singular and plural reasons. To produce a natural TT, **transposition** happens in translating with such phenomena. **Omission** of some ST words tends to happen since certain forms in the TT have expressed them. Poetry does not tolerate redundancy. As a result, however, length and shape and rhythm of the poem may be affected and **overall consideration** follows.

k) **The use of loan words in the source text**. Using words from other languages tends not to happen in Chinese poetry since the Chinese vocabulary has a rich semantic reservoir. In modern poetry, however, it occasionally happens that some young writers like to borrow English words for popular feel. This does not cause any problem in the course of translation.

As what has been explored above, I conclude that strategies to deal with non-equivalence at word level in the translation of poetic discourse from Chinese to English, depending on particular contexts, may involve interpretation, transformation, transcreation and compensatory techniques. In the use of such techniques, overall consideration, rephrasing and restructuring of sentences, using general or alternative words and substitution, omission and addition of words as well as adoption of the English prefixes and suffixes can happen.

### **Equivalence above word level.**

In the previous discussion, we have found that words occur in the company of other words. 'But words are not strung together at random in any language; there are always restrictions on the way they can be combined to convey meaning' (Baker, 1992: 46). These are identified as recurrent patterns in the language, i.e. lexical patterning. Translators tend to encounter differences in the lexical patterning of the SL and TL. To deal with lexical patterning, we come to the topic of *equivalence above word level*.

Above word level equivalence encountered in the translation of poetic discourse includes collocation, range, metaphor and the issues of naturalness and, idioms and fixed expressions.

### ***Collocation***

**Collocation** is the situation where words co-occur regularly in a given language. For example, in the TT of Poem 1, the 'sky' collocates with 'cloud' (Line7, Paragraph 1), the word 'hangs' in Line9 collocates with the words/phrase 'spider's web' in Line8 (Paragraph 2), the word 'glares' in Line4 collocates with the 'sun' in Line3 (Paragraph 3) and the words/phrase 'take off' in the last line collocates with 'wings' in Line10. However, in the ST of this particular poem, none of these collocations need to happen except 'fei-xiang' (take off) and 'chi-bang' (wings) in the last line. **The translator of poetic discourse needs to have a good command of the SL and TL collocations.**

### ***Range***

‘Every word in a language can be said to have a range of items with which it is compatible to, to a greater or lesser degree’. **Range** here refers to the set of collocates that associate with the subject word. Some words can have a broader range of collocation than others. ‘The more general a word is, the broader its collocational range; the more specific it is, the more restricted its collocational range.’ Furthermore, words can attract new collocates; they do so naturally, through processes of analogy, or because speakers create unusual collocations on purpose.’ (Baker, 1992: 49-50). This is extremely true with poetic discourse. Poets often create new collocations as their thoughts and imagination progress. For example, it is unusual to say ‘an ambition lingers’ but the poet/translator of *A Butterfly in the Web* makes it happen so Line3 of the TT, Paragraph 4, Poem 1 shows ‘lingers an ambition of...’ where ‘ambition’ becomes a member of the range to the word ‘linger’. It is unusual to collocate ‘autumn’ with ‘heart’ too, but in Line4 of the TT, Paragraph3 of Poem 3, ‘heart’ falls in the range of ‘autumn’ created by the writer/translator. Here again, **poetic translation cannot depart creativity.**

### ***Metaphor***

**Metaphor** is ‘ a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable’ (Oxford, 2001: 1163). This happens all too often with poetic discourse. In the three poems for analysis in Section 4, metaphor is found all through them. Selected examples in Poem 1, ‘egrets’ represent successful colleagues, ‘garden of youth’ the years of youth, and ‘redwood tree’ the path towards success (Paragraph 1); in Poem 2, ‘dove’ represents peace, ‘no voice’ being suppressed (Paragraph 1&2 of the TT), and ‘entrance’ the beginning (the last paragraph); in Poem 3, ‘dewdrops’ represents tears (Paragraph 2), ‘faded rose’ passed love, and ‘spring’ hope (Paragraph 3). **Translation of poetic discourse thus calls for the translator’s imagination to read the mind of the author and so as to reproduce the same or similar image appropriately.**

Newmark’s strategies in translating metaphors include: ‘**Reproducing the same image in the TL**’, using the ‘**same metaphor combined with sense**’ (1988:88), ‘**compensation in a nearby part of the text**’ (1988:90) and getting ‘**rid of unnecessary or ambiguous jargon**’ (1988:131).

### ***Naturalness***

Accuracy is not always naturalness. Although acceptable unnaturalness can occur in poetry, it often originates from the author’s specific motive rather than from translation difficulty that involves non-equivalence including lexical and grammatical differences. If occasionally unnaturalness happens in the translated version, it needs to be comprehensible and acceptable to the target readers. This will mean author-centeredness for the part that it carries expressive function, reader-centeredness for the part that it is acceptable in the TL, and translator-centeredness for the part that the decision is made by the translator.

