

Tackling End Users' Perception of Song Lyrics Translation: An Attitude-Analysis Approach to Subtitling Comments about “See You Again” in Chinese Music App NetEase Cloud

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Abstract

The present research probes into end users' perspectives on and their expectation of lyrics translation, with an aim to explore the standards of lyrics translation in the eye of target text receivers. Based on an attitude-analysis approach, this paper qualitatively analyses users'

comments on the Chinese translations of the English song “See You Again” in Chinese music app NetEase Cloud. By collecting 1200 pieces of subtitling comments a month before and after the translation was published, the paper revealed how music consumers perceive of lyrics translation and what is expected from the translator, underscoring three debatable issues: (1) the audience desire for lyrics and subtitles, realised by a series of affective descriptions; (2) their personal judgement on the competence of the translator, partially reflected in showcasing their bilingual abilities; (3) the stylistic use of classic Chinese in the official translation, with appreciation expressions accounting for their interpretation about the level of appropriateness. Empirically, the reception analysis of consumer comments suggests that the target audience give priority only to selected aspects of song lyrics translation in terms of sense, naturalness, and rhyme.

Keywords: Song lyrics, Subtitling, “See You Again”, NetEase Cloud Music, Consumer perception

1. Introduction

Song translation has always been intermingled with research on literary, poetry, and stage translation, whose history dates back to the 1990s when music translation such as opera flourished as an interdisciplinary field (Franzon, 2008; Bosseaux, 2011:132, cited in Chen, 2020; Grajter 2024). Other genres of musicals and popular songs also became the central focus of investigation later on, which pays equal attention to the observable performances of music and the lyrics in the source and target texts. Regarding the rules of song translation, Low (2005) proposed the “Pentathlon Principle” in order to evaluate the translation quality, which includes five aspects of criteria, i.e., “singability”, “rhyme”, “rhythm”, “naturalness”, and “sense” (see Chen, 2020:782; for the fifth aspect of “sense”, also see Franzon, 2008:374 for “fidelity to the sense of the source text”).

Built on Low (2005)’s translation principle, Franzon (2008) embarked on the elaboration of translation strategies and the definition of “singability” in terms of three functions. Specifically, he summarised five choices in song translation: (1) “leaving the song untranslated”; (2) “translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account”; (3) “writing new lyrics with no overt relation to the original lyrics”; (4) “translating the lyrics and adapting the music accordingly – sometimes to extent that a brand new composition is deemed necessary”; (5) “adapting the translation to the original music” (see Franzon 2008:376). Based on the analyses of English, Swedish, and Finnish versions of song lyrics, Franzon (2008) concluded three layers of musical-verbal unity: a prosodic match, a poetic match, a semantic-reflexive match (see Table 1).

Table 1. Functional consequences of match between lyrics and music (Franzon 2008:30)

A singable lyric achieves	By observing the music's	Which may appear in the text as
1. a prosodic match	melody: music as notated, producing lyrics that are comprehensible and sound natural when sung	syllable count; rhythm; intonation, stress; sounds for easy singing
2. a poetic match	structure: music as performed, producing lyrics that attract the audience' attention and achieve poetic effect	rhyme; segmentation of phrases/lines/stanzas; parallelism and contrast; location of key words
3. a semantic-reflexive match	expression: music perceived as meaningful, producing lyrics that reflect or explain what the music 'says'	the story told, mood conveyed, character(s) expressed; description (word-painting); metaphor

A case in point can be found in Chen (2020)'s study, which investigated the retranslation of Bob Dylan's songs in bilingual picture books intended for Chinese kids and thus discussed the poetic and semantic-reflexive matches reflected in the examples. On the one hand, song translation can be seen as poetry translation in this context, paying attention to the use of rhyme, parallelism and other literary devices; on the other hand, its semantic reflexive match can be achieved via conveying both narrative and emotive expressions to the target audience.

2. Translating and Subtitling Song Lyrics as Digital Commercial Products

Song lyrics are translated most often for two purposes: either to be performed as a song or to be read as subtitles. The former has been much studied in theatre and film translation (e.g., Carpi 2020; Cui & Wang 2022; Abu-Rayyash & Haider 2023; Chan 2025), while the latter, largely found in multimedia resources such as music apps, is given significantly less attention. The song lyrics, both in the form of original subtitles (source text, ST) and of translation (target text, TT), constitute part of the commercial products in the digital media platform, with two major goals of communication: narrating the song (information dissemination) and publicising the song (business promotion). Under these circumstances, not all Franzon (2008)'s five choices in song translation are applicable in subtitling popular song lyrics as digital commercial products. Considering the genre features of subtitled lyrics, the translator commonly resorts to "translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account", bearing in mind their musical, verbal, and linguistic constraints.

