

The Contrastive Study and Translation of Chinese-English Reduplicated Words

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Abstract

Reduplication is a common rhetorical method of languages. It reflects the beauty of the languages in rhythm image and expression. This paper aims to make a systematic contrastive study of reduplication in Chinese and English. It also illustrates the forms and functions as well as translation techniques of reduplicatives.

Keywords: Reduplication, Contrastive Study, Translation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reduplicatives, also called reduplicated or overlapping words, refer to the use of reduplicated morphemes or syllables. Reduplicated words are a common rhetorical means of language and a typical artistic technique to reflect the beauty of language rhyme, image and expression. Most Chinese words will have reduplicated forms. Many linguists and rhetoricians pay much attention to the phenomenon of overlaps in Chinese and English languages and their translation. Jeopersen, a Danish grammarian of English, argues that such words and phrases arise from "the human instinct to prefer certain syllables as a means of reinforcing speech". The American Heritage Dictionary has defined "reduplication" as: "an often grammatically functional repetition of a radical element or a part of it occurring usually at the beginning of a word and often accompanied by change of the radical vowel." Linguistic Dictionary of English has defined "reduplication" as: "Reduplication is a pattern where the double or multiple occurrence of a sound string syllable morpheme or word within a larger syntagmatic unit." While according to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, reduplicatives is defined as: repetition of syllable, a morpheme or a word. Using reduplicated words is not only a great tradition of our country's poetry creation, but also widely used in literary genres such as fiction and speech, and even daily language. The use of reduplicated words can make the form and content of language achieve the rhetorical effect of artistic unity. Reduplicated words are the common language forms of Chinese and English vocabulary systems, which add to

the richness of language. However, due to the asymmetry of Chinese and English reduplicated words, translation and cross-language communication become difficult problems. This paper will analyze the similarities and differences of Chinese and English reduplicated words from two aspects of forms and functions, and explore their mutual translation techniques.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Contrastive Study on Classification of Chinese and English Reduplicated Words

Chinese and English reduplicated words belong to reduplicated word formation, so there are some similarities in word formation, and the academic community has reached a consensus on this. Generally speaking, it mainly includes three categories: one is complete and partial overlap (Pan Wenguo, 2010: 183-184); One is complete overlap, partial overlap and compound overlap (Chen Wentao & Zhang Jinyu, 2014); Last is the letter expression type overlap, whose essence is also the division of complete and partial overlap, but more directly, can express different specific types (Zhang Weiyu, 2011). Zhang (2011) believes that there are rich forms of reduplicated words in Chinese, such as "AA, ABB, AAB, AABB, AABC, ABAC". However, strictly speaking, English has only the AA type, including absolute AA type and variable AA type. Pan and Chen (2011) divided English partially reduplicated words into rhymes reduplicated words and vowel alternating reduplicated words. Chen and Zhang (2014) even argued that Chinese and English overlaps have

similar overlaps, such as "tooth for tooth" and "arm in arm".

2.2 Contrastive Study on Syllables of Chinese and English Reduplicated Words

The comparison of Chinese and English reduplicated words mainly focuses on English reduplicated words and Chinese continuous words, which has been discussed by many scholars, such as Zhang Fengchun (1994), Pang Xiucheng (2006) and Pan Wenguo (2010). Zhang Fengchun (1994) mainly took the repetition of syllables or phonemes as the common basis of comparison, and studied the reduplication of first order reduplication of English words and second order of English words and Chinese reduplicated words. Li Wenjing (2006) held a similar view and pointed out that the continuous words of Chinese couplets had similarities with first order reduplication of English words.