**To achieve naturalness may mean alteration of words, paraphrasing and transposition of clauses**. In the Chinese grammar, there is not such a case as using a subordinate clause to modify a noun phrase (NP). The modifier for an NP is forever an adjective or prepositional NP that is placed in front of the subject or object. If in the case of having too long and complicated modifiers, the Chinese language would choose to create extra independent complete short sentence(s) with some of them acting as explanation. But in English, the lengthy and complicated modifier is often placed to the end as a subordinate 'that'-clause. For those adjectives or prep. NP that cannot find equivalent in the TT, they often need to be changed and rephrased with or without addition or explanation to suit the context in the TT. Very often, they appear in a 'that' clause to modify the NP. This is proved by the translation of the last line of paragraph 2 in Poem 1 where the NP 'guang-mu-chong li de' functioning as an adjective in Chinese is altered to become a subordinate clause beginning with 'that', added with the verb 'hangs' followed by semantic equivalents 'the leaves of the shrubs'. As what we have discussed about the strategies to deal with non-equivalence, **omission, addition and transcreation are also a means to attain naturalness.**

### ***Idioms and fixed expressions***

Idioms, according to the *New Oxford Dictionary of English* (2001), are 'a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words', 'a form of expression natural to a language, person, or group of people' and 'the dialect of a people or part of a country'. Baker narrows it to the scope of those that carry little transparency where 'the meaning of a word often depends on what other words it occurs with' (Baker, 1992: 63). She categorizes those that are transparent as fixed expressions and proverbs: 'Fixed expressions and proverbs often have fairly transparent meanings, i.e., the meaning of them 'can easily be deduced from the meanings of the words which constitute it' (Baker, 1992: 64).

It must be noted that even the word 'idiom' and the definition of 'fixed expression' find no exact equivalents in Chinese. Chinese categorizes fixed expression and idioms differently from English. In accordance to the *Modern Chinese Words Dictionary* (1985: 137 and 1331), idioms, fixed expressions and proverbs are grouped into two categories. One group called '**cheng-yu**' (meaning: composed fixed-language) includes idioms and conventional fixed expressions that are 'mostly composed of four words, simple in form, complex and deep in meaning, fixed in composition of words or short phrases', hard to understand, with or without transparent meanings and with or without repetition of meanings, and most of them are originated from a source in history, legend and/or dialects. Another group called '**yan-yu**' (meaning: commonly known fixed expressions-language) includes commonly known fixed expressions that are simple, known to the lower class but carry deep philosophies of life. They also have sources of history, legend and/or dialects, but are quite transparent and easy to understand since these stories are well known to the public. Excluded by the dictionaries, some Chinese **fixed expressions** are known to the educated and the literate people. They have neither regular forms nor restriction of word limit in each expression but are inseparable and unchangeable if the exact meaning is to be conveyed. They are often used in poetry as fixed expressions. An example in my analysis is the expression 'qing-yun' (green cloud) in Line2 of the ST, Paragraph 1 of Poem 1. To make it clear and simple, I group the 'cheng-yu' and 'yan-yu' that belong to the Chinese idiom, proverb and fixed expression dictionaries as '**idioms**' and term

those fixed expressions beyond the official categories as ‘**fixed expressions**’ in my writing. The Chinese fixed expressions thereby share the same nature as English fixed expressions for having transparent meanings though the Chinese idioms I am talking about here carry more features than the English ones.

Various skills are needed in dealing with idioms and fixed expressions in translation. As Baker (1992: 65) emphasizes, native knowledge is important as an ability to write in a language fluently with thoughts expressed structurally, grammatically and idiomatically correct. A translator is at the same time a writer of the target language. He or she therefore needs to **master the native knowledge of both the SL and TL** in the translation of idioms and fixed expression in order to avoid being misled by some similar or totally misleading idioms or fixed expressions. In case of non-equivalents, **interpretation and explanation** play their roles. Baker (1992: 72-77) suggests strategies including **using an idiom of similar meaning and form, translation by paraphrasing and translation by omission**.

With all the theories and strategies developed above, let us analyze and study the translation of three poems written by me, their ST being in Chinese and TT in English.

## **Analysis of Poetic Translation In Practice**

In the translation of my poems ‘A Butterfly in the Web’, ‘A Dead Dove’ and ‘A Cat’s Meditation’ (see Appendices I, II and III for the poems), I have come across the issues discussed above, that is, *word level equivalence* issues including word-to-word relationship, morphemes, propositional meaning, expressive meaning, evoked meaning and the strategies to deal with non-equivalence at word level and *equivalence above word level* issues including collocation, range, metaphor, naturalness and idioms and fixed expressions. The strategies to deal with each kind of problems have all been adopted. They include metaphrasing, substitution, addition, omission, alteration, creation, re-creation, adoption of general words and prefixes and suffixes, rephrasing, restructuring and overall interpretation, transformation, transcreation and compensatory techniques. The following is the detailed analysis of my translations.

### **Poem No.1: A Butterfly in the Web**

#### ***Paragraph 1***

**Word level equivalence** is found immediately in Line1 where ‘bai lu’ find their absolute word to word equivalents that share the same propositional meanings ‘white egrets’. ‘Vanishes’ in Line2 also equals ‘xiao-shi’ of the SL. ‘Colorful’ in Line3 equals ‘cai’ and ‘butterfly’ equals ‘die’. In Line4, ‘flies’ equals ‘fei’, ‘over’ equals ‘guo’, ‘garden’ equals ‘hua pu’ and ‘youth’ equals ‘qing-chun’. In Line5, ‘butterfly’ equals ‘die’. In Line6&7, ‘wishes’ equals ‘yu’, ‘climb’ equals ‘pang’, ‘redwood tree’ equal ‘hong-shan-shu’ and ‘cloud’ equals ‘yun’.