First and foremost, lyrics translation can be seen as “a supplement to the original lyrics” instead of a new version, produced only for the target audience to recognise “the existence of the original song” for the sake of better “enjoyment” (Franzon 2008:378-380). In that case, the translation and the subtitles are intended for identifying the main idea of the popular song without worrying about the consistency in reproducing the same prosodic effects. Moreover, the process of subtitling makes lyrics translation “constrained” to some extent, which brings about changes in discourse mode (e.g., from spoken to written), and imposes both spatial and temporal limits on the subtitlers (Williamson & De Pedro Ricoy, 2014). Most importantly, since translating and subtitling song lyrics gives priority to content over form, the audiovisual translators and editors have to leave their ideal goals fulfilled via Low (2005)’s Pentathlon Principle and Franzon (2008)’s musical-verbal unity (Wang & Zhang, 2023). This contextual translation practice has been explained by Aleksandrowicz (2019:176) in the following:

(T)ranslating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration is rather straightforward and requires much less effort, as the translator pays attention mostly to the content and largely disregards the form. In Franzon’s terms, the main focus is put on the semantic-reflexive match, with complete omission of the prosodic match and optional attention to all or some areas of the poetic match. In Low’s terms, the translator concentrates on sense and naturalness, completely neglecting rhythm and singability, and optionally including rhymes in the target version. Therefore, s/he has to compromise only two or three aspects of the original instead of five.

Noticeably, the linguistic task of translation and subtitling is accompanied by or even driven in a market-oriented sense, i.e., publicising the media product embracing the music, the original and translated lyrics, which requires the translators and editors to satisfy customer needs and thus encourage online purchases. That is to say, the music company as the source of media and text production has to examine whether or not the target audience ‘give a like’ as end users of music products, which, based on their perception, should ideally be in alignment with the functional match between music and lyrics such as the semantic-reflexive match and the poetic match. In consequence, their level of reception towards lyrics translation must be taken into consideration especially in terms of sense, naturalness, and rhyme: 1) whether the translated lyrics well express the story, the characters, the plot, the mood, and the emotion of the original song; 2) whether the translation successfully attracts the attention with its style, rhyme, and other devices.

3. Reception as a Substandard: What do End Users Need and How do They Comment

Originating from audience-oriented media studies, reception research has contributed to the development of audiovisual translation (AVT) by helping AVT scholars and researchers to identify and locate the target audience (major stakeholders of media consumption) and offering them a series of methodological solutions to analysing the media product based on their level of reception (see Di Giovanni & Gambier 2018 for details). While this integrated area of research touches on the reception of subtitles across various AVT genres, including films (e.g., Williamson & De Pedro Ricoy 2014; Di Giovanni 2016; Chen 2019; Ameri & Khoshsaligheh

2020), sitcoms (e.g., Ameri & Khoshsaligheh 2021), video games (e.g., Khoshsaligheh & Ameri 2020), and theatrical opera (e.g., Carpi 2020), not much effort has been directed towards the reception of song lyrics translation (but for Aleksandrowicz 2019).

In fact, Chen (2019) has summarised four main schools of theories about subtitle translation: lexis-centred, audience-focused, norm-specified, and semiotic-oriented studies. Regarding the audience-focused studies on subtitle translation, she mentioned the theories of reception and relevance, emphasising the viewers' reception strategies, cognitive processing, contextual effects (see Chen 2019:17-8). As one of the first few researchers on the reception of subtitles in lyrics translation, Aleksandrowicz (2019) conducted a survey among 209 participants on nine subtitled musicals of the classic Hollywood era with 88 songs, inviting the cinemagoers to answer questions regarding their attention to the content and the rhymes, their perception about the functional match, and their level of satisfaction with the subtitles. Results show that the target audience did not identify the prosodic match effectively and 40% of them paid little attention to the rhymes, which even had no direct effects on their satisfaction. The reasons include the limited amount of time spent on the musicals and the division of attention to multimodal resources.

Despite the fact that over 200 participants were involved, the study still has its limitations. First, the study was unable to cover other cases where song lyrics translation can be appreciated repeatedly in what Aleksandrowicz (2019) called "home media", similarly with digital media platforms performing the same function in this respect. Second, the prepared questions were designed based on the Low (2005) and Franzon (2008)'s criteria and principle of song lyrics translation, without collecting their narrations and ideas for an in-depth analysis. Interview data are needed if plausible to address their authentic information of the issue. Third, the development of online media has offered a chance for the 'invisible' target audience to post their opinions at any time, any place, and any way. For instance, after listening to a popular song, reading and watching its lyrics (ST and TT), netizens are encouraged to tell what they need about lyrics translation, make comments on the subtitles as a vital part of AVT resources, and even propose suggestions for industrial improvement.

