



## Features of Chinese Translation of Emily Dickinson's Poetry: A Comparative Study of Wang Hongyin's and Tu An's Translations

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<b>Received:</b> 04/02/2026	<b>Abstract</b>
<b>Accepted:</b> 13/04/2026	<i>The research on translation of Emily Dickinson's poetry has gradually attracted attention from scholars at home and abroad in recent years. But so far, comparison and evaluation of different translations are mostly based on subjective impression and less on objective empirical study. A statistical analysis of formal factors such as stanza, line, punctuation, and vocabulary use in 200 Poems of Emily Dickinson translated by Wang Hongyin and I Know He Exists translated by Tu An is performed with the help of programs written in Python language to objectively compare and summarize translation style of the two translations, and to reveal some of the features of current Chinese translation of Emily Dickinson's poetry. It is found that the two translations deviate slightly from the original in terms of stanza and line number. On the whole, Tu's translation deviates less from original text, its use of translation language and punctuation are very close to original text, with only occasional adjustment to original line and word sequences, its overall style is plain and smooth. Wang's translation deviates relatively greater from original text. Lots of alterations are made to original punctuation, its diction incorporates more translator's own understanding of original poems, many modal words, onomatopoeia and er-hua words with characteristics of northern dialect, etc. are added, and omits original sentence elements frequently, all of which resulting in a translation with distinctive translator's personality and diverse language styles.</i>
<b>Keywords:</b> Emily Dickinson's poetry; Chinese translation characteristics; comparative analysis; Wang Hongyin's translation; Tu An's translation	

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The American poetess Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) gave up social interaction since she was about 30 years old. She left more than 1700 poems, but only 10 poems were published before she died. The rest were published and known by the world after her death. After Dickinson's death, the fame of her works greatly increased, and research on Dickinson's poetry has gradually grown as well. Nowadays, study of Dickinson's poetry has become a prominent academic phenomenon in the field of American poetry research in China. At each annual meeting of American Literature Research Association held in China, scholars read papers on Dickinson's poetry research, and the number of master and doctoral dissertations on Dickinson in colleges and universities in China has also increased significantly. Poetry study and poetry translation often complement each other. Thorough academic research promotes excellent translation, and a large number of translations popularize academic research (Zhang Ziqing 4). As Dickinson and her poems have received more and more attention from academic circles, many Chinese translators have also presented Dickinson's poems to Chinese readers. Since the

mid-1980s, more than 20 Chinese translated versions of Dickinson's poems have been published in China. Among them, Jiang Feng's translation is the earliest, the most reprinted, with the largest circulation, and the most influential translation. Other influential translations include Sun Liang's translation and Zhang Yun's translation, on which the author of this paper has published a review (Zhou Jianxin 96–97). Wang Hongyin's translation and Tu An's translation, published in 2013, are Chinese translations that have attracted much attention in recent years. The translator Wang Hongyin (1953–2019) is a well-known professor and poetry translator in the field of translation studies in China. Mr. Tu An (1923–2017) is a senior poetry translator in China, especially in translation of poetry of John Keats (1795–1821).

Wang Hongyin's (1953–2019) poetry translation began approximately in the 1980s, and his translation of Emily Dickinson's works was mainly started during 1988–1990 while he was studying in the United States. He was entrusted by Canadian poetess Patricia Keeney (1943–) to translate her poems, and he published "Ten Poems by Keeney" in the second issue of *World Literature* in 1997, and then published *Breeding: Selected Poems of Keeney* (Shaanxi Tourism Press) in 1999, which had a considerable impact on his later poetry translation, criticism and creation (Wang Hongyin, 2012: 13–14). In the process of poem translation, Mr. Wang Hongyin strives to carry out different translation processes based on his own understanding and according to the characteristics of each poem. He once pointed out that "the translation process starts with reading of the source language to understand, and then through conversion into expression, that is, writing in the target language. The process of reading comprehension is basically a process of thinking in the original language, with analysis as the main task and synthesis as the supplement; the process of writing expression is basically a process of thinking in the target language, with synthesis as the main and analysis as the auxiliary" (Wang Hongyin, 2002: 121). In particular, he believed that "in general, in principle, poetry is a personal career, with personal life experience and unique language style in it, so attention must be paid to this situation when translating.... The style here does not mean a 100% full translation, but to capture the characteristics and express them so that people can feel and distinguish them" (Wang Hongyin, 2012: 18). It can be seen that Wang Hongyin's poetry translation pays more attention to highlighting the translator's personal understanding of poetry.

Mr. Tu An (1923–2017), formerly known as Jiang Bihou, has successively published poem translations since 1941. His first poem "The Death of a Child" was published on December 1, 1941, in *Jina* (i.e. Collection)(《集纳》), the Supplement of the *China-US Daily* during the "Isolated Island" period in Shanghai, China. He claimed to be "poetry lover, poetry author, and poetry translator" (Lin Donghai 40). His translations such as *Drum-Taps*, *Whitman's Poems*, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, *The Charming Spring: Selected English Lyric Poems* (co-translated with Bian Zhilin, etc.), *I Hear America Singing: Selected Poems from the United States* (co-translated with Yang Deyu, etc.), *100 Famous English and American Poems for Children*, *Selected Poems of Keats*, *Convergence of Double Poetry Streams* (co-authored with Jin Bo), etc. have all emerged among readers and imposed great impact. His *Selected Poems of Keats* (People's Literature Publishing House, 1997) won the Translation Award of the Second Lu Xun Literature Award in China. In 2016, People's Literature Publishing House published Tu An's *Poems and Essays*, a collection of poems and essays by Tu An throughout his life. Tu An translated and published Walt Whitman's (1819–1892) collection of poems, *Drum-Taps*, at his own expense at the end of 1948. Whitman and Dickinson are both representative poets of the 19th century in the United States, but Tu An feels that today's Chinese readers are less interested in Whitman than in Dickinson. He said, "Dickinson's poems have no political background and focus on art and philosophical thoughts, and seem to have attracted more attention from readers nowadays" (Jiang Nan C15). He also said in an interview that "Whitman and Dickinson are the binary stars in the history of American poetry. Dickinson was very low-