However, there are formal shifts showing **above word level equivalence** and proving that there is sometimes no one-to-one relationship between words and elements of meaning. Obviously, ‘A’ in Line3 equals ‘Yi’ plus ‘zhi’ and ‘delicate’ in Line5 equals

‘qian-xi’ plus ‘ling-long’, each of which case shows that two words in the ST are represented by one word in the TT.

Noticeably, **addition of words** is found among the word level equivalents and non-equivalence in the TT such as ‘of’ in the first line, ‘the’ and ‘of’ in the second line, ‘this’ in the fifth line, ‘to’ in the sixth line and ‘that’ and ‘in the sky’ in Line7. In Line5, **Omission** of ‘zhi’ and other elements are also found. **Paraphrasing** is viewed in the last line where deletion is also involved. These, as explained in the theories above (see section 3), are matters of **natural expression**, **variance in grammar** and **non-equivalence** at word level between the two languages. In the natural sense, these lines would be grammatically unacceptable if they were written without the prepositions, article and determinative in the English language because non-equivalent words ‘yi-hang’ (a line), ‘qing-yun’ (green cloud), etc are found. Grammatically, the ST in Chinese does not need prepositional NP to describe the mass number of egrets, nor article ‘the’ for ‘cloud’. Chinese can use long adjectives to modify a noun, but as a reflection of word non-equivalence, the ST idiom ‘gao-song-ru-yun’ (meaning: tall-reaching high straightly-cloud) here find no equivalent in the TT and it is the English grammar that allows a ‘*that*’ clause to modify an NP.

**Above word level equivalence**, which includes the translation of **idioms** and **fixed expression**, appears in Line6 and Line2 respectively.

In Line6, the Chinese idiom ‘gao-song-ru-yun’, if translated word by word, would be ‘tall-reaching high straightly-into-cloud’. But in the English version, such an expression is **unnatural**. There is no need to repeat the meaning of ‘tall’, while ‘reaches the clouds’ are enough to depict the status of the redwood tree’s height. Moreover, being placed in a poem, the length of the line is restricted to fit in the shape. Thus a few words are **omitted**. For this same reason, Line6 of the ST is broken into two lines in the TT.

## **Paragraph 2**

**Equivalence above word level** is seen in the translation of Line1. ‘Yi-lu-lu’ means ‘one wisp after another’ while ‘feng-qing’ is a fixed expression putting ‘wind’ and ‘love’ together to mean ‘flirtation’. In English, we cannot say ‘one wisp after another wind-love’. It just does not make sense. I thus have to translate it **semantically**, creating an acceptable idiom in the TT. So it becomes ‘Breezes of flirtation’ where ‘breezes’ expresses the quantity and quality of the wind that gives a soft and repeated feeling, and ‘flirtation’ expresses one of the various meanings of the non-equivalent word ‘wind-love’. This transcreation supports Baker’s view: There is ‘no one-to-one relationship between words and elements of meaning’ (Baker: 1992,11).

In line 2 of the ST, ‘wu’ means ‘dance’ and ‘long’ means ‘provoke’. The equivalent for ‘ta’ is ‘her’ here while that of ‘jiao-qiao’ is ‘elegant’. These represent **word level equivalence**. **Above word level equivalents** are found more than word level equivalence in this line. The word ‘qian-ying’ is a **fixed expression** which literally means ‘a beautiful shadow’ but the phrase often implicates or just means ‘a beautiful figure’. The whole sentence presents a picture where ‘her beautiful shadow is seen being teased and provoked by the dancing wind’. Yet we cannot just say ‘dance provokes her elegant beautiful shadow’. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, the

subject 'flirtation' in the 1st line that is represented by the image of 'wind' does not **collocate** with the verb 'dance' in English in the textual sense. Secondly, 'dance' is an intransitive verb that takes no object in the grammatical point of view. Thirdly, even if we add 'to' between 'dance' and 'provoke', it is odd to say 'provoke somebody's shadow'. **Unnaturalness** is obvious. I therefore translate the whole line semantically and poetically, **adding** a verb 'tease' to replace 'dance' and to stress the action of provoking, adopting 'figure' rather than 'shadow' and **adding** 'in the wind' to give some 'shaking and dancing' image. The word 'wind' here is a **synonym** to 'breezes' and **collocates** to it. The line is **broken up** into two because of the need **for shape** and **musical effect** in the poem in TT. This line of interpretation shows more transcreation than mere translation.

In Line3 of the ST, 'cha-zi-yan-hong' is an **idiom**, whose word to word translation would be 'magnificent-purple (and) beautifully smiling-red'. Even in Chinese, it does not necessarily mean the colors of purple or red but apparently means 'glamorously colorful'. The translation here demands the **knowledge of the SL idioms** and the **skills in using semantic equivalents**. The following words 'se-diao' simply means 'colors and tone'. Although word level equivalents are available here, a direct translation would cause unnecessary repetition of 'color', keeping the redundancy word 'tone' and disturbing the **musical effect**, all of which are not appreciated in poetry writing. It is obviously simple, easy and accurate to just put it as 'glamorous colors' here to represent all. This reflects the special consideration and technique in poetry translation where **deleting redundancy** and **adopting appropriate words** become an important strategy.