As Williamson and De Pedro Ricoy (2014:164-5) argued, "(while) 'genuine users' of interlingually subtitled texts rely fully on the subtitles for comprehension, the co-presence of subtitles and soundtrack allows viewers to compare and judge their quality." Inspired by this aspect, researchers then spare no efforts to explore what end users want to know about subtitling and how they evaluate the quality of subtitles. Theoretically, reception research on subtitled song lyrics contributes to examining the level of functional (mis)match between music and lyrics, paying attention exclusively to the poetic and semantic-reflexive match. Empirically, further exploration should be encouraged by inviting more authentic subtitling comments from online consumers with the widespread popularity of digital and online media.

4. Research Aim, Research Method, Data Source, and Data Collection

Armed with the theories related to song lyrics translation, subtitling, and reception, the present

research probes into online consumers' perspectives on and their expectation of song lyrics translation. Drawing on Martin and White (2005)'s appraisal framework, this paper analysed end users' feedback on the Chinese translation of the English song "See You Again" in Chinese music app NetEase Cloud. By collecting the comments of netizens on its official translation, the study intends to investigate their attitudes towards lyrics translation in general, with an aim to reexamine the standards of lyrics translation in the eye of target text receivers.

Specifically, this paper qualitatively analyses end users' comments on lyrics translation based on an attitude-analysis approach. Appraisal theory (AT), first proposed by Martin and White in their works *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English* (2005), approaches the interpersonal meaning of discourse as social practice under systemic functional linguistics (SFL). It has long been utilised to analyse social actors' evaluative expressions, their stance-taking procedure, and the degree to which they are presented. To put it into the context of translation studies, one key aspect for AT to contribute is by analysing the level of reception among the target text receivers. Relying on the three subcategories of attitude from AT, i.e., affect, judgement, appreciation, the present research analyses the audience assessment about the translator and the translation, which contextually refers to their emotions and feelings about the song and the (translated) lyrics, their evaluation about the translator's competence, and the quality of translation (see Table 2).

Table 2. Use of appraisal theory in reception and translation research

Category	Attitude	Audience as appraiser	Translator as appraised
1	affect	emotions about translation	/
2	judgement	/	competence of translator
3	appreciation	/	quality about translation

As one of the most commented English songs in the international music industry, "See You Again" was performed by American singer Charlie Puth and rapper Wiz Khalif as a tribute to the actor Paul Walker for the movie series *Furious 7*, who died in a car accident in 2013. Ever since its official release into the commercial market on March 10, 2015, the song had received outbursts of applause and triggered rounds of sorrows all the year round. It was later subtitled and translated in April, 2015 by NetEase Cloud Music, the 3rd largest music app in China with 89,850,000 users according to the 2020 Report of China's Online Music Industry. By collecting NetEase users' comments related to translation before and after the translation was published online, this paper reveals how these music product users perceive of song lyrics translation. The data were collected within one month, which is divided into two periods. Period One is from March 11 to April 13, 2015, when the song was officially released into the market without subtitles or translated lyrics. Period Two is from April 13, 2015 to April 16, 2015, when and after the song lyrics were translated into Chinese for consumption. Initially, over 10,000 pieces of comments were available in the comment section of "See You Again", some of which were then excluded if found irrelevant to translation, e.g., concerning the original lyrics and the

melody. Altogether, 1,200 comments were finalised, with 150 comments in Period One and 1050 comments in Period Two.

5. “See You Again” as a Case study: An Attitude-analysis Approach to Subtitling Comments

5.1 Period 1: March 11 to April 13, 2015

As can be seen in Table 3, the use of affective expressions to address lyrics translation occurs the most frequently (37 examples, 88.1%) in the comment section of “See You Again” during the first period, when there are no subtitles or official versions of translation. Among them, 35 examples of positive emotions account for the desire and hope for lyrics translation while only two examples of negative emotions entail the consumers’ mental reactions to the long-time missing or the instant discovery of an unofficial translation. Almost no examples of judgement can be seen commenting the competence of the translator (one example, 2.4%). Only a few are evaluating the quality of an unofficial translation (four examples of appreciation, 9.5%), giving either supportive or opposed opinions. Each case is illustrated in the following part, whose English translation is offered by the authors of the manuscript (see Case 1-3 for the attitudinal expressions in bold).