2.3 Contrastive Study on Translation of Chinese-English Reduplicated Words

The phenomenon of overlaps has attracted the attention of many linguists and rhetoricians because of its common, unique and changeable nature, and the Chinese and English reduplicated words and their translation have been widely discussed. In 1954, Lu Zongda and Yu Min pointed out the important position of the form of overlaps in Chinese, but did not make a classification of it. In the 1980s and 1990s, the research scope of semantics and pragmatics expanded, which laid the foundation for the later research on the form and function of reduplicated words. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the study of Chinese reduplicated words has become more in-depth, which has brought a lot of enlightenment to the later researchers. The study of English reduplicated words has also attracted much attention. A Study of English reduplicated Words by Cai Pijie and Chen Anquan fully explores the pragmatic effects of English reduplicated words by taking literary works as examples. Wang Zuoliang and Ding Xiangdao take two aspects of morphology and syntax to analyse the grammatical functions and meanings of English reduplicated words. He Shanfen regards overlaps as a means of word formation and makes a comparative analysis of the phenomenon of English and Chinese overlaps from five levels. On the basis of the predecessors, this paper clarifies Chinese-English reduplicated words, and takes the reduplicated words of 300 Tang poems as an example to discuss the form and function of Chinese-English reduplicated words, and probes into their translation techniques.

3. Comparison of Chinese and English Reduplicated Words

3.1 Comparison of Forms

3.1.1 Forms of Chinese Reduplicated Words

(1) AA :

① **滟滟**随波千万里，何处春江无月明。

② **苍苍**竹林寺，**杳杳**钟声晚。

(2) AAB :

③无边落木**萧萧**下，不尽长江**滚滚**来。

(3) ABB :

④送人发，送人归，**白茫茫**鸬鹚飞。

⑤清明时节**雨纷纷**，路上行人欲断魂。

(4) AABB :

⑥蜀江水碧蜀山青，**圣主朝朝暮暮**情。

⑦**年年岁岁**花相似，**岁岁年年**人不同。

(5) AABC :

⑧迟迟钟鼓初长夜，**耿耿星河**欲曙天。

(6) BCAA :

⑨**晴川历历**汉阳树，**芳草萋萋**鹦鹉洲。

⑩**雨雪纷纷**连大漠，胡雁哀鸣夜夜飞。

(7) ABAC :

⑪锦瑟无端五十弦，**一弦一柱**思华年。

⑫**自去自来**梁上燕，**相亲相近**水中鸥。

To sum up, reduplicated words abound in Chinese, and centered on the complete overlapping of the AA type, which evolve to both ends or within, and almost cover all parts of speech including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and quantifiers, becoming indispensable language forms of poetry.

3.1.2 Forms of English Reduplicated Words

(1) AA :

⑬迟迟白日晚，**翩翩**秋风生。

Xu's translation : **Slowly, slowly** shortens the day; **Rippling, rippling** blows autumn breeze.

⑭寂寂竟何待，**朝朝**空自归。

Xu's translation : **Lonely, lonely**, what is there to hope for? Day by day I come back without an end.

(2) ABA :

⑮挂席几千里，**名山**都未逢。

Xu's translation : For **miles and miles** I sail and float; High famed mountains are hard to seek.

⑯随山将万转，**趣途**无百里。

Xu's translation : It winds from **hill to hill** Till far away it looms.

⑰去春**零落**暮春时，泪湿红笺怨别离。

Xu's translation : **Petal by petal** you fell in late spring last year; Since you are gone, my paper's wet with tear on tear.

(3) ABAC (Alliteration) :

⑱乐游春苑断肠天。

Xu's translation : You're ravished amid the **merry-making** trees.

⑲若无水殿龙舟事，共禹论功不较多。

Xu's translation : Could the **flood-fighting** emperor do anything more Than the Sui dragon-boats of three stories or four?

(4) ABCB (Rhyme) :

⑳水村山郭酒旗风。

Xu's translation : By *hills and rills* wine shop streamers wave in the breeze.

① 傭利抱水含满唇，暗洒茱弘冷血痕。

Xu's translation: He grinds the stone in order to make an inkwell; Violet flowers look dim like cold blood shed *pell-mell*.

