| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Textual Function Analysis of Different Translations of Jiang Xue

Dou Huanjie

Postgraduate student, School of Foreign languages, Changchun University of Science and Technology, ChangchunJilin, China
Corresponding Author: Dou Huanjie, **E-mail**: 2351495381@qq.com

| **ABSTRACT**

Based on Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar(SFC), this research selects 4 English translation versions of the Chinese poem *Jiangxue*. Quantitative analysis is applied to analyze how textual function can be used to explore the artistic conception, theme of poems and the background of poets. The purpose of it is to enrich and widen the research dimension of textual function so that it can not only provide new research angles of view but also attend to attest the explanatory and the force of research, which is able to help readers to comprehensively understand the beauty conveyed by poems.

1. Introduction

China's poems in ancient times are regarded as the treasure and quintessence of Chinese civilization. They are handed down from generation to generation and are still enduring appealing. Compared with the current vernacular writings, poetry is more lucid, sprightly,   and readable, which presents the poem's beauty in the figure of speech and also demonstrates the poets' very high level of literature at that time. Poetry has very outstanding language characteristics. Thus, for a long time, linguistics and translators continuously explore how to convey the cultural connotation of poetry to readers to the largest extent. Since the 1990s, linguistics began to contrastively analyse the translation of the passage on the basis of Hallidy's textual function. The primary content of this article is the contrastive analysis of different versions of *Jiangxue*'s translation in terms of SFC. The writer selects four representative editions of this poem and analyzes the differences among them.

2. Literature review
2.1 The theory of textual metafunction:
In Halliday's SFC, metafunction plays a very important role, and it consists of ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function.

The ideational function("experiential" and "logical") is to convey new information, to communicate content that is unknown to the hearer; the interpersonal function is concerned with the interaction between the addresser and addressee in the discourse situation and the addressee's attitude toward what he speaks or writes about; and textual function refers to the existence of a mechanism in the language, which can be a verbal or any written discourse organization into a coherent and unified chapter and make a living language fragment distinguish from a random permutation.

This paper will talk about the application of the three semantic systems of textual function: including the theme-rhyme system, the given information-new information system and the cohesion system.

2.2 The background of the poet and poem:

Liu Zongyuan, the politician, proser, and philosopher of the Tang Dynasty, is one of the four great pastoral poets of the Tang Dynasty. He was the son of an elite government official. When he was at the age of 21, he passed the imperial examination and entered the official court from there. His unshakeable personality and desire to reform the political corruption of that time led him to join in reform movement initiated by Wang Shuhua in 805. Unfortunately, the operation failed. He was exiled to Yongzhou. Though faced with great frustration, he did not give up his political ideals. During his ten years in Yongzhou, he devoted himself to local affairs and wrote a mount of excellent poems, including River snow.

In Chinese classical poetry, rhythm is realized through the tonality and pause of each line. Pause is to divide each line into several semantic groups according to its meaning. Generally speaking, five characters in three sentences are the characteristics of five character quatrains, and Jiang Xue is of this distinctive characteristic. In addition, we can find that the first and second lines are in strict antithesis; for example, "千山", "万径", "鸟飞", "人踪", "绝" 和 "灭" are the tail rhyme. It can be seen that the poet used simple rhyming in Jiang Xue, which made its rhythm prominent.

3. The functional analysis of Jiang Xue's English version :

3.1 The thematic structure:

Basically, English is SVO, but in English, there are various ways in which the basic clause elements of subject, verb, complement/object, and adverbial can be rearranged by putting different elements at the beginning of the clause. The thematic structure is a system of textual function and is mainly used to analyze the relationship between the beginning of clauses and the rest of them. In discussions about the division of theme and rheme, Halliday advanced that theme is the element which comes in first position in the clause and serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned. And rheme is the remainder of the message, the part in which the theme developed.

What's more, a theme can also be divided into an unmarked theme and a marked theme. Halliday put forward to decide the theme element from the speaker and that in English clause typical theme is determined by mood, which can be called unmarked theme. In terms of Thompson, the mood is subject plus finite. And in a declarative sentence, when the subject is in the theme position, it can be called an unmarked theme. However, other constituents at the beginning of sentences are marked themes; In exclamative sentences, wh- and how elements are the representative theme. While in general questions, finite words and subjects function as an unmarked theme, and if other elements are in the theme position, it is the marked theme. When it comes to special questions, the interrogative words usually act as the unmarked theme, and in imperative sentences, the verbs at the beginning of the sentence are the unmarked theme, and other typical situations are usually marked themes.