Table 3. Appraisal analysis (P1)

No.	Attitude	Audience V.S. Translator (Appraiser V.S. Appraised)	No. of Examples
1	affect	emotions about translation	positive: 35 negative: 2
2	judgement	competence of translator	positive: 1 negative: 0
3	appreciation	quality about translation	positive: 2 negative: 2
Total			42

5.1.1 Case 1 Affect: Emotions about Translation

Example (1)

求(QIU)歌词和翻译@云音乐曲库。

In want of song lyrics and a translation@NetEase Cloud Music.

Example (2)

滚动翻译呢？太(TAI)对(DUI)不(BU)起(QI)速七了。

Where are the rolling translations? **So sorry for** Furious 7.

Example (3)

英语不好，当我看到翻译的时候，心那(NA)么(ME)痛(TONG)！

(My) English is not good. When I read the translation, (my) heart **aches badly!**

The subtitling comments about the translation of “See You Again” are constituted by a large number of affective expressions in Period One, mostly reflected in demonstrating the consumers’ personal desire for an official translation. In Example (1), QIU, which literally means “in want of”, has been repeatedly used in Period One with 35 occurrences, accompanied by other degrees of request such as XI WANG (hope for), QIANG LIE YAO QIU (have a strong desire for) and GUI QIU (beg for). As for Example (2) TAI DUI BU QI (So sorry), these negative feelings are caused by a failed request for the rolling translations, combined with Example (1) to express the consumers’ demand for understanding the content of the song lyrics. Moreover, those like in Example (3) NA ME TONG (aches badly) act as an indicator of instant sadness due to the discovery of an unofficial translation, which is more inclined to demonstrate the necessity of delivering and translating emotions across the languages, apart from the semantic-reflexive meanings conveyed in the original lyrics about the story, the plot, and the characters.

5.1.2 Case 2 Judgement: Competence of Translator

Example (4)

是时候让神(SHEN)奇(QI)的(DE)翻译大哥出现了。

It is time for a **marvelous** translating fellow to appear.

The comment section under “See You Again” offers a chance for consumers not only to express freely their own emotions, but also to voice their evaluative opinions about the translator of song lyrics. Since the official translation did not appear in Period One, there is only one appraisal expression in Case Two, i.e., SHEN QI DE (marvelous), which is intended for narrating their expectation of a professional translator to fix the problem of comprehension with his or her bilingual power. The positive appraisal about this linguistic role also reflects the consumers’ respect and recognition of translating song lyrics in a timely manner.

5.1.3 Case 3 Appreciation: Quality about Translation

Example (5)

看到的最(ZUI)美(MEI)翻译“吾(WU)之(ZHI)挚(ZHI)友(YOU)，无(WU)见(JIAN)许(XU)久(JIU)。君(JUN)影(YING)若(RUO)现(XIAN)，诉(SU)之(ZHI)怀(HUAI)悠(YOU)”。

电影结束全场鼓掌 For 永远的车神 Paul，走好#速度与激情七 (转自拐五栋寺很酷)。

“It’s been a long day without you my friend. And I’ll tell you all about it when I see you again.” (This is) **the most beautiful translation** (I’ve) ever seen. When the movie ended, all applauded for Forever Racing God Paul, rest in peace#Furious 7 (Posted by GUAI WU DONG SI HEN KU).

Example (6)

别用文言翻译了真(ZHEN)酸(SUAN)。

Don't resort to classical Chinese while translating. It **really sucks**.

Interestingly, the first unofficial translation of “See You Again” appeared in the comment section on 17 March, 2015, which was conducted (actually copied) by an anonymous netizen nicknamed “GUAI WU DONG SI HEN KU” using the Chinese search engine Baidu. As the first two lyrical sentences of the song, “It’s been a long day without you my friend” and “And I’ll tell you all about it when I see you again” are not translated literally word by word, but handled more in a literary writing fashion. This stylistically classic version of Chinese translation adopts a four-character format, showcasing the value of parallelism (two lines and four phrases) and rhymes (WU-WU-SU; YOU-JIU-YOU) in producing the poetic effects. However, the amateur translation received two contrasting pieces of evaluation from the online consumers. It was claimed to be the best translation in Example (1) ZUI MEI (the most beautiful), yet verbally discouraged as a bad example in Example (2) ZHEN SUAN (really sucks). Considering the limited examples of appreciation above in this period and the fact that the translated lyrics were composed by an anonymous netizen instead of any officially assigned translator, it is still implausible to conclude the consumers’ evaluation about the quality based on the stylistic use of classic Chinese prose in song lyrics translation.