It can be seen that English reduplicated words mostly come from the overlap of vowels or consonants, and the translation of poetry is dominated by special overlap (two identical words overlap, that is, word 1= word 2, and the middle is connected by prepositions, adverbs or verbs). Alliteration and end rhyme are common in English poetry. In terms of the form of repetition, both English and Chinese use the form of double sound and repetition to form reduplicated words or phrases. For example, in English, "pell-mell, flood-fighting, day by day"; In Chinese, "苍苍，滟滟，年年" and so on. In English vocabulary, a kind of overlapping words not only form a double sound because the first consonant is the same, but also the second consonant is the same, which strengthens the charm. For example, zigzag, Flip-flop and so on. Since most Chinese characters end with a vowel, not a consonant, it is impossible to form English words or phrases with the same consonant before and after. Many words in English are more than two syllables. Words and phrases that use alliteration can be divided into alliteration words (e.g. part and parcel, as fit as fiddle), end rhyme words (e.g. to and fro, rough and tough), double rhyming words (e.g. hugger-mugger, fuddy-duddy). By comparison, Chinese has only end rhyme words (e.g. 灿烂，徘徊，吐露) and repeated words (e.g. 日日夜夜，一个个，卿卿我我). This is because Chinese single characters are one-syllable words with one character, and it is impossible to form words and phrases with multiple rhymes as in English, and it is impossible to produce words or phrases with both double sounds and overlapping rhymes. In contrast, Chinese words are very rich, and their forms are numerous and the number is huge beyond English. The reason why Chinese has such a large number of simple overlapping words is inseparable from the phonetic characteristics of Chinese. One of the main characteristics of Chinese is that each word is a monosyllabic word without the use of consonant clusters, so it is easy to simply repeat and form overlapping words; Another feature of Chinese is that vowel is dominant, coupled with the tonal pattern and the length and length of syllables, the composition of repeated words is rich in musical feeling. Generally speaking, Chinese repeated words can be formed at will according to the needs of the speaker; In English, however, except for a few onomatopoeia words that can be formed temporarily, they are generally conventional and can be found in dictionaries.

3.2 Function Comparison

"The function of reduplicated words is emphasis. The method of reduplicated words is used to

highlight thoughts, emphasize feelings, strengthen rhythm and add rhyme beauty (Chen Hongwei, 1998 : 107). From the perspective of form, reduplicated words can make the syllables of words symmetrical and the form neat, and at the same time can give words new meaning and emotional color. From the semantic point of view, overlapping causes meaning to increase, decrease or weaken. In poetry, Chinese and English overlaps have similar functions.

1. Beauty of Rhythm

Literary works, especially poetry, pay attention to the effect of rhythm. The use of reduplicated words in a text can produce special sound effects. As a result, reduplicatives are loved by poets.

② 无边落木萧萧下，不尽长江滚滚来。

Xu's translation: The boundless forest shed its leaves *shower by shower*. The endless River rolls its waves *hour after hour*.

The poet looked up at the boundless, leafless wood, overlooked the flowing, rolling river, while sketching the scene, he deeply expressed his feelings. "无边" "不尽" make "萧萧" "滚滚" more vivid, not only reminds people of the sound of falling wood, the surging Yangtze River, but also invisibly conveys the sense of fleeting time and unfulfilled ambition.

③ 车辚辚，马萧萧。

Xu's translation: Chariots *rumble*, and horses *grumble*.

"辚辚" refers to the sound of passing chariots, and "萧萧" refers to the sound of hooves. With his bold, heavy-ink strokes, Du Fu suddenly reveals a breathtaking farewell picture: chariots rumbling, horses whistling, poor people in uniform, armed with bows and arrows, escorted by officials to the front line. The translator translates the "辚辚" and "萧萧" of the original poem into onomatopoeia words "rumble" and "grumble" respectively, which reproduces the musical beauty of the original poem and produces special sound effects.

2. Emphasis

④ 苍苍竹林寺，杳杳钟声晚。

Xu's translation : *Green, green* the temple amid bamboos, *Late, late* bell rings out the evening.

"苍苍" refers to the deep green, and "杳杳" refers to the sound of the bell that is far away. The author uses reduplicatives to emphasize the deep green of the jungle and the late of the time, giving people both visual and auditory associations.