key during her lifetime and created nearly 1800 poems, but only a few poems were published anonymously when she was alive; and now, her brilliance even somewhat obscures Whitman" (Li Xiao, "Approaching the Poet"). In 2013, 90-year-old Tu An cooperated with his youngest daughter Zhang Yan in translating Dickinson's poems. His daughter translated the first draft. He was responsible for checking and revising. They finally translated 258 poems and published them under the name *I Know He Exists: Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*.

Mr. Tu An believes that compared with other categories of translation, translators are more demanding in poetry translation, in that they not only have to convey the original form, but more importantly, convey the original charm. Translating poems should be the embrace of two souls, realizing the unity of the translator and the original author, realizing the collision and fusion of the two languages, and must penetrate into the spiritual feeling of the original. Mr. Tu An once translated the poetic concept "negative capability" mentioned in John Keats' (1795–1821) letter to his brothers as 「客体感受力」 (i.e. object sensibility). He said: "the object is what a poem intends to praise; the 'object sensibility' means abandoning translator's original mindset, embracing the object that a poem means to eulogize, and expressing the feeling. I believe in this poetic concept very much." He believes that poetry translation also needs this kind of "object sensibility", that the translator must give up his own inherent thinking pattern, integrating into the original text of the target language, embracing the original text, experiencing the words, thoughts and artistic conception of the original text, experiencing the creative emotions of the original author, and transforming the comprehension gained after integration into the context of the target language. This is also the basic principle and method of his poetry translation (Ding Zhenqin 57).

Obviously, every translator has his own translation style, and different translations of the same poem may even be quite different. Dickinson's poetry has a unique language style, and she is good at choosing words according to her feelings and giving them life. She uses a variety of vocabulary including popular spoken language, dialect, religious terms, scientific vocabulary, etc. to express her unique understanding of things. She also likes to make bold changes in part of speech, word form and grammar as needed to achieve specific expression effects (Xiao Liqing 49–50). These characteristics make Dickinson's poems extraordinarily dexterous and refined, and make her poems read like riddles, giving readers an aesthetic space for associations, but they also bring great challenges to the translation of her poems. By means of statistical analysis, this paper conducts a contrastive analysis of the translation styles of 78 translated poems with the same original text respectively in Wang Hongyin's translation, *200 Poems of Emily Dickinson*, and Tu An's translation, *I Know He Exists: Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, so as to find out translation styles of the two translations, which can reflect one of the characteristics of Chinese translation of Dickinson's poetry, and at the same time, can also witness translation views of the two translators.

Wang Hongyin's translation comprises 200 Chinese renditions drawn from 200 original poems by Emily Dickinson, while Tu An's translation includes 258 Chinese versions translated from 258 Dickinson originals. The two translations differ not only in the quantity of translated poems included but also in their selection of source texts, with only 78 source poems appearing in both versions. In other words, merely 78 translated poems in each translation are rendered from the same Dickinson originals. Regardless of the thematic or formal characteristics of these 78 source poems, a comparative analysis of the stylistic differences in the two Chinese translations of these 78 shared poems can help illuminate the distinctive translation features of Wang's and Tu's translations.

The original poems of both translations are from *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1960) edited by Thomas H. Johnson (1902–1985). When referring to Dickinson's poems in this paper, the serial number of Dickinson's poems designated in the Johnson edition is adopted.

## 2. Analysis of Translation Features of the Two Translations

Depending on programs written in Python language, the number of stanzas, lines, word types and punctuation marks in the original and the two translations are counted. A comparative analysis is made between Wang's and Tu's translations from the aspects of stanzas and line breaks, vocabulary use, and punctuation, to reveal translation style and characteristics of the two translations. Wang's translation, *200 Poems of Emily Dickinson*, is divided into two parts, including 200 translated poems. It can be seen from the translator's preface that although Mr. Wang Hongyin follows some basic translation methods in actual translation process, there is no absolute unified translation principle. Instead, he carries out different translation processing according to his personal understanding, according to different styles and language performance of each poem, and at the same time, he tries to translate in a feminine tone (Wang Hongyin, 2013, "Preface": 8–9). Tu's translation, *I Know He Exists: Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, is divided into four parts: "Life", "Nature", "Love", and "Time and Eternity", containing a total of 258 translated poems. In terms of poetic form, this translation maintains the formal features of the original poems in Johnson's *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, translates and keeps as far as possible in accordance with the original punctuation without making any changes; in terms of style, the translator also stated to try his best to convey the style of the original (Tu An, "Preface": 4).

