A Comparative Study of Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Its' Chinese Translation from the Perspective of Thematic Structure

Zhu Siwei and Zhao Xueai

Abstract—**This study analyzed the thematic structures of Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and its Chinese version by Fei Bai to compare the theme distributions and their markedness in the original and Chinese versions of the poem. Results showed that the number of simple themes in the translated version was significantly higher than in Wordsworth's original version. Conversely, Wordsworth's version had more marked themes than Fei Bai's version. This study then explored potential reasons for the different thematic structures in the two versions. The percentage of simple themes in Fei Bai's version was higher than that in the original version because Chinese does not have a clausal theme, so translators would more frequently use simple themes. Additionally, Wordsworth's original version reflected a higher percentage of marked themes than Fei Bai's Chinese version because native English writers prefer to use juxtaposed phrases and clauses. These results provide theoretical insights on employing the linguistic perspective to compare English poems and their Chinese translations.**

Index Terms—**Thematic structure, "Daffodils," Theme distribution, poetry translation.**

I. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to make a comparative study on the thematic structures of Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Fie Bai's translated version. This study mainly uses M.A.K Halliday's thematic structure theory. As for thematic structure, Halliday believes that one clause should consist of two essential elements, which are Theme and Rheme. According to Halliday [1] , A Theme is the starting point of the whole clause, and a Rheme is a further explanation of Theme. A Rheme always accompanies a Theme, and a Theme always precedes Rheme.

Based on the thematic structure theory, this study first identifies the thematic structures of Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Fei Bai's translated versions and makes comparisons. After comparing the thematic structure of the two versions, this study finds out that there are similarities and differences between the two versions and explains the reasons, respectively. This study will make a discussion on Fei Bai's translated version and give suggestions.

Compared with the previous studies, this study analyzes the poetry translation differently.

In terms of studies of the "Daffodils," most of the researchers will explain it from an aesthetic perspective. Still, fewer of them will analyze it from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. In this way, this study will provide people with a new angle to analyze poetry: thematic structure theory. In other words, this study comes up with a new perspective for the following researchers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The word "Theme "was first put forward by Plato, and the notion of Theme was first proposed by Vitem Mathesius, who was a Czechoslovakian linguist. From the perspective of Mathesius [2], people are more comfortable to accept and understand the known information instead of unknown details. In other words, the speaker should start his speech from the known information to the unknown information to help his listeners better understand what he said. Theme-Rheme order exactly follows this principle.

Recently, it is a tendency to combine translation studies with systemic functional linguistics theory. In systemic functional linguistics, translation is examined in the field of multilingual studies [3]. Halliday indicates that it is possible to apply the systemic functional linguistic to the translation. Therefore, many scholars try to combine these two theories, and it is observed that Halliday's meta-functional theory is also applicable in the poem translation area. In this way, it is possible to apply a thematic structure theory to translation studies.

In the past ten years, the rapid development of the thematic structure study makes a significant contribution to the translation and interpreting activity. González Pérez [4] suggests that thematic structure theory is helping translation and interpreting scholars gain new insights into both old and new data. Besides, other scholars suggest that it is possible to use the previous understandings of the thematic structure to make a model with "additional theoretical architecture" [5]. Martin [5] employs thematic structure theory on the discourse semantics, genre, and appraisal to figure out the "additional theoretical architecture." There is also a tendency to analyze the Persian translation version with English from the thematic structure perspective .

The domestic scholars, Huang Guowen [6], plays a vital role in the practice of Poetry translation theory. He employs the thematic structure to translate work to examine whether the thematic structure theory is practical to all the language

structures. In his work Linguistics Explorations in Translation Studies—Analyses of English Translations of Ancient Chinese Poems and Lyrics [6], he uses thematic structure theory to analyze the poem. Therefore, more and more researchers begin to analyze poetry from this perspective. For example, Ma Yuanyi, and Bo Wang [3] explain mood to type, polarity, and modality, which may be ignored by the translators.

What is more, a large number of studies on the application of thematic structure translation tend to use this theory to generate a more cohesive thematic structure [7], or to explore the translation skills [8]. However, there remain some gaps. Some scholars divide a clause into Theme and Rheme [9], but do not further classify the specific type of Theme; some studies focus on how to achieve the equivalence and shift of the thematic structure and thematic progression, but most of the studies make commons instead of giving useful solutions.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions

This study will make a comparative analysis between the "Daffodils" of Wordsworth and its Chinese translated version by Fei Bai, and this study is going to explore the following two questions:

Research Question1: What are the differences between Wordsworth's original version and Fei Bai's translated version in terms of the distribution of different kinds of Theme?