Next, the different versions of Jiangxue's translation will be analyzed in detail:

The first line:

The translator	theme	rheme
Burton Watson's version（1989):	From a thousand hills,	bird flights have vanished;
Wang Dalian's version(1997):	Amidst all mountains,	birds no longer fly
Soane Jenyns' version（2000）:	On a thousand hills	all birds life is cut off,
Wu Juntao's version (1997) :	O'er mountains and mountains	no bird is on the wing

The common point of them is to translate the poem into clauses. From these four translation versions of the first line, the four authors all adopted marked themes with different prepositional phrases. When in one passage markedness is employed, the speaker or writer must convey special connotation meaning. Generally speaking, in order to emphasize some information, the author will arrange the structure of given information and new information reasonably as the author expected. In these four sentences, all themes are prepositional phrases with a number, and at the same time, it seems that these phrases painted one seam picture with countless mountains. While the rheme is no bird is flying, it, to a large extent, displayed the differences between the two scenes. Nevertheless, the unmeasured vastness of thousand mountains and the word "flying" has made a comparison between silence and movement. The more capacious and quiescent the background is, the more obvious the descriptive object is highlighted.

The second line:

The translator	theme	rheme
Burton Watson's version（1989）:	On ten thousand paths,	human traces wiped out:
Wang Dalian's version(1997):	On all roads,	no more travelers pass by.
Soane Jenyns' version（2000）:	On ten thousand paths	there is no trace of human footsteps;
Wu Juntao's version (1997)：	On thousand lines of the pathways	there's no footprint.

In these four sentences, the authors also employed the same structure as the first line. That is, prepositional phrases function as a marked theme, and the rheme is new information. The marked "ten thousand paths" can attach great importance to the following information and attract readers' attention to the phenomenon that no more travelers pass by. With a marked theme, the ordinary scene " flying birds and moving travelers" is more animate and vibrant. So the former serves as a foil to the latter.

Not only that, in order to make English sentence structure balanced, with the markedness at the theme position can achieve this purpose so that the effect of stressing significant information "no footprint" can be enhanced easily.

3.2 The types of theme:
Theme concludes three types. They are a simple theme, multiple theme and clausal theme. A simple theme includes only one constituent, which usually is a noun phrase, adverb phrase or prepositional phrase. And multiple themes are often made up of multiple meaning constituents, such as textual elements and interpersonal elements. If these three kinds of elements occurred into one theme simultaneously, their marshaled sequence is often textual elements, interpersonal elements and experiential elements. While the clausal theme mostly refers to one clause as the theme. Then the third line will be elucidated.

The third and fourth lines：
Burton Watson's version（1989）: Lone boat, an old man in a straw cape and hat, fishing alone in the cold river snow.
Wang Dalian's version(1997): Straw hat and cloak, old man's in boat, head low, fishing alone on river cold with snow.
Soane Jenyns' version（2000）: In a lonely boat, the old man with the bamboo hat and cape, sits by himself fishing the river in the winter snow.
Wu Juntao's version (1997)： In a lone boat on the snowbound river, an old man in palm-bark cape and straw hat, drops his angle string.

The translations of the third and fourth lines of this poem are different because the two lines are translated into one sentence. In Burton Watson's version and Wang Dalian's version, their predicate verbs are invisible. Actually, the verb is "is". While these four versions also employed a subject theme and an adjunct theme. The adjunct theme " lone boat" or "straw hat and cloak" here lays a foundation for the subject theme. That is, with the foil of a lonely boat, the man and writer's emotions will be more evident. What's more, although their theme is added to a noun phrase or a prepositional phrase and they still belong to the simple theme, it can be called an experiential theme. The word "lone" cannot be used to decorate an emotionless boat. Here the author just transferred the poet's loneliness into this boat. The phrase "old man" can show this person is very gerontic, which equally emblemed that poet, in his old age, is very lonely and desolate. From the figure of the old man, it is obviously found that the author created more melancholy circumstances.

And in the rheme section, Soane Jenyns' version and Wu Juntao's version have their own verb, " sit" and "drop". The author also presented a picture that, under very cold circumstances, the old man still insists on fishing, which can express the old man's fearless spirit. By depicting this, the author wants to show his strong will and pure soul.