### 2.1 Analysis of Stanza and Line

The number of stanzas and lines of the 78 translated poems with the same original text in Wang's translation and Tu's translation are counted respectively, and statistics of the number of stanzas and lines of the 78 original poems is also recorded. The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Statistics of Stanzas and Lines in the Original and Translations**

Items	Original	Wang's Translation	Tu's Translation
Stanzas	188	188	190
Lines	862	851	847
Difference from Original in Stanzas	\	\	-2 (-1.1%)
Difference from Original in Lines	\	11 (1.3%)	15 (1.7%)

#### 2.1.1 Stanza

Statistics show (see Table 1) that in terms of the number of stanzas, Wang's translation is the same as the original, and Tu's translation has 2 more stanzas (about 1.1%). In Tu's translation, there are a total of 8 translated poems with different number of stanzas from the original, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Eight Translated Poems with Stanza Deviation in Tu's Translation**

Poem No.	99	475	1052	764	976	1212	1276	1624	Total
Original Stanzas	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	11
Translated Stanzas	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	13
Difference Value	1	1	1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-2

For poems 99, 475, and 1052, Tu's translation merges the 2 stanzas of each original poem into 1 stanza, thus removing the original rhythmic break between 2 stanzas, and enhancing

compactness and continuity of translated poems. For poems 764, 976, 1212, 1276, and 1624, Tu's translation transforms the one-stanza original poems into two-stanza translated poems. Generally, Dickinson's poems have the same number of lines in each stanza in the same poem, and most individual stanzas have four lines. Tu's translation also splits equally when splitting the original stanza, that is, the number of lines in each stanza is the same after splitting. For example, the original poem 764 has 1 stanza (4 lines), and in Tu's translation, it is split into 2 stanzas, each with 2 lines; and the original poem 1212 has 1 stanza (6 lines), and Tu's translation splits it into 2 stanzas, with 3 lines in each stanza; and each of the remaining 3 original poems has 1 stanza with 4 lines, and is divided into 2 stanzas with 2 lines in each stanza in Tu's translation. By dividing the original one-stanza poem into two stanzas, Tu's translation highlights the progressive and transitional relations in the content. It can be seen that Tu's translation has made some adjustments in terms of poetry stanza.

### 2.1.2 Line

In terms of the number of lines, Wang's translation and Tu's translation are 11 lines (1.3%) and 15 lines (1.7%) less than the original respectively, and Tu's translation is 4 lines less than Wang's (0.5%). In addition, there are 44 places in Tu's translation where the number of lines is not changed, but line order or word order of two or more lines of the original poem have been adjusted in the translation, such as changing the order of two lines of a poem, or moving part of one line to another line, and so on. There are only 13 places in Wang's translation where similar internal adjustments take place, which is 31 less than Tu's translation (70.5%). After adjustment in word order or line sequence, Tu's translation does not obviously change the original meaning. However, the translated sentences (lines) are more in line with the reading habits of Chinese language, which are more fluent and easier to understand; while some of Wang's translated poems that have not adjusted the expression order according to Chinese expression habits are generally translated according to original word and line order, and the translated sentences (lines) are sometimes slightly stiff and hard to understand.

### 2.1.3 Summary

In short, of all the 78 poems, the number of stanzas and lines in Wang's translation and Tu's translation deviate little from the original text, in which the number of stanzas of Wang's translation is the same as that of the original, and the number of stanzas of Tu's translation is 2 (1.1%) more than that of the original. Wang's adjustment of line and word order is 70.5% less than that of Tu's. It can be seen that Wang's translation is closer to the original in terms of stanza and line, while Tu's translation is more flexible than Wang's translation.

## 2.2 Analysis of Vocabulary Use

The occurrences of repetitive words, modal particles, onomatopoeias, idioms, and erhua words in the 78 translated poems included in the two translations are counted respectively, and the results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Occurrences of Five Types of Words in Two Translations**

Items	Wang's Translation	Tu's Translation	Differences between Two Translations
Modal Particles	24	12	12 (100%)
Onomatopoeias	5	2	3 (150%)
Repetitive Words (excl. onomatopoeia)	52	56	4 (7.7%)
Er-hua Words	15	19	4 (26.7%)
Idioms	17	17	0

Erhua words in the table refer to words with the suffix 「儿」 as a light-sound morpheme, such as 「花儿」 and 「鸟儿」, excluding 「女儿」 and 「婴儿」. Modal particles in the statistics are third-level modal particles used at the beginning or end of a sentence, or at pause points within the sentence, to express imperative, interrogative, or exclamatory mood, such as 「啊」, 「吧」, 「吗」, 「啦」, and 「哉」, excluding 「的」 and 「了」. Onomatopoeias are all two-syllable onomatopoeic words, such as 「唧唧」, 「嗡嗡」, and 「格格」. Repetitive words refer to words containing two or more consecutive same single-character units (not including onomatopoeia), including word-form patterns of AA, ABB, AABB, AABC, and ABCC, such as repetitive words like 「小小」, 「轻轻」, 「毛茸茸」, and 「小心翼翼」, etc.. The reference standard of statistical idioms is the idioms included in *Dictionary of Modern Chinese Idioms*, published by Shanghai Dictionary Publishing House in July 2009. The idioms in the translation studied in this paper are all four-character idioms. There is overlap between the above-mentioned types of words, for example, 「小心翼翼」 is included in both repetitive words and idioms. But the cases of overlap are not many.

According to statistics, Wang Hongyin's translation has a relatively larger number of occurrences of modal particle and onomatopoeia, among which occurrences of modal particle are twice as many as Tu's translation, and occurrences of onomatopoeia are 2.5 times as many as Tu's translation; while Tu An's translation has more occurrences of repetitive words (not including onomatopoeia) and erhua words, among which occurrences of erhua words are 26.7% more than Wang's translation.