5.2 Period 2: April 13, 2015 to April 16, 2015

As can be seen in Table 4, the use of appreciation expressions to address the quality of translation occurs the most frequently (771 examples, 83.0%) in the comment section of “See You Again” during the second period, when and after the subtitles and/or the official version of translation were produced via NetEase Cloud (see Appendix 1). Among them, 457 examples of positive evaluation account for the timeliness in completing the task of lyrics translation, the stylistic beauty felt by product consumers in reading the Chinese translation, and other minor aspects of prosodic effects generated via the use of classical Chinese. Contrastingly, 314 examples of negative evaluation demonstrate another idea, negotiating the level of appropriateness in applying classical Chinese into the official version of translation. In addition, 102 examples of affective expressions (11.0%) can be seen conveying consumers’ attitudes towards and feelings about the official translation, showing their supportive/hostile opinions and personal emotions respectively. Only a small part of evaluative comments is intended for making judgements on the competence of the translator (56 examples, 6%), mostly acknowledging his bilingual skills especially his proficiency in Chinese writing except for several cases of criticising its translation style (see Case 1-6 for the attitudinal expressions in bold).

Table 4. Appraisal analysis (P2)

No.	Attitude	Audience V.S. Translator (Appraiser V.S. Appraised)	No. of Examples	
1	affect	emotions about translation	positive: 35 negative: 67	102
2	judgement	competence of translator	positive: 45 negative: 11	56
3	appreciation	quality about translation	positive: 456 negative: 315	771
Total				929

5.2.1 Case 1 Affect: Positive Emotions about Translation

Example (7)

感(GAN)谢(XIE)文言歌词，翻的实在棒。

Thanks to the classical Chinese lyrics, the translation is really great.

Example (8)

文言文歌词翻译，网易云你够了，你再这样装，我就……越来越喜(XI)欢(HUAN)你了啊！！！！

Classical Chinese lyrics translation, NetEase Cloud, that's enough. If you continue like this, I will.....like you **better and better!!!**

Example (9)

我能说我被这个翻译惊(JING)艳(YAN)了么...

I would say I am **amazed** by this translation...

Example (10)

听了好几遍，今天第一眼看翻译简直不得不让人佩(PED)服(FU)这翻译，这才是一个有灵魂的音乐软件，不同于其他的清丽而脱俗。

After listening several times, the first time I saw the translation today, I really **admired** it. This is a music software with soul, which is different from other beautiful and refined ones.

The comment section has been overwhelmed by another series of affective comments in Period Two, which are firstly concerned with consumers' positive emotions about the subtitled lyrics and their supportive attitude towards the official translation. The appearance of the official version enables the target audience to understand the content of the foreign language song and thus facilitates verbal expressions about their initial feelings. First of all, online consumers say yes to the classical Chinese lyrics by expressing a verbal welcome, e.g., Example (1) GAN XIE (thanks: 4 occurrences). Furthermore, they are inclined to give a direct praise for the use of

classical Chinese lyrics by expressing their sincere love, excitement, or even admiration for the translation. A case in point can be seen in Example (2) XI HUAN (like: 11), where the audience feedback centres around the translated lyrics, the style of translation, and the translator. Other emotional responses to the official translation are made to show their surprise and astonishment simply about the use of classical Chinese, such as in Example (3) JING YAN (amazement: 3) and Example (4) PEI FU (admiration: 6).

5.2.2 Case 2 Affect: Negative Emotions about Translation

Example (11)

其实我不(BU)喜(XI)欢(HUAN)把英文歌词翻译成古文，不知道有木有和我一样的。

In fact, I **don't like** to translate English lyrics into ancient Chinese. I don't know if there is anyone like me.

Example (12)

喷子那是见什么都喷，这个翻译已经让很多人反(FAN)感(GAN)了好么，要是只我自己一个人觉得不好那我承认脑残，要是都觉得不好你觉得谁的问题。

Critics criticise everything. Many people have been **disgusted** by this translation. If I am the only one who feels bad, I admit that I am brain-impaired. If everyone feels bad, who do you think is responsible for the problem.

Example (13)

这个翻译太差了.....我看完整个人都不(BU)好(HAO)了，直接看英文看得很流畅很舒服，这翻译什么破玩意。

This translation is too bad.....I am **not feeling good** after reading it. It feels very smooth and comfortable to read the English lyrics directly. What the hell this translation is like.

Example (14)

这翻译，我表示看中文比英文废(FEI)力(LI)。

Regarding this translation, I would say I **feel more exhausted** to read Chinese than English.