3.3 The information structure:
The two elements, given information and new information, together make up an information unit. In order to communicate effectively, the speaker must bring to the hearer's attention some elements of shared or "mutual knowledge". This shared information is usually found at the beginning of a clause and is labeled as given information. From the angles of textual function, the beginning is the start of information, and the end is the core of information. Given information refers to the mentioned message or those that can be judged by context. On the contrary, such information as the focus of the speaker's message in most clauses is new information. So new information is those not mentioned or those that cannot be judged by context.

Normally, the information structure of one sentence is the same as its thematic structure of it. In this poem, the given information is the background of this story, which happens among mountains, on the paths and in a lonely boat. The new information attracted the poet's attention to the topic. Among mountains, the poet is concerned that there are no birds flying in his view and no man is walking on the snowy paths. In a lonely boat, only one man enjoys fishing on the river with snow. With the depiction, more and more new information becomes given information, which makes readers know dominating figure and main plot. Meanwhile, with

the change of new information, the originally still picture can be a dynamic one: there is no bird, no travelers, but only one old man is fishing in the cold winter.

3.4 Cohesion and coherence:

Cohesion refers to the connections which have their manifestation in the discourse itself. Cohesion actually concerns the question of how sentences are explicitly linked together in a discourse by different kinds of overt devices. While coherence refers to the semantic connection in discourse, it lies in the deep of discourse. It can be achieved by logical inference. And it is an invisible network of discourse. Coherence captures the content-based communications between the words that make them produce sense. It refers to the connections which can be made by the reader or listener based on their experience. Cohesion concludes two types: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion mainly consists of reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. About lexical cohesion, it contains repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy and antonymy. All of those cohesive methods provide us with direct language clues, which greatly benefit the production and understanding of discourse. Then this article will give an explanation of the poem from lexical cohesion and meaning coherence.

In the first and second lines, the use of number words like"thousand" and "ten thousand" in Burton Watson's version gives the reader an impression of a lot of mountains and countless roads, and at the same time, the author also adopted repetition, which meanwhile has an intensifying effect on the background and manifests splendid and extensive spectacle. And the words "vanish" and " wiped out" are synonymy, which can also be called repetition and make a comparison with "thousand" in the first line; "all mountains", and "all roads" in Wang Dalian's version; and "mountains and mountains" in Wu Juntao's version is also the phenomenon of repetition and emphasizes more than mountains; the word "no" in the latter part also have the same effect.

From the angle of coherence, according to our world experience, the two poetic images "thousand hills" and "ten thousand paths" can make up an endless space, and then another two ", no birds flying", " no human footsteps" are capable of getting rid of the noise and crowding of the world; " lone boat" "fishing alone" shows that only one person is fishing, which shows the void and silence. In the vast space, the person is so tiny that the sense of coldness and peacefulness is taken a step further. In addition, " no birds flying" and " no human footsteps" manifest the snow is very heavy. "the fishing man" also represents the author's goal which is pursuing high ideals by simply living and keeping himself noble and virtuous.

As a whole discourse, semantic coherence is still existing between the lines of the poem, although there are not any conjunction words like "and", "but", etc., to link sentences so that the logical relation between sentences can be represented.

4. Conclusion and implication:

This paper takes a new research perspective and takes Halliday's systemic-functional grammar as the theoretical framework, specifically, thematic structure, information structure, as well as cohesion and coherence and takes Liu Zongyuan's Jiang Xue as the corpus to explore the artistic conception, the theme of the poem as well as the background of the poets from the linguistic perspective. In other words, this research studies the text with the help of textual function and finds that the whole poem adopts the thematic structure to describe a static picture of the snowy landscape.

The primary attribute given to the readers is that through the use of thematic structure, information structure, cohesion and coherence, the poet expresses his ideas that in the dark political environment at that time, he still has the courage to keep his audacity and peaceful inner states. It reveals the poet's ideas of convincing readers that he established a strong will and strong desire. That is, although the poet was in troubled times, he still could do it himself.

Due to the author's limited level and the number of the version selected, this study enriched and expanded the research dimension of SFC only to some extent but provided a new perspective for subsequent poetry research and also verified the explanatory and research power of SFC for poetry research, providing a new path for the interpretation of Chinese classical poetry in the future.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.
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