### **2.2.1 Modal Particle**

For modal particles, the use of interjections such as 「啊」 (Ah) and 「哦」 (Oh) at the beginning of sentences (verse lines) is largely a feature of modern poetry. The interjections at the beginning of a sentence (verse line) in translation are basically reservations by the translator for the original interjections. There are 6 occurrences of interjection in the original 78 poems, which are all located at the beginning of the sentence (verse line). They can be seen in such verse lines as "Oh some Scholars! Oh some Sailor! / Oh some Wise men from the skies!" [poem 101], "Why, look out for the little brook in March" [poem 136], "Oh Sea—look graciously—" [poem 162], and "Ah! the Sea!" [poem 249]. Wang's translation retained all six occurrences of modal particles at the beginning of the sentence (verse line), while Tu's translation deleted the modal particle "Why" of original poem 136.

In addition, the first line of the fourth stanza of original poem 712 is "Or rather—He passed Us—"; Wang translated it as 「哦，可不是，他已走在我们前」; Tu translated it as 「或不如说——夕阳从我们身旁路过——」。Tu's translation, like the original, has no interjection at the beginning of the sentence (verse line), while Wang's translation adds an interjection 「哦」 (Oh) at the beginning of the sentence.

Modal particles such as 「吧」 and 「呢」 in the middle and at the end of the target sentence (verse line) are added by the translator according to his own understanding. There are no mid-sentence or end-of-sentence modal particles in the original text because modal particles are rarely used in the middle or at the end of sentences in English. In their 78 translations, Tu adds a total of 7 occurrences of mid-sentence/end-of-sentence modal particles, and Wang adds a total of 17 occurrences, which is about 2.4 times that of Tu's translation. For example, poem 494 ("Going

to Him! Happy Letter!") has no modal particles. Wang's translation adds 5 occurrences of modal particle at the end of sentences (verse lines), reflecting the translator's understanding of the tone and emotion of the verse line, and making the poetic language more colloquial, while Tu's translation only adds 1 modal particle at the end of a sentence.

Counting all the mid-sentence/end-of-sentence modal particles added in the two translations, it is found that, in Wang's translation, 「吧」 with 4 occurrences expresses imperative mood; 「呢」 and 「吗」 with a total of 6 occurrences indicate interrogative or rhetorical mood; 「哉」, 「哪」 and 「呀」 with a total of 5 occurrences express exclamatory mood; 1 modal particle 「啦」 with 2 occurrences expresses declarative mood; and in Tu's translation, 「吧」 with 5 occurrences represents imperative mood, and 「啊」 with 2 occurrences represents exclamatory mood.

In short, in addition to retaining the original 6 occurrences of modal particle at the beginning of sentences, Wang's translation also adds 1 occurrence of modal particle at the beginning of a sentence and 17 occurrences of mid-sentence/end-of-sentence modal particles, while Tu's translation only retains 5 of the original 6 occurrences of modal particle at the beginning of sentences and adds 7 occurrences of mid-sentence/end-of-sentence modal particles. It can be seen that both translations have added sentence-end modal particles to express imperatives and exclamations to enhance emotional connotation; in addition, Wang's translation also tends to add interrogative modal particles at the end of question sentences, thereby enhancing the interrogative or rhetorical mood of poems.

### 2.2.2 Onomatopoeia

In the use of onomatopoeic words, Wang's translation uses 5 times, namely 「营营」, 「唧唧」, 「嗡嗡」 (twice), and 「格格」; Tu's translation uses 2 times, namely 「吃吃」 and 「嗡嗡」. Obviously, occurrences of onomatopoeia in Wang's translation are more. Comparing the specific use of onomatopoeia in Wang's translation and Tu's translation, it is found that Tu's translation generally translates the original verbs according to their original meaning, and tries not to increase or reduce the original meaning, while in Wang's translation, onomatopoeia is used to translate the original verbs, which increases the vividness and rhythm of the poem. For example, comparing Wang's translation of 「蜜蜂营营」 (bee humming) with Tu's translation of 「蜜蜂低吟」 (bee chants) of the same original verb, and Wang's translation of 「蟋蟀唧唧」 (cricket chirping) with Tu's translation of 「蟋蟀唱歌」 (cricket sings), it can be seen that the use of onomatopoeia in Wang's translation makes the translated poems more vivid and has a sense of picture, while the direct translation of original verb into translated verbs in Tu's translation makes translated poems less lively but more elegant.

### 2.2.3 Repetitive Words

For repetitive words other than onomatopoeia, in the two translations, some repetitive words are also idioms, such as 「小心翼翼」 (cautious), 「彬彬有礼」 (polite), 「姗姗来迟」 (late coming), etc., which will be analyzed together with other idioms later. Except for idioms, repetitive words that occur with high frequency in Tu's translation are 「小小」 with 8 occurrences, 「轻轻」 with 6 occurrences, 「缓缓」 with 3 occurrences, and 「匆匆」 with 3 occurrences; while in Wang's translation, repetitive words with top frequency are 「小小」 with 11 occurrences, 「静静」 with 4 occurrences, and 「轻轻」 with 3 occurrences.

Throughout the 78 translated poems in each of the two translations, there are 52 repetitive words in Wang's translation and 56 repetitive words in Tu's translation. The number of

repetitive words in Tu's translation is only 7.7% more than that in Wang's translation. There is little difference in the number of repetitive words between the two translations. The use of repetitive words enhances rhythm of the poem, making it more catchy, and also setting off emotions.