In Line4 of the ST, the **idiom** 'wu-bian-wu-ji' has an equivalent in English as 'no end, no boundary'. But the original functions as an adjective are marked by the particle 'de' that follows the idiom. It modifies the noun phrases of 'zhui-zhu' and 'kun-yao' (meaning 'chasing' and 'disturbing') in the ST. In the TT, however, 'no end' and 'no boundary' are noun phrases while 'chase' and 'disturb' are verbs. If we use the adjective 'endless' and the noun forms 'chasing' and 'disturbance', the direct translation appears as 'Is endless chasing and disturbance.' This makes no sense and does not sound **natural**, and is too short in the TT to produce a musical effect that matches other lines in the same Paragraph. I therefore adopt the verb forms 'chase' and 'disturb', the adjective 'endless', an **insertion** of noun 'temptation' that **collocates** to 'glamorous colors', and **re-organize** the sentence of the line to express in two lines, using **transposition** technique and achieving **semantic, grammatical and musical effects** that compose a better poetry.

In the translation of Line5&6 of ST, **rephrasing** and **transposition** of words and **changed words** are also witnessed. In Line5 of ST, the exclamation mark 'Oh' is moved from the end in the ST to the front position in the TT version, according to the **custom** of English expression. 'Mi-huo' meaning 'bewildered' is **changed** into a prepositional noun phrase 'in bewilderment' and placed after the word level equivalent 'butterfly' in the TT. This, I think, sounds better in achieving harmony in the lines and serves better in creating a musical effect. The reason is that the line that follows undergoes the same **alteration of structure**.

In Line6 of the ST, a word-to-word translation would be 'fall down at the shrubs' spider's web'. It describes more a possessive status as that the spider's web belongs to



the shrubs than an action status of the spider's web that is hanging in the shrubs as the ST means. Besides, such a sentence would not make sense to the TL speakers. The preposition therefore needs to change and so do the modifier, word order and the sentence structure. The rephrased version of Lines5&6 of the ST in Lines7, 8 & 9 of the TT displays a clear and balanced structure in English where modifiers follow the NPs. Line6 of the ST is broken up into two lines in the TT because of the length and musical needs of the poem.

### **Paragraph 3**

Line1 shows **equivalence at word level** but the **word order is changed** and the article 'the' is **added** in TL version.

The translation of **fixed expressions** is found in Line2. 'Xie-yang' equaling 'slanting sun', is a fixed expression in the SL to mean 'setting sun'. 'Qi-cai' is also a fixed expression which literally means 'seven-colors'. Yet it does not really mean 'seven colors' but 'many colors' or 'colorful'. For this line, the word-to-word translation is 'woven setting sun's colorful dream'. This is neither grammatically correct in the TL, nor natural, nor musically effective for the context. And it is also anomalous. In order to achieve **naturalness** and **comply** to the TL system, I had to put aside the original version, let my **thoughts go back to the TL environment**, immersed myself into the **same emotion** while **reproducing** a similar version in English. Such a translating **process** reflects **reader-centered, translator-centered and author-centered** phenomena simultaneously. It shows a re-creation above-word level termed as **transcreation**. Every step to reach the final product is part of the translation. The consequence of this process is the product that shows changes and transposition in the translation. 'There' is added at the beginning of the sentence, 'dazzling' is added before 'dream' to semantically represent the quality of colors from the 'setting sun' and the imaginable feelings of the butterfly in the web. For expression to the full extent, the **process** carries on with further **explanation** extending into two **additional lines** (namely, Line3&4 of the TT), which modify the NP 'dazzling dream' in Line2 of the TT. The product then becomes both semantically acceptable and grammatically correct and shows natural expression where a balance and musical effect are obtained. **Translation of poetic discourse is in this way proved to be both a process and a product.**

In Line3 of the Chinese version, 'cen' means 'layers' while 'die' means 'gathering'. 'Cen-die' is a **fixed expression** meaning 'gather layers of'. With 'zhe' that follows to show the continuous action and 'de' to show the status of the dust, these four words form an adjective meaning 'layers of ... gathered'. Equivalents for 'Hui qu' and 'yan-chen' are 'wave off' and 'dust' respectively. 'Shu-shi' (grubby world) before 'yan-chen'(dust) serves as an adjective to modify 'dust' meaning 'from the grubby world'. As we are unable to form equivalent adjective in the TL, I had to break up the sentence, placing 'cen' and 'die' into two different clauses so that the 'layers' is expressed before 'dust' and 'gather' later with 'from the grubby world' in a 'that'-clause that modifies 'dust'. Such **transposition** has helped to achieve grammatical, musical and coherent effect in the paragraph, corresponding to the **change of form** of Line2 of ST, i.e., Line2, 3&4 in the TT. Translation here shows that the process involves consideration of **text form, shape and style coherence**.