In spite of the positive appraisal above, the lyrics still received contrasting feedback online, issuing harsh criticism on the manipulative use of ancient Chinese in the translation. Specifically, the negative emotions can be felt among consumers who express their sense of hatred about the translation such as in Example (1) BU XI HUAN (don't like: 11 occurrences) and Example (2) FAN GAN (disgust: 9). It should be noted that these online audiences, regardless of their bilingual competence, experience challenges in consuming the translation. For those with much knowledge of the source language (English), they complain about "not feeling good" (BU HAO) in Example (3), together with another ten similar expressions in the data comments such as ZUI LE (confused or fainted), NAN SHOU (uneasy), TU LE (sickening), and TONG KU (painful). For the general audience or those with a lower level of Chinese proficiency, one of their commonest complaints in reading the translation is energy-

Example (19)

这翻译就和以前的 someone like you 的那个古风翻译一样，纯粹给人感觉就是为了秀(XIU)文(WEN)笔(BI)，反而少了这首歌原来的那种纯粹和感觉，个人感觉，不喜勿喷。

This translation is of the same ancient style as the previous song “Someone Like You”, simply giving people the feeling that it is to **show off the style of writing**, but it loses the original purity and sense of the song. This is my personal opinion. Do not criticise if you do not agree.

Example (20)

感觉歌词一点不好，一看就中(ZHONG)二(ER)病(BING)写的，一群人还捧上天了。

I don't feel that the lyrics are good at all. They must have been translated by **a teenage nerd**, and a group of people even gave a superhigh praise.

Despite limited in amount, doubt still occurs when the role of translator has yet to be agreed upon during the process of translation. Major debate centres around the so-called “classical Chinese translation”, which is criticised for acting a bit “girlishly” (see Example 1), “showing off the style of writing” (see Example 2), and being produced by a “teenage nerd” (see Example 3) who does not care about the target audience or understands little about the use of plain language and lyrics writing. As evidenced above, these online consumers do acknowledge the ability of the translator as a proficient language user in adopting classical Chinese, but they put more emphasis on negotiating the level of appropriateness for the sake of exercising the translator's professionalism, which should be evaluated individually in terms of stylistic and emotional impact. Witnessed as sacrificing the purity and mood of the English song, the role of the translator needs to be further confirmed.

5.2.5 Case 5 Appreciation: Positive Evaluation about Quality of Translation**Example (21)**

我靠 中文翻译这(ZHE)么(ME)快(KUAI)就出啦了。网易好屌。

Fuck! The Chinese translation came so fast. NetEase is dammed amazing.

Example (22)

看看人家这翻译，欧美时尚美与古典中文美的完(WAN)美(MEI)契(QI)合(HE)，好曲好词配佳(JIA)译(YI)，学习学习!!

Look at this translation, which is a **perfect combination** of Euro-American fashion and classical Chinese beauty. Good melody, good lyrics plus **good translation**. Learn to Learn!!

Example (23)

翻译已经成神，能用诗(SHI)一(YI)样(YANG)美(MEI)丽(LI)的语句搭配同样美丽的歌曲仅见此人

This is the only person who has become a man of God in translation and can use **beautiful sentences like poems** to match equally beautiful songs.

As mentioned before, the category of appreciation accounts for the largest percentage of all the attitudinal resources, which mainly contributes to evaluating the quality of the official translation. Arguably, the priority of quality assessment has been given at least to the following aspects: the efficiency of releasing the official translation, the balance of language transfer between the source and the target cultures, and the effectiveness of generating artistic effects. First, the official version of translation was praised for being highly efficient in Example (1) ZHE ME KUAI (so fast: 8 occurrences), which indicates to some extent a market desire for understanding the content of the song lyrics (also see Period One for positive affect). In addition, the translation was considered of good quality in Example (2) JIA YI (good translation), with a large percentage of other pieces of data comments appraising positively the use of classical Chinese such as SHEN (super good), TAI ZAN (too admirable), NIU BI (awesome), TAI BANG (too excellent) (337 occurrences in total). Specifically, part of their comments mentioned this translation as “a perfect combination” of fashionable English lyrics, musical melody, and ancient Chinese culture (see Example 2 WAN MEI QI HE) on the condition that both versions are comprehensible to the target audience in this context. Last but not least, consumers also elaborate on the artistic effects, paying special attention to the stylistic beauty conveyed in the Chinese translation. 92 pieces of statements compare this translation as a prose or poem, such as in Example (3) SHI YI YANG MEI LI (beautiful sentences like poems) or other data comments like HAO WEN YI (stylistically classic) and TAI YOU YI JING (too artistic). Without being able to dip into the specific literary devices employed in the translation, the target audience still perceive of the prosodic effects as reflected in the linguistic charm of using classic Chinese prose for song lyrics translation.