3. Highlight Emotion

⑤ 去春零落暮春时，泪湿红笺怨别离。

Xu's translation : *Petal by petal* you fell in late spring last year; Since you are gone, my paper's wet with *tear on tear*.

The poem itself does not use reduplicatives, but the reduplicatives used in the translation better highlight the poet's sad feelings. Instead of writing the flowers in front of him, the poem starts from last year's parting with the flowers, revealing the poet's sad state of mind in the past year to cherish the spring flowers, so as to set off the joy of reunion with the flowers this spring. The contrast between sadness and joy is strong, bringing people into a certain realm." 泪湿红笺 ", indicated the poet's deep love for flowers, for the wisps of feelings into poetry.

②⑥多情却似总无情，唯觉樽前笑不成。

Xu's translation: *Deep, deep* our love, too deep to show; *Deep, deep* we drink, silent we grow.

The poem focuses on the farewell, describing the feelings that are inseparable from the banquet with the singer. The second sentence "笑不成" point out that the original feeling is not heartless, but sad, sentimental, which responses to the first sentence. The translation of the use of four "deep", giving the poem rich feelings, with deep sentimental.

4. Translation Techniques of Chinese and English Reduplicated Words

1. Alliteration and Rhyme Scheme:

Alliteration and end rhyme are common rhetorical devices in English. When it is impossible to translate Chinese reduplicated words directly, the advantages of English expression may be taken advantage of. Change the reduplicated words into rhymes to achieve similar phonological effects.

②⑦青青河畔草，郁郁园中柳。

Green grows the grass upon the bank, The willow shoots are *long and lank*.

The first two English words and the last two words of the poem use alliteration to achieve the Chinese reduplicated effect. According to their respective usages, the two languages are repeated in different ways of expression, usually to convey the vividness of the original text.

2. Loop Translation:

The loop translation method refers to that when the corresponding reduplicated word cannot be found in English, and the reduplicated word continues to express a time or state in the original poem, it can be translated into the form of "noun +after/to/by+ noun". This method of translation is common in Xu Yuanchong's translation.

②⑧泠泠风吹面，纷纷雪积身。朝朝不见日，岁岁不知春。

Gust by gust winds caress my face; *Flake on flake* snow covers all trace.

From *day to day* the sun won't swing; From *year to year* I know no spring.

The reduplicated words in the poem all use the same two nouns mixed with a preposition to replace the reduplicated words in Chinese poetry, which also achieves the beauty of form and the stylistic function of overlapping words.

3. Parallel Structure:

Sentences with Parallel structure occupy an extremely important place in the English language. A parallel structure consists of two or more linguistic units with the same or similar syntactic structure, related meaning, and consistent mood. It is a concise and bright rhetorical device used to improve the ability of language expression. The use of this structure especially in speeches and poems will make the speech powerful, rhythmical, and have strong influence and appeal.

②⑨君意如鸿高的的，我心悬旆正摇摇。

Your ideal will *fly* up as high as the wild geese;
My mind still *flutters* like a streamer in the breeze.

The words "的的" and "摇摇" in the Chinese verse are replaced by the verbs "fly" and "flutter" in the English translation. In form, the structure and syntax of the two languages are the same, and the two English verbs are also rhyming. Although there is no English reduplicated words to translate the Chinese reduplicated words, the structure and wording both reflect the rhythm of the poem and have a strong influence and appeal.

4. Ing Form:

Some adjectives in Chinese poems can be replaced by ing adjectives in the translation of repetition words.

③⑩清明时节雨纷纷。

A *drizzling* rain falls like tears on the Mourning Day.

"Drizzling" refers to drizzling rain, corresponding to the light rain of Mourning Day in Chinese, and although there is no reduplicated word translated into Chinese, the meaning is reached, and the translation of 纷纷(drizzling) and Mourning Day (清明) both use the Ing form and reflect the beauty of form.