In Line4 of the ST, the adjective ‘xiao’ meaning ‘little’ to express the delicateness of the butterfly is omitted in the TT. In the Chinese custom, when ‘xiao’ is used to modify a subject, it sometimes means physically small while other times include also the speaker/writer’s compassion for its size or young age. In this context, it is more a collocation, in other words, habitual saying rather than a semantic use. Although it is not a redundant in the ST due to a different speaking custom, it could become a redundant if placed in the TT, because it is not a custom to put ‘small’ in front of a subject in English unless you really want to say it is small. Besides, other words such as ‘delicate’ in the first paragraph (Line5 of the TT) and ‘elegant’ in the second paragraph (Line3 of the TT) have already conveyed this meaning and feeling that the author wants to express. ‘With reader-centered concern, this is not necessary in the translated version here. For musical reason, I have left it out, a reflection of **reducing redundancy** .

Line5 of the ST is broken up into two lines in the TT, adopting **semantic translation** strategy and using an **affirmative sentence in the TT to substitute the negative expression in the ST** . In this **rephrasing process** , the verb ‘strives’ in Line8 of the TT is **added** without changing the meaning while ‘fails’ **replaces** the equivalent of the negative auxiliary verb ‘cannot’ element in the line. Like Line4 of the ST, this translation also has taken into account **naturalness** , **text form, shape and style balance and the sound effects on the lines** with the consequence of **transcreation, change of form, transposition, addition and substitution** on and above word level equivalence.

#### **Paragraph 4**

Translation of **fixed expressions** and the strategies of **omission, addition, substitution, semantic translation, rephrasing, recreation and lexical coherence** are found here. Here we witness **transcreation, transformation and transposition** above word level equivalence as well as **restriction** and **expansion** in the translation of poetic discourse.

In Line1 of the ST, ‘yun-tian’ is a **fixed expression** whose equivalent is ‘clouds-sky’. It’s often used by artists and often contains distressing mood. Direct translation of this line is ‘Look at the clouds and sky’. But in the TT, ‘Look’ is **substituted** by ‘There’ that indicates direction and the idea of looking while ‘clouds’ is **omitted** for its unnecessary of existence since the **added** verb ‘lingers’ in Line3 of the TT gives the impression of hanging clouds representing some distress. Again, **redundancy** is gone and **naturalness** achieved.

Direct translation for line2 of the ST says: ‘High and afar and hard to reach is early life’s ambition.’ No pronoun is needed in the Chinese version and the SL reader is supposed to understand and be able to relate ‘ambition’ to ‘her’ (the butterfly). The SL fixed expression ‘gao-yuan nan-ji’, meaning ‘high and afar and hard to reach’ **collocates** the ‘yun’ in the 1 st line. The SL readers can imagine that those clouds are her hanging ambition. The translation is broken up into two lines for a clearer structure and text shape and sound effect. The SL ‘hard to reach’ is omitted because ‘high and afar’ has already expressed the idea of being hard to reach and the added verb ‘lingers’ expresses a feeling of persistence and therefore unsuccessfulness.

The same case applies to Line3&4 of the ST. But Line4 of the ST is broken into more lines in the TT. 'Kan' of Line3, the ST meaning 'watch' is replaced by 'Here' in the TT. The poetic fixed expression 'luo-xia' (falling clouds) is translated above word level to become 'evening clouds'. The preposition 'on' and article 'the' are added in front of it in order to obtain a grammatical structure that suits the TT and enable the TL readers to understand it. **Reader-centeredness** is reflected here. The broken-up and extended lines are for the shape and musical effects of the poem.

In the ST, a literal translation for Line4 can be 'Illusion re-appearing is flickering love'. To correspond to the musical effect of the previous lines, I broke up the line and re-write it as **on the semantic and musical levels**, producing Lines5, 6&7 in the TT. In Line7 of the TT, 'flickering' collocates to 'shinning and glowing' (Line5 of the TT) and 'appearing and disappearing' (Line6 of the TT) as well as the **changed word** 'myth' that follows. I chose the word 'myth' to represent both 'illusion' and 'love' for they cannot both fit in the poetic lines here. **Restriction and expansion** in translation is reflected in this translating process.

The structure of Line5 in the SL goes like this: NP functioning as adjective ('another town's') + n. ('butterfly') + exclamation ('Oh'), but the corresponding structure in the TT (Line8) is **transformed** to become: Exclamation mark ('Oh') + determinative ('this') + n. ('butterfly') + prepositional phrase ('from another town'). Transposition with addition of a determinative and a preposition for the TT **structural** needs have happened in this process.

**Transformation of voice** takes place in the translation of Line6 of the ST. In Line6 of the ST, passive voice is not used though the passive meaning is conveyed. A word-to-word display in the TT shows: 'Trap & fall – at-web-centre'. The sentence is translated using **repositioning, adding** and **omitting strategies** as well as **transforming** the structure by adopting **passive voice** form 'is trapped' and **prepositional phrase** 'in the middle of'. 'Luo' (fall) is omitted for being a redundancy that repeats what has already been said in the previous Paragraphs. 'Charming' is added without changing the meaning for rhyming need.

The last line of the ST is translated **semantically** into the TT, having **repositioned** words to suit the TT structure and **adding** the adverb 'How' in the front to form an interrogative sentence that fits in the English structure.