5.2.6 Case 6 Appreciation: Negative Evaluation about Quality of Translation

Example (24)

我觉得翻译得不(BU)好(HAO)。用文言文不(BU)是(SHI)那(NA)么(ME)恰(QIA)当(DANG)。

I **don't** think the translation is **good**. It is **not that appropriate** to use classical Chinese.

Example (25)

我也同意，其实白话文更适合这首歌表达的感觉，那种温情和怀念并不(BU)需(XU)要(YAO)这(ZHE)么(ME)讲(JIANG)究(JIU)的语言，反而给人一种距(JU)离(LI)感(GAN)。白话文用词妥当更加合适。

I also agree that, in fact, vernacular Chinese is more suitable for the feeling expressed in this song. That kind of warmth and nostalgia **does not need such exquisite language**, but gives people **a sense of distance**. It is more appropriate to use plain words in vernacular Chinese.

Example (26)

对这个歌词翻译完全无感...跟歌曲影片和保罗沃克的气质基(JI)本(BEN)不(BU)搭(DA)。为什么这歌要用旋律加 hiphop 对唱的形式，正好体现电影的街头感和保罗与文迪赛尔与那帮黑人兄弟情。这文绉绉的翻译真心不是一般扯(CHE)淡(DAN)。

Completely no feeling about the translated lyrics...It **basically doesn't match** the song, the movie, or Paul Walker's temperament. Why this song uses the form of melody and hip-hop duet, which just reflects the street sense of the film and the bromance between Paul, Vin Diesel, and the black gang. The overuse of classic Chinese in translation is really **nonsense**.

In spite of the positive appraisal mentioned above, there are still other consumers who hold opposed opinions about the official translation. Their evaluative comments are not concerned with the efficiency of offering translation or the balance of cultural transfer, but more about the effectiveness of generating artistic effects reflected in terms of the mood, the music, and the characters. In their opinion, the official translation is not good or at least inappropriate for the following reasons. First, though without further elaboration, the negotiable use of classical Chinese is simply considered awkward such as in Example (1) BU HAO (not good) and BU SHI NA ME QIA DANG (not that appropriate), with 34 similar expressions in the data comments like ZAO GAO DE (terrible), LAN (rotted), and CHA PING (negative comments or criticism). In addition, part of the consumer group thinks it unnecessary to employ classical Chinese, categorised as too "exquisite" language in Example (2) JIANG JIU. This is consistent to the negative judgement in Period Two, when the translator is considered to be "showing off" rather than fulfilling his/her role of conveying down-to-earth information. By comparing with vernacular Chinese in this example, the consumer suggests that the translated lyrics disconnect with the original song melodically, thus leading to what Example (2) called "JU LI GAN" (a sense of distance). More importantly, not only the music but also the characters and the theme of the song are taken into consideration by the target audience based on the data comments. In Example (3), s/he mentioned the central theme of the movie "Furious 7": bromance and the sense of street racing, who criticised the official translation as "JI BEN BU DA", i.e., "basically not matching" the theme of the movie or the spirits of Paul Walker, the main character of the song whose death in reality triggered the worldwide emotions. In consequence, the overuse of classical Chinese in the Chinese translation of the English song "See You Again" has been negatively commented in the data as CHE DAN (nonsense), ZHUANG BI (showing off), BIE NIU (weird), and ZUO ZUO (pretentious), etc.

6. Findings and Implications

The present study tackles end users' perception of song lyrics translation via employing an attitude-analysis approach to subtitling comments, which qualitatively discusses the evaluative comments on the English-Chinese translation of "See You Again" in Chinese music app NetEase Cloud. Major findings are concluded as follows, with respect to consumers' attitudes towards the (un)official translation and the translator of the song lyrics:

It is confirmed that the target audience are in urgent need of lyrics translation, which can be witnessed in the large percentage of affective expressions about "in want of a translation" in Period One, consumers' passionate emotions about the appearance of the subtitled lyrics, and their supportive attitude towards the official translation in Period Two. Despite the fact that both positive and negative affect can be found in the data comments, most of their negative

ones are criticisms on the simple use of classical Chinese in the translation, still acknowledging the audience desire for an official translation of the song lyrics.