5. Equivalent Translation:

Equivalent translation, or overlapping translation, refers to the translation of reduplicated words in Chinese into corresponding reduplicated words in English. Under the premise of achieving the same expression effect as the original text without affecting the meaning of the original poem, this translation method can be used to directly find the corresponding reduplicated words. This kind of translation is more

common in *Three Hundred Tang Poems in Contrastive Translation between Chinese and English*.

③① 寂寂竟何待，朝朝空自归。

Lonely, lonely, what is there to hope for? Day by day I come back without an end.

"寂寂" two words, both realistic, but also abstract, not only show the scene of the gate, but also express the mood of the author. Mr. Xu Yuanchong in the translation of "寂寂" cleverly translated into two adjective reduplicated words: *lonely, lonely*. This translation not only retains the characteristics of the original poem with repeated words, but also has a sense of rhythm; It also depicts the plaintive feelings of the author of the original poem after his failure, which is true and interesting.

6. Omission:

Omission refers to the method of omitting and not translating the reduplicated words in the original poem. This translation method can be considered in two cases: (1) the role of the reduplicated words in the original poem is not important, and the omission and untranslation will not affect the expression effect of the original poem, and too much confusion will blur the focus of the description of the original poem; (2) the reduplicated words have no special meaning in the poem.

③② 春眠不觉晓，处处闻啼鸟。

This spring morning in bed I'm lying. Not to awake till birds are crying.

The Chinese "处处" is omitted in the English translation as the reduplicated words play little role in the original poem, and the omission and untranslation will not affect the expression effect of the original poem. The key point is the bird sound, and the English translation pays more attention to the rhyme between "crying" and the "lying" in the previous text.

7. Liberal Translation:

Paraphrase the reduplicated words in Tang poetry and explain the meaning of the reduplicated words in the original poem. In view of the great differences between English and Chinese, the frequency of English repetition is much lower than that of Chinese. When equivalent translation and loop translation cannot be used, liberal translation becomes a popular translation method.

③③ 年年岁岁花相似，岁岁年年人不同。

The flowers of this year look like those of last *year*; But next year the same people will not *reappear*.

Chinese uses the same two sets of words for time, meaning how similar flowers bloom and fall from year to year, but as time passes, one's youth is no longer permanent. English translation pays more attention to the

meaning and contrast of the reduplicated words in the original poems. The liberal translation is the most frequently used translation technique in the 300 Tang poems.

8. Onomatopoeia Translation:

Onomatopoeia translation refers to the translation of reduplicated words in the original poem into onomatopoeia, that is, to find corresponding words that imitate sounds in English. This translation method can not only retain the rich musical beauty of the original poem, but also reproduce the function of the reduplicated words in the original poem to describe the environment and express emotions. The simulation of sound can make the scenes described in the original poem delicate and grand, let the rhythm rapid or slow, sonorous or subtle, and present a three-dimensional auditory enjoyment for readers.

③④ 车辘辘，马萧萧。

Chariots *rumble*, and horses *grumble*.

"辘辘" is the sound of passing chariots, and "萧萧" is the sound of hooves. With his bold, heavy-ink strokes, Du Fu suddenly reveals a breathtaking farewell picture: chariots rumbling, horses grumbling, the poor people dressed in uniform, armed with bows and arrows, and escorted by officials to the front line. The translator translates the "辘辘" and "萧萧" of the original poem into onomatopoeia words "rumble" and "grumble" respectively, reproducing the musical beauty of the original poem.

5. CONCLUSION

Reduplicatives is a common rhetorical device, which can show the beauty of expression, image and rhythm of language. In order to make the form of the language consistent with the content of the original poem, Chinese makes good use of reduplicated words, while English avoids repetition and omits reduplicated words. Therefore, the reduplicated words commonly used in Chinese poetry are often lost in the English translation process, but they are not untranslatable. This paper analyzes the different forms and the same functions of reduplication in Xu Yuanchong's *Three Hundred Tang Poems in Contrast between Chinese and English*, and sums up eight techniques of reduplication in Tang poems translation. Therefore, translators should use different translation techniques for different reduplicatives in order to perfectly reproduce the aesthetic effect of the source text.

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