All through these paragraphs, **metaphors** are found obviously and obscurely. From 'butterfly', 'delicate' and 'elegant figure', readers can imagine the image of a young girl. 'Egrets' can represent successful colleagues, 'garden of youth' the years of youth, 'redwood tree' the path towards success, 'breezes of flirtation' playboys, 'wind' unstable situation, 'glamorous colors' all kinds of attractive temptation, 'spider's web' trap that hinders progress, 'dazzling dream' confusing intention, 'layer of dust' and 'grubby world' anxiety and unfavorable environment, 'painting her desirable garden of Eden' achieving her goal of ambition, 'flickering myth' unidentified goals, 'from another town' alien to the environment, 'a charming web' unfavorable trap that is full of temptation, 'tender wings' weak body and 'take off again' re-establish herself.

Although the poem presents itself as a narration of a legend, the legend reflects the inner mind of the poet. In order to be **author-centered** in the translation, that is, to

retain the spirit, the mystery of the original poem, bury the real mind of the author for readers to dig and leave readers' space to imagine, explore and extend their thoughts, I, the translator, made the decision for the translating process, i.e., **translator-centered** where I keep faithful to the most of the text, i.e., **text-centered**, reproduce the same image in the TL [Peter Newmark's first preference (1988:88)] while at the same time consider the naturalness and rhythm in the TL and the impact it would produce on the TL readers, i.e., being **reader-centered**, and free myself from the SL to immerse my thoughts into the TL for re-production and re-creation of some portions of the poem.

### **Poem No. 2: A Dead Dove**

The translation of this poem supports Newmark's (1988: 167) hypothesis: 'A successful poem is always another poem.' In this poem, it is obvious that the TT has only two paragraphs while the ST has three. The first two paragraphs of the ST are combined to become one paragraph in the TT for the consideration of holistic style because some lines in Paragraphs 1&2 of the ST are converted into fewer lines in the TT for necessary grammatical change, natural expression and rhythm, etc. For the same reason, a few lines of the ST in Paragraph 3 are condensed and combined so the paragraph has fewer lines in the TT. The holistic effect is that the first two paragraphs become one and the last paragraph become a shorter paragraph. Both paragraphs of the TT end up with eight lines each and the original poem is transformed into a new style in the TT.

#### ***Paragraph 1 of the TT***

Lines 1&2 are actually one sentence. The original words are arrayed one after another as 'A piece dead dove fall-dead on the complex balcony'. In the TT, the classifier 'zhi' (piece) and the verb 'dao' (fall-dead) are omitted. The NP 'complex balcony' in the ST is **replaced** by the prep NP 'the balcony of the complex' in the TT. The sentence is restructured with the adjective 'dead' **transpositioned** to the front for topicalization. So 'Dead' in Line1 of the TT functions as a predicative complement rather than a mere adjective to modify the noun 'ge' (dove) as in the ST, and the verb in the ST becomes unnecessary and is **omitted** in the TT.

Lines 3&4 of the TT are converted from Lines 3, 4&5 of the ST. The change of line adapts to the need of rhythm and the **naturalness** of expression in the TL. The Chinese **idiom** 'qu-yan-fu-shi' (curry favor with the powerful) is **replaced** by one single semantic equivalent 'snobbish' in the TT for **natural** expression, the length of the line, shape of the poem and musical effect. **Omission** of conjunctions is found in Line 4 of the ST. They are 'Que' (But) and 'zhi-hui' (can only) which are not important to keep when the TT needs to reach the poetic style. The verb 'kang' is **directly translated** to 'look' though other **choices** of the same lexical set have also **words** like 'see', 'watch', etc. Only 'look' suits the context. The adverb 'chao-shang' (towards-up) in Line 4 (ST) is originally in front of the verb 'kang' (look), but in the translated version, their **positions are changed** with the verb 'look' being placed in front of the adverb 'up', because in English, adverbs forever follow verbs but in Chinese, they are the other way round. Line 5 (ST) is **metaphrased** as 'That firework's glory'. But in the TT, the preposition 'for' is **added** and the prep NP 'glory of firework' substitutes NP 'firework's glory' for the need of **rhythm** and **natural** expression.

Lines 5, 6, 7 & 8 of the TT, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, equal to all the lines of Paragraph 2 of the ST. The translation here undergoes radical change in structure. In Chinese, the word ‘Dang’ (when) is forever placed at the beginning of a complete sentence. But in English, ‘when’ can follow the main clause to form a conjunctive relation. In the TT, the subordinate clause is placed behind and thus leads to an enormous change in lines. **Semantic translation, rephrasing** and **restructuring** have happened. Lines 9 & 10 of the ST are combined into one and placed ahead of other lines in the TT. The **fixed expression** ‘ku-ming’ (bitter-life) in Line 9 of the ST becomes ‘poor’ in the context. The Chinese idiom ‘chen-mo’ (silent) and ‘gua-yan’ (little talk) in Line 10 of the ST are represented by ‘had no voice’ in English. The underlie meaning in Chinese here is used as a **metaphor** to mean that people who like peace are silent without voice like a dead dove. Such metaphor is well conveyed into English by the expression ‘had no voice’, which presents to readers a double meaning such as ‘dead’ and ‘no voice, no speech’.