Arguably, the target audience attribute the use of classical Chinese translation to the translator's professional skills and competence, which is reflected in the way that they make judgements on the translator or the translation team in two periods. On the one hand, they give full credit to the role of a translator in enabling an in-time and solid understanding about the original lyrics. On the other hand, they show a recognisable respect for the translator's use of classical Chinese, even though a small percentage of commenters disagree on the "showcasing" behaviour, with conflicting opinions on the stylistic choice.

Moreover, it is difficult to determine if the target audience are satisfied with the quality of translation or not, which depends chiefly on the calculation of appreciation expressions in positive and negative polarisations. In fact, they differ a lot in terms of the level of appropriateness in applying classical Chinese into the official translation of the song lyrics, which has been negotiated from the perspectives of release efficiency, cultural balance, and artistic effectiveness. Analysing the data in the comment section of NetEase Cloud implies no issue in acknowledging the efficiency of releasing the official translation, almost all as satisfying in Period Two. Regardless of their linguistic input, the target audience do not demonstrate a potential interest in the academic value of a cultural balance required in the traditional translation theory, with only a few cases narrating it vital for a good translation. The central debate lies in the third perspective, i.e., the effectiveness of generating artistic effects, for which the official translation is considered by part of the target audience as a beautiful literary artwork rather than a bilingual text. However, opposing ideas are expressed mainly in the following aspects: 1) with an intralingual comparison with vernacular Chinese, the use of classical Chinese in the official translation becomes an obstacle to understanding the content of the song lyrics; 2) the official translation with such "exquisite language" does not match the song melodically, emotionally, and thematically, as required in accordance with the functional match between lyrics and music, especially the poetic and semantic-reflexive matches.

Overall, reception analysis of consumer comments in this context indicates that priority has been given only to selected aspects of song lyrics translation. First, in terms of sense, the target audience focus on the theme, the mood, and the main characters of the movie related to the lyrics, without paying sufficient attention to the original text, i.e., the content of the song lyrics. Second, as for naturalness, they give critical comments on the pros and cons of applying classical Chinese into the official translation, regarding it as a stylistic feature for (un)easy reception or consumption. Third, they touch on the relationship between the melody and the translated lyrics, but do not elaborate on the musical properties such as rhymes in both texts. The attitude analysis, however, only contributes by inviting the discussion about the mood of the song and the emotions evoked via consuming the translation. Further studies should focus more on their stances towards the translation of song lyrics including detailed suggestions for improving the translation.

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Appendix A

Official translation of “See You Again” via NetEase Cloud

It's been a long day without you my friend

吾之挚友，无见许久

And I'll tell you all about it when I see you again

君影若现，诉之怀悠

We've come a long way from where we began

功成已长，名就同休

Oh I'll tell you all about it when I see you again

吾将诉浮华万千若君影重故

When I see you again

君容依旧

Damn who knew all the planes we flew

怎忆空影君吾逝

Good things we've been through

佳观君吾赏

That I'll be standing right here

则吾同君孤立

Talking to you about another path

谈笑人生别途

I know we loved to hit the road and laugh

虽晓同好行路乐逍遥

But something told me that it wouldn't last

然冥冥诉语前路莫同

Had to switch up look at things different see the bigger picture

无奈分别，异与君世观于明景

Those were the days hard work forever pays

往昔种种，所劳酬报

Now I see you in a better place

见君现已处佳华

How could we not talk about family when family's all that we got?

家若仅存此生，怎可默消家谈

Everything I went through you were standing there by my side

历经风雨，君影依然，并肩同

And now you gonna be with me for the last ride

如今君同吾行最终章

It's been a long day without you my friend

无君之候，此独已久

And I'll tell you all about it when I see you again

君若复归，吾可言尽

We've come a long way from where we began

始点途远，长此以往

Oh I'll tell you all about it when I see you again

如见君影诉世炎凉

When I see you again

君影复现

First you both go out your way

本意踏己寻路

And the vibe is feeling strong and what's small turn to a friendship

强心感应，轻助化友

a friendship Turn into a bond

挚友为亲

and that bond will never be broke and the love will never get lost

亲情血脉不支离，心中爱未迷归向

And when brotherhood come first then the line will never be crossed established it on our own

兄弟之情平行初心，手足之心立于自绪

When that line had to be drawn and that line is what we reach

独丝必涂，单线所及

So remember me when I'm gone

吾影若逝，可否怀依

How could we not talk about family when family's all that we got?

家若吾众仅拥，何以言离家语

Everything I went through you were standing there by my side

君影徘徊吾旁，共同面对无常

And now you gonna be with me for the last ride

现君即同吾速终程

Let the light guide your way

留光引君途

Hold every memory as you go

君之飘逝忆长留

And every road you take will always lead you home

君择之途，引君归返故过

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