#### **2.2.4 Er-hua Words**

According to statistics, there are 11 erhua words used in Wang's translation with altogether 15 occurrences, while Tu's translation uses 7 erhua words with a total of 19 occurrences. From the perspective of frequency, erhua words are used more frequently in Tu's translation, totaling 19 occurrences, which is 4 occurrences (26.7%) more than that in Wang's translation. Generally speaking, the frequency of most erhua words in Tu's translation is higher than that in Wang's translation. For example, in Tu's translation, 「鸟儿」 (bird) appears 6 times, 「花儿」 (flower) and 「心儿」 (heart) appear 4 times respectively; while most of the erhua words in Wang's version only appear once, and the maximum number is no more than 3 times.

Among the 11 erhua words used in Wang's translation, 8 of them reflect the characteristics of northern dialect of Mandarin, which are 「阵儿」, 「点儿」, 「灯儿」, 「对儿」, 「圈儿」, 「滋味儿」, 「我们俩儿」, and 「一忽会儿」; and 3 of them are common Chinese erhua words, that is, commonly used words with the suffix 「儿」 sound: 「鸟儿」 (bird), 「花儿」 (flower) and 「风儿」 (wind).

Among the 7 erhua words in Tu's translation, 4 of them are erhua words with characteristics of northern dialect of Mandarin, which are 「这儿」 (here), 「那儿」 (there), 「玩儿」 (play) and 「旮旯儿」 (corner), and 3 of them are common Chinese erhua words: 「鸟儿」 (bird), 「花儿」 (flower) and 「心儿」 (heart).

In short, in Wang's translation, there are more occurrences of erhua words that reflect the characteristics of northern dialect of Mandarin, and fewer occurrences of common erhua words; while Tu's translation mainly uses common erhua words with more occurrences. The common erhua words are often used in poetry translation, which helps make the emotional mood of the poem more gentle, reflecting tenderness of poetic language, and generally does not affect the overall fidelity of the translation to the original; but the erhua pronunciation that highlights characteristics of northern dialect of Mandarin in translation may alter the style of the original language, causing the emotion or meaning of the target language to deviate from the original. Wang's translation uses more erhua words with characteristics of northern dialect of Mandarin, so the language style difference between Wang's translation and the original may be relatively larger. Although total occurrences of erhua words in Tu's translation is more than that in Wang's translation, most of them are common erhua words, and there are fewer occurrences of dialectal erhua words, therefore, as compared with Wang's translation from the perspective of use of erhua words, the language style of Tu's translation is closer to the original.

#### **2.2.5 Idioms**

The use of idioms can often make expression more refined and powerful, with far-reaching meanings and more beautiful language. According to statistics, the number of idioms used in the two translations is the same, both of which are 17. There are 5 identical idioms, all of which are translations of the same original words. Although Wang's translation does not use idioms in translating some of the poems for which Tu's translation uses idioms, his translation language is quaint or concise and also has a good expression effect; while in cases where Wang's translations use idioms but Tu's translations do not, the language of Tu's translations appears more colloquial.

The Chinese translator Yan Fu (1854–1921), in the preface to his translation of Thomas Huxley's (1825–1895) *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*, mentioned the well-known "three difficulties in translation: faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance" (Yan Fu, "Preface": 9). The difference in the use of idioms and quaint words between Wang's and Tu's translations may indicate that Mr. Wang Hongyin pursues "elegance" when translating Dickinson's poems, which makes Wang's language more beautiful and concise, but also with more Chinese characteristics, which weakens the unique style and taste of the original English text to a certain extent.

**2.2.6 Summary**

To sum up, in terms of vocabulary use, Wang's translation uses modal particles, onomatopoeias, and dialectal erhua words more than Tu's translation to highlight a certain emotional orientation, which shows that Mr. Wang Hongyin has added more of his subjective understanding of poetry into the translation. Mr. Tu An is more respectful of the original text and basically performs direct translation, and rarely shows his subjective feelings in the translation. Although the original word or line order is adjusted occasionally in his translation to make the translation smooth, it does not significantly change the meaning of the original text.

**2.3 Analysis of Punctuation and Word Count**

Comparing 78 translated poems in the two translations with the original text in terms of punctuation marks, statistical results show that the use of dashes, commas, periods and semicolons in the two translations is quite different from the original text, while the use of other punctuation marks has no big difference. The statistical results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Statistics of Punctuation Marks in Source Text and Translations**

Items	Dashes	Commas	Periods	Semicolons	Exclamation Marks	Question Marks	Total
Original	543	166	62	7	49	25	845
Wang's Translation	73	392	148	64	42	28	784
Tu's Translation	542	180	45	9	44	24	876

There are a small number of other punctuation marks such as quotation marks and parentheses in the original text and the two translations, which have little influence on the analysis results due to their small quantity, so they are not included in statistics.

**2.3.1 Punctuation**

A large number of line segments are used in manuscripts of Dickinson's poems, some of which are long and short, some horizontal and oblique, which are uniformly printed as short horizontal bars in printed version, and are called dashes. It can be seen that the original meaning of these short horizontal bars is not clear, and their functions are not single. They may indicate the prolongation or pause of tone, or may indicate transition, jumping, and omission of elements. They can play a role in creating an overall atmosphere, creating dramatic conflicts, highlighting key concepts, and triggering readers to think (Liu Xiaomin 91). Among the 78 original poems, only 7 do not use dashes, and the remaining 71 use dashes. In the translation of these 71 poems, Tu's translation only removed one original dash, which is the dash at the end of the line "Who till they died, did not alive become—" [poem 816, "A Death blow is a Life blow to Some"], while the rest of the original dashes are all retained.