In Line 6 of the TT, a grammatical change is found where the verb ‘jian-ta’ (tramp on) in Line 8 of the ST is moved forward in the TT. The verb ‘jian-ta’ can also mean ‘step on’ but the choice of **expressive word** ‘tramp on’ expresses a stronger action and conveys the **author’s idea** better. The fixed expression ‘yong-min’ (ordinary/silly people) in Line 7 of the ST is well represented by the expressive word ‘idiot’ in Line 7 of the TT, which conveys the **author’s** anger and attitude of contempt. The Chinese prepositional structure ‘yu...jiao-xia’ (under the feet) is **omitted** because the ‘tramp on’ is sufficient to express the meaning in English. The Chinese **idiom** ‘wang-zi-zun-da’ (ridiculous-self-conceited-important), functioning as an adjective in the ST, is **paraphrased** by ‘who thought they were superior’ and **transpositioned** to the end as a subordinate clause to modify the NP ‘idiots’.

### ***Paragraph 2 of the TT***

Paragraph 2 of the TT equals Paragraph 3 of the ST. The first two lines are of one sentence where Line 1 in the ST is the time indicating adverbial clause and Line 2 the main clause. But they exchange position in the TT because in either language ‘Nan-guai’ (No wonder) must be put in the front of the sentence to make sense. In Chinese, ‘nan-guai’ is followed by either a time or place indicator and positioned before a main clause; but in English, ‘no wonder’ is always followed by the event (main clause) before a time and/or place indicator. The TT is thus **transpositioned** from the ST. In Line 1 of the ST, ‘xue-li’ is paraphrased into ‘Sydney’ while ‘jing-ye de’ (tonight’s) and ‘xu-xi’ (New Year’s Eve) are semantically put as ‘this New Year’s Eve’ in the TT. In the ST, the ‘xue-li’ (Sydney) and ‘jing-ye’ (tonight) plus ‘de’ (no actual meaning but a particle that follows an adjective when combined with other words) together form a combined NP adjective in the ST to modify ‘xu-xi’ (New Year’s Eve); but in the TT, a **structural change** takes place so that the preposition ‘on’ is **added** in front of ‘this New Year’s Eve’ and the preposition ‘in’ is added in front of ‘Sydney’. The prepositional NPs ‘On this New Year’s Eve’ and ‘in Sydney’ function as an adverbial modifier to the main clause ‘the wind was frantic’.

In Line 2 of the ST, ‘wang-feng’ (night wind) becomes just ‘wind’ in the TT (Line 1) with ‘wang’ (night) **left out** for the reason that repetition is unnatural and unnecessary when its meaning is fully conveyed by the word ‘Eve’ in the next line. The fixed expression ‘hu-xiao’ (whistle) and ‘kuang-xiao’ (howl) in Line 2 of the ST is peculiarly

**transcreated** into ‘was frantic’ semantically, because the **writer** wants to express strongly the ‘frantic’ feelings of the world and it is the translator’s decision to convey this emotion..

Line3 of the TT corresponds to Line 3&4 of the ST. Word to word equivalents for Line3 of the ST are: ‘The-once-make-people-feel awesome-glory’, and for Line 4 are: ‘encounter-already-twist-and-change shape’. As one sentence, the ‘glory’ is the subject modified by a long adjective in the front. In English, the long modifier needs to be broken down to form a ‘that’ clause, saying ‘the glory that used to make people feel awesome’. These two lines would appear long and redundant if not **trimmed** to fit in the shape and quality of the poem. The translator decides to paraphrase the sentence so that two lines becomes one with the meanings unchanged and redundant words cut. ‘The awesome glory’ is enough to interpret the third line of the ST while ‘was twisted’ the fourth.

Line4 of the TT is paraphrased from Lines 5&6 of the ST. Here only ‘And’ equals ‘Er’. No other equivalents of words are found but only the abbreviated sentence that retains the spirit and meaning of the original. The word ‘qi’ meaning ‘its’ is **replaced** by ‘the’ in the TT. Redundancy is largely removed and the particular poetic style maintained by substitution and omission of all the other words. The adjective ‘lang-man de’(romantic) and the fixed expression ‘shen-cai’ (a look that glows with health and radiating with vigor) are **condensed/replaced** by one word ‘glamour’ in the TT. The fixed expressions ‘shi-se’ (lose color) and ‘xiao-shi’ (disappear) are **substituted** by only one word ‘faded’. Conjunctions ‘ye’ (also) and ‘bing’ (and) are **omitted**, so is the adverb ‘zhou-ran’ (suddenly). As a result, **redundancies are removed and musical effect and the shape of the poem are achieved**.

Line5 of the TT equals Line7 of the ST. The words ‘zhi’ meaning ‘only’ and ‘ying-wei’ meaning ‘because’ are translated as ‘only’, with an **addition** of ‘It was’, the preposition ‘of’ and the determinative ‘that’. This is due to the need for the **length of the line** in the TT and the need to use ‘that’ to lead to the next line.

Line6 of the TT equals Line8 of the ST. ‘Na’ in the ST meaning ‘that’ is already expressed in the previous line in the TT and is thus omitted. The word ‘he-ping’ finds its exact equivalent ‘peace’. ‘Yi-jing’ meaning ‘already’ is replaced in the TT by the past tense verb ‘was’ whereas the fixed expression ‘shi-luo’ (lose-fall) meaning ‘lost’ is simply translated as ‘lost’.