Research Question 2: What are the differences between Wordsworth's original version and Fei Bai's translated version in terms of the markdenss of Theme?

B. Research Procedure

Before clarifying the methodology of this study, the first step of this study is data collection. William Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Fei Bai's Chinese translated version are chosen as the text resources of this study. This reason for choosing Fei Bai's translated version is that this version is quite controversial. The translator, Fei Bai, is famous for his unique translated style. He claims that excellent translation should inherit the style of the original work, even if it does not translate every word of the original work, respectively. According to his other translations, he tends to use exotic style words to make sure that his work has the same style as the original works. In this way, these two versions may have the same writing style. Therefore their writings may have some common points in the thematic structure; in other words, they are comparable. Hence, this study chooses Fei Bai's translated version as the text source.

This study is mainly focused on the study of the thematic structures of Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Fei Bai's translated versions. This study uses discourse analysis to analyze thematic structures of Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Fei Bai's translated versions. Then Themes and Rhemes in these Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Fei Bai's translated version will be collected by manual counting, and Theme will

be categorized according to its complexity and role in the clause.

C. Data Analysis

This study will analyze the two versions in three steps. The first step is to illustrate the type of each Theme in the data of Wordsworth's original version, and Fei Bai's Chinese translated version with the help of Halliday's definition of thematic structure. Then, this study will further and deeply analyze each Theme in the two versions according to its complexity and its role. The last step is to compare and summarize the features of two different versions, and then finds the differences and similarities between them in term of thematic structure and to clarify the reasons.

IV. RESULTS

A. Differences between the Thematic Structures of Two Versions

1) The difference in the distribution of Theme

Both of the data of Wordsworth's original version and Fei Bai's translated version are analyzed by thematic structure theory. There are altogether 24 lines in Wordsworth's "Daffodils," and the number of words of the data is 156. Moreover, there are entirely 23 lines in Fei Bai's translated version, and the total number of words is 218.

TABLE I: STATISTICS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF THEMES

Type of Theme	Original		Fei Bai's Chinese Translated version	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Simple Theme	10	41.67%	14	60.87%
Multiple Theme	12	50%	9	39.13%
Clausal Theme	2	8.33%	0	0
Total	24	100%	23	100 %

Table I shows the distribution of these three kinds of Themes in Wordsworth's original version and Chinese translation. The most advent difference between these two versions is that there is no clausal Theme in the Chinese version, which is caused by the unique characteristic of Chinese. There is no way to find a subordinate clause in Chinese grammar because translator Fei Bai translates these subordinate clauses into a loose sentence in Chinese style. By doing these, the original clausal Themes are transformed into simple Theme, which also explains that the number of the simple Theme in Chinese up to over 19% than that of the original text.

Besides, from this table, we can see that there are apparent differences between Wordsworth's original version and Fei Bai's translated version. As for Themes in the original version, there is only 41.67% of them are simple Theme, while the number of this is up to 60.87% in Fei Bai's Chinese translated version. There are 12 multiple Themes in the original version, which occupies 50% of all Themes, while there are nine multiple Themes in Fei Bai's translated version, which only holds 39.13% of all Themes.

From the above table, it is noticed that multiple Themes

take up a large proportion of all Themes in Wordsworth's original version. To find out why multiple Themes exist in a large number, this study is going to analyze the multiple Themes in both versions in detail. Halliday [9] puts forward that there are three elements in multiple Themes: textual Themes, interpersonal Theme, and experimental/topical Themes. According to him, the innovative Theme should be proceeded by interpersonal or textual Theme. Therefore, topical is the necessary element in each Theme, which means that one Theme at least consists of two different Themes. Hence, this paper examines all the multiple Themes of Wordsworth's original version and Fei Bai's translated version. Table II shows the results of the examination.