It is obvious from the statistical table that the number of dashes in Wang's translation is far less than that in the original and Tu's translation. There are 543 in the original and only 73 in Wang's translation, a decrease of about 86.6% (470); while the frequency of comma, period and

semicolon is relatively high, reaching 2.36 times, 2.39 times and 9.14 times the corresponding punctuation in the original text respectively. Comparing the total number of the three punctuation marks of comma, period, and semicolon in the three versions, the number in Wang's translation is also significantly greater than that in the original and Tu's translation. The total number of these three punctuation marks in the original text is 235, Tu's translation is 234, and Wang's translation is 604. The number in Wang's translation is about 2.57 times that of the original and Tu's translation. But if dashes are added to the statistics, the gap between Wang's translation and the original and Tu's translation will not be so large. The total number of the four punctuation marks of dash, comma, period, and semicolon in the original text is 778, in Tu's translation is 776, in Wang's translation is 677, and the number in Wang's translation is about 87% of the original and Tu's translation. This is because a large number of dashes at the end and in the middle of the original verse lines are either omitted or translated into commas, periods, or semicolons in Wang's translation. As a result, the number of dashes in Wang's translation is much less than that in the original text and Tu's translation. At the same time, Wang's translation also adds commas, periods and semicolons at some places that are unpunctuated in the original text, which results in the number of these three punctuation marks in Wang's translation being much more than that in the original text and Tu's translation.

Looking at the total number of punctuation marks in the statistical table, there are 845 punctuation marks in the original text, 784 in Wang's translation, 61 (7.2%) less than the original, and 876 in Tu's translation, 31 (3.7%) more than the original. Referring to the aforementioned analysis of the four punctuation marks of dash, comma, period and semicolon, it can be seen that Wang's translation has made great changes to the original punctuation marks. In short, unlike Tu's translation, which is basically loyal to the punctuation of the original text, Wang's translation does not reserve most of the original dashes, directly removing or converting them into commas, periods, and semicolons. In addition, Wang's translation also adds many commas, periods and semicolons to places where there is no punctuation in the original text. The different translation styles of punctuation between the two translations may be related to the different views and preferences of the two translators on punctuation and pauses in poetry. Tu's translation preserves original punctuation as much as possible, with fewer changes, which shows that the translator respects the original text and the author, avoids misinterpreting or changing the meaning of a certain punctuation, and leaves more room for readers to experience and understand by themselves. Wang's translation has added more of the translator's feeling and understanding of the rhythm of the poems, and concretizes the connotation of original dashes, adjusting the tone pause of the poem by alteration of original punctuation marks. The purpose of Wang's translation is to make the translation more fluent and catchy, avoiding visual discomfort caused by frequent occurrences of dashes at the end or in the middle of verse lines (Wang Junling 11), but this also causes the translation to deviate obviously from the original text in the use of punctuation.

### **2.3.2 Word Count**

In terms of word count, the 78 original texts have a total of 4,225 words, Wang's translation has a total of 6,582 words, and Tu's translation has a total of 6,991 words. Tu's translation has 409 more words than Wang's translation, with each poem about 5 words more on average. According to statistics and verification, one of the reasons why Wang's translation has fewer words than Tu's is that it omits sentence elements, such as many subjects and quantifiers in the original text that have been deleted in translation. For example, for the first two lines of the first stanza of original poem 101, "Will there really be a 'Morning'? / Is there such a thing as 'Day'?", Tu An translates the original "a" into 「一个」 (one) and 「这么个」 (such a) respectively, but Wang Hongyin directly omits them without translating; while for the first two lines of the second stanza, "Has it feet like Water lilies? / Has it feathers like a Bird?", Tu An translates the

original subject "it" into 「它」, while Wang's translation omits it. Another example is about the subject "it" in the first line of the three stanzas of original poem 297, for which Mr. Wang Hongyin has omitted it in his translations, while Mr. Tu An retains them and translates them as 「它」.

In addition to omission of sentence elements, another reason for the fewer words in Wang's translation is the frequent use of classical Chinese, which is characterized by brevity. The most prominent examples are the translations of original poems 192, 1147, 1212 and 1276, in which Tu's translations are all in modern Chinese, while Wang's translations are much briefer and more concise by using classical Chinese words such as 「其」, 「之」, 「哉」 and 「方」 in some occasions. As for the other translations, which are translated in modern Chinese in both Wang's and Tu's versions, there is little difference in word count between them.

Wang's omission of sentence elements and the use of classical Chinese make some of his translations elegant and concise. This is obviously the result of translator's choice of a specific language style based on his own understanding of the original poem, which may deviate from the expression effect of the original poem. By contrast, Tu's translation respects the original text more, rarely omits elements of the original text, and does not deliberately change the language style of the original text.

#### 2.4 Comparison of Language Style of the Two Translations

As far as the overall style of target language is concerned, Tu's translation is generally relatively plain and rarely incorporates the translator's personal subjective emotions; while Wang's translation's language style is more diverse. Wang often chooses language style of the translation according to his personal understanding of different mood, connotation and emotional tone of each poem. In each of the following classifications, some examples of Wang's and Tu's translation of the same original text are compared in terms of language style.