Line7 of the TT equals Line9&10 of the ST. ‘Er’ finds its equivalent ‘and’ and ‘na’, ‘the’. The ‘he-ping’ (peace) and ‘ge-zi’ (pigeon/dove) are represented by one word ‘dove’ in the TT because ‘dove’ already carries the implication of ‘peace’. That is why ‘dove’ is **chosen** rather than ‘pigeon’ in this lexical set of equivalents. The ‘zi’ (of ‘ge-zi’) itself has no concrete meaning. It usually follows a noun to form a NP in the Chinese language. So it is actually omitted in the TT. In Line10 of the ST, the first ‘Yi’ means ‘also’ and the second ‘yi’ means ‘already’. The **fixed expressions** ‘ming-jue’ (life-end) and ‘shen-wang’ (body dead) are **translated by meaning** being **substituted** by one single equivalent ‘dead’ in English. Redundancy is therefore avoided.

Line 8 of the TT equals Line11 of the ST. Due to grammar difference of the two languages, the ST preposition ‘zai...shang’ (meaning ‘at...on’) is **replaced** by one single preposition ‘on’. The ‘zhe’ meaning ‘this’ is replaced by ‘the’ for the similar meaning for fluent expression. The verb ‘mai’ is **omitted** for it is unnecessary in the English expression. The adverb ‘xiang’ meaning ‘towards’ is **changed** to preposition ‘to’. ‘Xin-nian’ **equals** ‘New Year’ but ‘a’ is **added** for the grammatical need in the TL and ‘de’ (no meaning but for constitution of fan NP adjective in the Chinese language) is **replaced** by ‘to’ in the TT. The ‘tong-dao’ finds its **equivalent** ‘entrance’ but is **transpositioned** to the front of ‘a new year’ in the TT due to grammatical need.

To sum up, the translation of this poem involves word level and above word level phenomena including metaphor, fixed expressions and idioms etc. The translating process has involved **metaphrase**, **paraphrase**, **omission**, **addition**, **alteration**, **substitution**, **selection of words**, **transformation and transcreation**, and it reflects highly **author-centered translator’s decision**. These have also been found in the previous analysis.

### **Poem No. 3: A Cat’s Meditation**

Full translation of this poem is presented in Appendix III. As the translation phenomena and translating strategies involved are all repetition of the previous discussion on Poem No. 1 and 2 except one of the lines, namely Line1 of Paragraph 5. I therefore just analyze this particular line here.

The ‘ci-shi’ (this-time) finds its **semantic equivalent** ‘now’ in the TT. The pronoun ‘ta’ meaning ‘she’ in the ST is **omitted** for the **transformation** of the sentence and ‘her’ is used to convey the meaning. The verb ‘dai zhe’ meaning ‘carrying’ is **omitted** in the TT while the **added** preposition ‘with’ conveys the idea of ‘carrying’. The word ‘lin-xu’ finds its **equivalent** ‘compassion’ and the prepositional NP ‘with compassion’ is **moved** to the end of the line in the TT. While the Chinese **idiom** ‘guang-mang-si-she’ meaning ‘lights radiating in four directions’ is selectively translated as ‘radiating’ in this context to fit in the **register**, ‘he’ finds its **equivalent** ‘close’ and the auxiliary ‘qi’ (no concrete meaning till combined with a verb) is **omitted**. The ‘de’, which carries no meaning but to combine with ‘guang-mang-si-she’ to form an adjective in the ST, is also **omitted**. ‘Shuang-mu’ meaning ‘double-eye’ is represented by the semantic equivalent ‘eyes’ whereas ‘shuang’ (double) is **omitted** for the plural form of ‘eye’ in the TT has conveyed the ‘double’ meaning. The structure, words and forms have all undergone **alteration**.

Even translating one line has proved the complexity in the translating process noting the word-level and above word level phenomena and strategies involved, namely, addition, omission, selection, transposition, and rephrasing of words and reconstructing of the sentence. The same strategies are found in the translation of other lines.

### **Critical Issues**

From the above translation analysis, I have found that poetic translation is not just a matter of lexical, grammatical, rhetorical and functional issues. The issues of musical effect including rhythm and rhyme and poetic form including line length and the

shape of the poem are particularly important in the formation of another poem as a successful poetic translation. Yet how would this impact on the translator's decision and the process of translation and what kind of outcome of a poetic translation is defined as perfect are topics subject to further exploration.

## **Conclusion**

I conclude that translation of poetic discourse is more a process than a product. In the process, consideration of context, register and the dimensions of semantic, grammatical, lexical and poetic areas plays a significant role. The processing methods of paraphrasing, substitution, addition, omission, alteration, creation, re-creation, adoption of general words and prefixes and suffixes, rephrasing, restructuring and overall interpretation, transformation, transcreation and compensatory techniques are significant strategies for translation of poetic discourse. The outcome of a translation is heavily influenced by the orientation of the translator who decides whether it should be reader-centered, author-centered or translator-centered. A perfect poetic translator needs to be a bilingual poet.

## **Abbreviation List**

Adj.	Adjective
Adj. NP	Adjective Noun Phrase
Adv.	Adverb
Prep.	Preposition
Prep. NP	Prepositional noun phrase
NP	Noun Phrase
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TL	Target Language
TT	Target Text

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**[Appendix 1](#)**

**[Appendix 2](#)**

**[Appendix 3](#)**

## **Biodata**

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