TABLE II: STATISTIC OF TYPES OF MULTIPLE THEME

	Original version		Fei Bai's translated Chinese version	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
TE+TO	9	75%	8	88.89%
I+TO	3	25%	1	11.11%
I+TE+TO	0	0	0	0
Total	12	100%	9	100%

With the help of Table II, it is clear that the combination of topical Theme and textual Theme occupies a dominant place in both original and translated versions, and both of them have no coexistence of three elements (Textual Theme, interpersonal Theme, and topical Theme). Besides, the combination of interpersonal Theme and topical Theme also takes up a small percentage in both versions. To figure out why it happens, one Theme that is with interpersonal Theme and the topical Theme is analyzed as follows:

(8) Ten thousand (topical Theme) saw I (interpersonal Theme) // at a glance. (R)

In this example, "ten thousand" is functioned as a topical Theme and "saw I" is functioned as an interpersonal Theme. The interpersonal Theme and topical Theme in this example expresses the poet's first impression on the scenery and makes the reader imagine what the writer will write in the next line. Interpersonal Theme is also used to express the characters' attitudes and emotions, so it often appears in the novels. Therefore, both the original version and the Chinese translated version have few interpersonal Themes.

2) The difference of markedness of Theme

In the above section, this paper explores the difference between the distribution of Themes of the Original and Fei Bai's translated version. In this section, this paper will further explore the difference of markedness between the original version and Fei Bai's translated version.

To analyze the markedness of Theme, it is necessary to find out the statistic of the distribution of marked Theme and unmarked Theme of these two texts. This study adopts Halliday's notion to make the identification and the results of statistics of marked Themes, and unmarked Themes can be seen in Table III below.

From Table III, it is easy to find that there are differences between the original version and the Chinese translated version. This data shows that marked Theme takes a massive number in Wordsworth's original version, which takes up

66.67%; however, as for Fei Bai's Chinese translated version, the percentage of marked Theme is much less than the former with 43.48%. It is noticed that the number of unmarked Theme in Fei Bai's translated version is 13, which occupies the percentage of 56.52%. In comparison, it just holds the percentage of 33.33% in Wordsworth's original version.

TABLE III: STATISTIC OF MARKED THEME AND UNMARKED THEME

	Original version		Fei Bai's Chinese Translated Version	
Types of Theme	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Marked Theme	16	66.67%	10	43.48%
Unmarked Theme	8	33.33%	13	56.52%
Total	24	100%	23	100%

B. Features in the Thematic Structure

Through the analysis of the thematic structure of the original version and Fei Bai's Chinese translated version, this paper finds that there are some similarities in both versions. From the table of 5.1, we can find: first, both versions use a large number of the combination of the textual Theme and topical Theme; second, both of the two versions useless combination of interpersonal Theme and topical Theme, and none of them has the combination of three elements (Textual Theme, interpersonal Theme, and topical Theme).

According to Halliday [10], and interpersonal Theme often expresses the emotion, ideas, and intention of the character; a topical Theme is always functioned as the core of the whole sentence, and the textual Theme is still used as cohesion. Hence, it can explain why both Wordsworth and Fei Bai use so many textual Themes instead of interpersonal Themes. A combination of textual Theme and topical Theme is useful at joining the cohesiveness among lines, and a less number of the combination of interpersonal Theme and topical Theme also helps to express the poet's emotion and ideas. However, according to chapter 1, the work "Daffodils" is famous for its symbolism [11], which means that the writer is not expressing his concept directly. In this work, he expresses his pure emotion and feelings through the help of Daffodils. Therefore, it is evident that the interpersonal Theme does not play an essential role in the whole poem, and it manifests the fewer poets' emotion [12]. That is why both versions have more textual Themes instead of interpersonal Themes

This paper also found two differences in the thematic structure between Wordsworth's original version and Fei Bai's Chinese translated versions.

As mentioned in Table I, one is that the original version has more multiple Themes than Fei Bai's Chinese translated version, and Fei Bai's Chinese translated version tends to have more straightforward Theme than the original version. The other is that Fei Bai's Chinese translated version has more unmarked Theme than the original version. These two parts also make people doubt the conciseness of Fei Bai's

version since he makes a significant change in the structure of the original version. Therefore, to answer these doubts and explain these differences, this paper is going to make a discussion about the reasons for these two differences in the next section.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Different Target Readers

"Daffodils" is written in English, and its target readers are people who use English as their native language, which dominates that it should adjust to the reading habits of English speakers. Although Wordsworth might consider that this poem maybe attracts different people who come from different countries, he could not write a poem whose thematic structure is suitable for all the readers. According to Huang Guowen [6], in English, it is reasonable to use a clause or a verb phrase to be a Theme, and it will cause no reading problem for the native readers [12]. However, things are quite different for Chinese readers. From the perspective of Chinese grammar, Theme is more like the "subject" of the sentence. This can be proved by the data of the original version and Fei Bai's Chinese Translated versions.