##### 2.4.1 Philosophical Poems

The translations of poem 1212 show that Wang's translation is neat, brief and concise, similar to the wording of ancient Chinese poetry, while Tu's translation is in modern Chinese basically translated according to original English modern poetry expression. Both have achieved "faithfulness" and "expressiveness", but Wang's translation is more elegant:

J1212:

A word is dead  
When it is said,  
Some say.  
I say it just  
Begins to live  
That day.  
(Dickinson 534–535)

Wang's Translation:	Tu's Translation:
言既出	有人说
便死掉,	一个词一出口,
有人说。	它就死了。
我要说	而我说
言出时,	恰在这一日
方始活。	它开始存活。
(Wang Hongyin 130)	(Tu An 67)

A similar example can be seen in translations of original poem 192 ("Poor Little Heart!"). Wang's translation uses classical Chinese words such as 「其」, 「之」 and 「扎」, while Tu's translation is still in modern Chinese. Poem 1212 is a poem with strong philosophical nature, and poem 192 is a lyric poem with a certain philosophical nature. Wang's translation tends to use a language with ancient Chinese elegance, while Tu's translation reflects more of modern Chinese poetry style, which directly corresponds to the original English modern poetic form and language style, without too much condensation on poetry language. This is why the number of words in Tu's translation is much more than that of Wang's translation, as has been previously discussed.

#### 2.4.2 Descriptive Poems

The last stanza of original poem 328 and the translations are as follows:

J 328, Last Stanza:

Than Oars divide the Ocean,  
Too silver for a seam—  
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon  
Leap, plashless as they swim.  
(Dickinson 156)

Wang's Translation:	Tu's Translation:
轻似船桨划过海面 银白一片，水波不兴 如一只蝴蝶，飞离正午的芳堤 一闪而起，不惹起一丝涟漪 (Wang Hongyin 18)	比双桨划开海水更迅捷， 耀眼的银白见不到裂缝—— 比午时飞离河岸的蝴蝶更轻， 跳跃，游泳时没溅起水声。 (Tu An 115)

This is a lyrical and descriptive poem. By contrast, Wang's translation is more beautiful and agile. The words and sentences such as 「水波不兴」, 「芳堤」 and 「一闪而起，不惹起一丝涟漪」 highlight the clear and lively tone of the poem, while Tu's translation is a little rigid and dull and not delicate enough. Although it is translated word by word from the original text, it fails to transmit the lightness and agility of the bird in the original poem and the scene when the bird skims the water.

#### 2.4.3 Satirical Poems

For poems that are satirical in a witty tone, such as poem 288, Wang's and Tu's translations are also quite different in language style:

J288:

I'm nobody! Who are you?  
Are you—Nobody—Too?  
Then there's a pair of us?  
Don't tell! They'd advertise—you know!

How dreary—to be—Somebody!  
How public—like a Frog—  
To tell one's name—the livelong June—  
To an admiring Bog!

(Dickinson 133)

<p><b>Wang's Translation:</b>  我是小人物，你呢？  你也——是——小人物？  那我们可不就是一对儿？  别吵声！人家会宣扬——你晓得！</p> <p>真烦哪，做个——大人物！  真露脸，像只大青蛙。  六月一生，都把自己的大名聒噪  面对羡慕你的一团泥沼！  (Wang Hongyin 8)</p>	<p><b>Tu's Translation:</b>  我是无名之辈！你是谁？  你也是个——无名小卒？  那我们可是天生一对？  别声张！你知道——他们会大肆宣扬！</p> <p>做个大人物——多么无聊！  就像一只蛙——不停地鼓噪——  整个六月——到处扬名——  冲着羡慕它的泥淖！  (Tu An 24)</p>
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Obviously Wang's translation is more relaxed and humorous, by the use of colloquial words such as 「吱声」, 「晓得」 and 「露脸」 and the use of several modal particles, as well as sentences such as 「像只大青蛙」, all of which highlight the banter tone of the poem. Tu's translation uses slightly formal language that is conventional in poetry translation, translating "nobody" into 「无名之辈」 and 「无名小卒」, and "like a Frog" into 「就像一只蛙」, which is less interesting and witty than Wang's translation.

#### 2.4.4 Spiritual Poems

For poems centering on spiritual depiction or metaphysics, such as poem 303, Wang's and Tu's translations are also different in language style due to their differences in word choices.

J303:

The Soul selects her own Society—  
Then—shuts the Door—  
To her divine Majority—  
Present no more—

Unmoved—she notes the Chariots—pausing—  
At her low Gate—  
Unmoved—an Emperor be kneeling  
Upon her Mat—

I've known her—from an ample nation—  
Choose one—  
Then—close the Valves of her attention—  
Like Stone—  
(Dickinson 143)

<p><b>Wang's Translation:</b>  灵魂自成一体  然后将门关闭,  隔绝她神圣的优势</p>	<p><b>Tu's Translation:</b>  灵魂选择自己的伴侣——  然后——把大门紧闭——  对于她，神圣的多数——</p>
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不透一丝消息。	不用再考虑——
眼见车辇停于门前	无动于衷——她看见马车——停在——
无动于衷，	她低矮的门口——
任凭国君跪于面前	无动于衷——一位皇帝在她的
无动于衷。	席垫上跪求——
我了解她，	我了解她——从一个人口众多的国度——
一个丰饶的族群	选定了一位——
选定了信念，	从此——把她注意力的阀门关闭——
从此，关闭她感觉的闸门	像顽石一块——
心如磐石坚。	(Tu An 288)
(Wang Hongyin 10)	

Regarding the original line "The Soul selects her own Society", Tu's translation is 「灵魂选择自己的伴侣」 (the soul selects her own partner), and Wang's translation is 「灵魂自成一体」 (the soul is self-contained); the original word "Majority" is translated by Tu as 「多数」 (majority) and by Wang as 「优势」 (advantage); "Chariots" is translated by Tu as 「马车」 (horse cart) and by Wang as 「车辇」 (chariot); "an ample nation" is translated by Tu as 「一个人口众多的国度」 (a country with a large population) and by Wang as 「一个丰饶的族群」 (a rich ethnic group); "Choose one" is translated by Tu as 「选定了一位」 (selected one) and by Wang as 「选定了信念」 (selected a faith); and "Like Stone" is translated by Tu as 「像顽石一块」 (like a piece of stone) and by Wang as 「心如磐石坚」 (heart is like a solid rock). It can be seen that, compared with Tu's slightly straightforward translation, Wang's translation is more delicate and elegant. The use of four-character idioms such as 「无动于衷」 (indifferent) and 「心如磐石」 (heart like a rock) subtly conveys the poetic connotation of the original English poem. At the same time, it can also be seen that Wang's translation has incorporated more of the translator's own understanding. Different readers may have different interpretations of verses like "Choose one" that do not present the connotation explicitly, and Mr. Wang Hongyin directly brings his own understanding into the translation and extends the original "one" to the meaning of 「信念」 (faith), which is not a simple literal translation. This may provide readers with some references for interpretation of the original, but there is also the possibility of misinterpreting the author's original intention.

The above examples show that language of Wang's translation is more individualized, and different treatments are made according to the translator's different feelings and understandings of each poem during translating, resulting in a variety of translation styles; Tu's translation is more in line with the original text, striving to present the most original appearance of the poem, and letting the translator's subjective feelings affect the translation as little as possible.

## 2. 3. Conclusion

Based on previous statistical analysis of stanzas and verse lines, word types, punctuation, word count, and language style of the two translations, the following conclusions can be drawn:

In terms of stanzas and lines, deviation between the two translations and the original are relatively small, but comparatively, Wang's translation is closer to the original. The number of stanzas in Wang's translation is the same as that of the original. The number of stanzas in Tu's translation is 1.1% more than that of the original. There is little difference in the number of lines between the two translations and the original text, and the number of lines between the two translations is almost the same. But Wang's translation's adjustment of original word and line order is 70.5% less than Tu's translation. Tu's translation makes relatively more adjustments to the order of original words and lines, which makes the translation more in line with Chinese reading habits and more accessible, avoiding difficulties in reading and understanding that may be caused by copying the original word and line order. However, these slight changes to the sequence of poetic lines and words within the overall framework of the poem do not alter the meaning and presentation of original poems, and basically do not affect faithfulness of Tu's translation to the original text.

In terms of punctuation, Wang's translation has made great changes to original punctuation, removing about 86.6% of original dashes and adding many commas, periods and semicolons to adjust the rhythm of the translation, reflecting the translator's personal understanding of original poem. Tu's translation is more loyal to original punctuation, with few changes. Tu's translation is more inclined to literally translate original punctuation, trying to avoid influence of translator's subjectivity on original expression in translation.

In terms of vocabulary use, Wang's translation is more flexible and changeable. For original poems with different themes and tones, Mr. Wang often chooses words of the translation based on his personal understanding, and strives to reflect different emotions and connotations of each original poem through changes in language style of the translation. This kind of personalized and individualized translation method makes translation more vivid and more diverse in style, which may facilitate conveyance of meaning of the poem, but it is also prone to over-interpretation or misreading of the author's original intention. Words used in Tu's translation are generally relatively plain, sometimes straightforward, and the expression is plain and smooth with modern Chinese characteristics, which are more in line with the wording and formal characteristics of original poems as modern poetry. It can be seen that Tu's translation respects the original text in terms of words and expressions, and tries to avoid misinterpreting the original work, especially avoiding influence of translator's personal understanding on transmission of original poetic connotations. This also reflects Mr. Tu An's translation views and translation principles, that is, abandoning translator's own inherent mindset and relying on "object sensibility" for translation.

In short, Tu's translation deviates less from the original. In addition to occasional adjustments of original in-line and inter-line expression sequence, the translation language and punctuation are very close to the original, and the overall style is plain and smooth. Wang's translation deviates from the original text more obviously. The translation not only changes drastically the original punctuation marks, but also reflects translator's personalized understanding of original poem by adding more modal particles, onomatopoeic words and erhua words with characteristics of northern dialect of Mandarin, and frequent omission of original sentence elements in translation. Therefore, Wang's translation is a translation with distinctive translator's personality, and various language styles, sometimes concise and elegant, sometimes playful and witty, sometimes graceful and lively, and sometimes bright and clear.

How to accurately reproduce original text without misinterpreting authorial original intention through language conversion has always been a big problem in translation of literary works. Dickinson's poetry has a peculiar style and is not bound by conventional grammar and rhythm rules. It is even more challenging to fully translate the ideological connotation expressed in

Dickinson's poetry. Interpreting and appreciating Dickinson's works and presenting their translations to the public still need to rely on the continuous efforts of translators and Dickinson researchers.

The two translations selected for this study exemplify distinct approaches: one prioritizes fidelity to the original text, while the other favors the expression of the translator's personal interpretation. This dichotomy reflects not only a common phenomenon in translation but also the current reality of Dickinson's poetry translation in China. It is hoped that the findings of this study will enlighten future translators: while poetry translation inevitably incorporates the translator's subjective understanding, translation is ultimately not a vehicle for the translator's self-expression. Striving for fidelity to the original text (including both content and form) remains the objective that translators should consistently pursue. Currently, more than 20 Chinese translations of Dickinson's poetry are available on the market in China, varying significantly in quality. The findings of this study serve not only as a potent admonition to future translators of Dickinson's poetry but also offer valuable guidance for Chinese readers selecting translations of Dickinson's poetry.

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