(9) Ten thousand saw I (multiple Theme) //at a glance. (R)

In this line, "Ten thousand saw I" is the Multiple Theme, "Ten thousand" is the topical Theme and "saw I' is the interpersonal Theme. If we just solely preserve the original thematic structure the translated version will become like this:　　(10) 十万朵看见了我 (multiple Theme) //一下. (R)

It is confusing to most people, and it also cannot express the original meaning of the writer [13]. The main reason is that the original sentence is an inverted sentence, so it might cause misunderstandings if the translator does not change the original thematic structure. Therefore, Fei Bai translates it into:

(11) 我 (simple Theme) //一眼看见了一万朵. (Rheme)

By doing this, it becomes more familiar for Chinese readers to understand, and it also expresses the original meaning of the poets.

According to Huang Guowen [6], a simple theme is more usual to Chinese readers than multiple Theme. It is not only because of the characteristic of Chinese but also the simple Theme makes the sentence easier for people to comprehend. Hence, Fei Bai uses more multiple Theme to meet the need of Chinese readers.

In conclusion, English is a language which prefers to use longer and complex modifier around Theme, so Wordsworth uses many multiple Themes. However, too many multiple Themes will confuse readers who come from different cultural backgrounds [14]. To solve this problem, Fei Bai changes some modifier into a simple independent Theme, so the number of simple Theme in Chinese translated version is increased.

B. Different Writing Purposes

The other difference is the difference of the markedness of Theme. According to the table of 4.1, Wordsworth's version

refers to marked Themes while Fei Bai's translated version prefers to unmarked Theme. The characteristic of Chinese plays a small role in it, but the main reason is that these two versions have different writing purposes. According to Wordsworth, he states that his mission is to admire the freedom and beauty of Daffodils and expresses his feelings and emotion. In other words, the most important things for him are to express his emotion clearly, and the readers' need is put in the second place. According to Zhong Wei and He Wei [15], they thinks that marked Theme is more logical than unmarked Theme. Zhong addresses that Western people prefer forms and logic. The Marked Theme shows the separation of Theme and Rheme more clearly, and it can make the poem to be more cohesive in the forms; nevertheless, Eastern people, especially Chinese people prefer the parataxis unity of meaning, and unmarked Themes play an important role in balancing the meanings of each sentence, which means it makes poems more cohesive in meanings. Besides, Zappavigna, in his work "Searchable Talk: The Linguistic Functions of Hashtags" [16], also points out, "Chinese language freely omits some elements that in English are considered essential." He finds out that English is more focused on the logic of language, while the Chinese language is more concerned about the coherence of the whole meaning. In this way, writers who come from English speaking countries prefer to juxtapose phrases and clauses, which is quite different from Chinese writers.

Therefore, Wordsworth uses a large amount of marked Theme to make the sentence to be more cohesive and logical. However, Fei Bai has quite different writing purposes. "A translator should always take his readers' needs in the first place." All his works must serve his readers' needs, and his primary readers are Chinese. Hence the unmarked Theme is more suitable.

For all these reasons, it would be very vital that the thematic structure of the Fei Bai's translated version should be different from Wordsworth's original one.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study is based on objective systemic functional linguistic theory instead of subjective evaluation, so it is more scientific and accurate. In this way, this study provides people with a new angle to analyze poetry translation: thematic structure theory. In other words, this study comes up with a new perspective for the following researchers; as for the application of thematic structure, some studies only apply the thematic structure to do discourse analysis but lack genuinely systemic and theoretical research. In terms of studies of the "Daffodils," most of the researchers will analyze it from an aesthetic perspective, but fewer of them will explain it from the systemic functional linguistics. This study will try to pave the way for the future study of poetry translation and give useful advice.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this work. We

declare that we do not have any commercial or associative interest in connection with the work submitted.

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Zhu Siwei was born in Shandong, China, in August 1997. She received her bachelor of arts in English at Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, China.

She is pursuing her master's degree in School of Foreign Studies, Northwestern Polytechnical University. Her field is systemic functional linguistics.

Zhao Xueai received her bachelor's degree of arts in English, Lanzhou University and she continued her postgraduate study at Xi'an Jiaotong University. From 1996 to 1998, she worked as a visiting scholar in the United States.

From now, she is a professor in School of Foreign Studies, Northwestern Polytechnical University. Her field is systemic functional linguistics