

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU’S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

Lenny Solo

STKIP PANCA SAKTI BEKASI

lennysolo@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The research aimed (1) to what extent are Xu’s three principles of beauty compatible to the Malay poems and their translations in this present study, (2) What other significant factors apart from the Xu’s three principles of beauty that is likely to play important role as well as in creating the beauty of a poem. The samples were 3 Malay poems and their translations. The study used descriptive qualitative method which covers the data collection, classification, analysis and conclusion. The results of the research show that the theory “Three Principles of Beauty” which is proposed by Xu is not universal. It is because all the criteria in the three principles of beauty are not fulfilled by the translation versions. The other significant factors apart from the Xu’s three principles of beauty that are likely to play important role as well in creating the beauty of a poem are: making the poem meaningful is by changing the position of lines in the original poem to the translation version, changing the class of word from the original poem to the translation version as long as the meaning is not lost when it is transferred to the translation version and make the form of the poem better, the translator focuses on the meaning to be transferred in the translation version, the translator has the poetic license to disobey the rules of the language syntactically and Adding and deleting the words if needed.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui seberapa besar teori Xu tentang tiga prinsip keindahan yang cocok pada puisi Malaysia dan terjemahan Inggrisnya pada penelitian ini dan untuk menjelaskan faktor – faktor signifikan yang juga memegang peranan penting dalam membuat keindahan dalam puisi. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah 3 puisi Malaysia dan terjemahan Inggrisnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskripsi kualitatif yang mencakup koleksi data, klasifikasi, analisis dan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teori tentang “Tiga Prinsip Keindahan” yang di kemukakan oleh Xu tidak cocok atau tidak universal. Hal ini disebabkan ketiga prinsip keindahan tersebut tidak dipenuhi oleh versi terjemahan. Faktor – faktor signifikansi yang juga memegang peranan penting dalam membuat keindahan dalam puisi adalah: menjadikan puisi itu bermakna dengan mengganti posisi larik – larik dari puisi asli kedalam versi terjemahan, penggantian kelas kata dari puisi asli ke versi terjemahan selama makna tersebut tidak hilang bilamana ditransfer kedalam versi terjemahan dan membuat bentuk puisi menjadi lebih baik, penerjemah fokus pada makna yang

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

ditrasfer kedalam versi terjemahan, penerjemah mempunyai isin berpuisi untuk melanggar aturan – aturan bahasa secara sintaksis dan menambah dan menghapus kata – kata jika diperlukan.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of literary translation, it is well known fact that poem translation is the most challenging and laborious work, and thus principles and methods of poem translation have always been the most controversial in the theoretical study of literary translation. (Bujing: 2007). It is proved by the existence of the theory from professor Xu (1984) who proposed the famous three beauty principles in the poem translation, that is, the “beauty in form”, the “beauty in sound” and the “beauty in sense”.

A poetic language is a language framed in an extraordinary pattern; it is valued by its culture wherever it is. A literary text also occupies a certain position in literary history. It is part of a tradition and has historical relationship with other text that came before and after it. Such a text is also a piece of language and all languages have a design. Literary language makes an extraordinary use of the possibilities of language design; by all means affect its readers to

perceive it. (Cumming & Simon: 1983).

In the translation, one language cannot express the meanings of another; instead, there is a distinction between the meanings built in and the meanings that must be captured and expressed. Translation is not only just to replace the source language into a new target language, but also involves a number of aspects to be seriously considered, such as; knowing the lexicon, grammatical structure, situation of communication and the culture of the source language text, analyzing the source language text to find out the meaning and also revealing again the same meaning by using the lexicon and grammatical structure that are suitable to the target language. (Larson: 1988).

Based on the statement above, the writer as an intention to go more deeply into the whole process in translating a poem because poetry as one of the most ancient literary forms in both languages is the perfect unity of sound, form and sense in both languages. The unity of the sound, form and sense has been regarded as the highest standard in poem translation.

The writer takes the theory from Xu Yuanchong who is a veteran translator of classical Chinese poetry; he has suggested the so-called “three

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

beauty principles” in evaluating the poetry translation. Specifically, the three-beauty principles evaluate the translation by its beauty in sense, beauty in sound and beauty in form (Xu, 1984). A translator needs to fulfill the three beauties to leave the target readers impressed, touched and pleased (Xu, 2005:44).

According to Xu, poem translation should be as beautiful as the original poem in sense, sound and form. In that sense, a good poem translation should be a perfect combination of good pattern of rhyme and rhythm as well as the profound meaning implied in the original poem.

From these examining factors, the writer will find out the strength and the weakness of the Xu's theory in translating the poems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Poetry

Perrine defines poetry as “that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language (1974:553)” This definition claims that poetry is a kind of language which is different from daily language or daily conversation because in poetry, it says more express intensively to it.

Types of Poem Translation

Andre Lefevere (1975) noted seven types of poem translation which is used by English translator in translating poetry, as follows:

1. Phonemic Translation / Phonological translation
2. Literal Translation
3. Metrical Translation
4. Poetry into prose
5. Rhymed Translation
6. Free Translation
7. Interpretation

Definition of Three Beauty Principles

a. The Criteria in Beauty in Form:

1. Line Length, it is considered as beauty if the stanza consists of a group lines whose metrical pattern is repeated throughout the poem. It means that not lengthen the poem. If the original line is short, the translator does not shorten the poem into his version. Not shorten the poem, it means that if the original line is long, the translator should not shorten in his version.
2. Repetition of Word, phrase, line, stanza or metrical pattern. It may reinforce and as a chief controlling factor in the arrangement of words into poetry.
3. Parallelism in Structure, it is said as beauty if the line using the same pattern of words

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

4. The number of words in each line, it means that one stanza which has four lines and the number of words in each line are the same. This is to make a good cadence

- 6) Paradox
- 7) Overstatement or Hyperbole
- 8) Understatement or saying less than one means
- 9) Verbal Irony

b. The Criteria in Beauty in Sound:

1. Rhyme Scheme. One of the most characteristic in formal verse is rhyme. It is considered as beauty if the poem has regular pattern in rhyme scheme.
2. Sound Patterns, such as:
 - 1) Repetition
 - 2) Rhyme
 - 3) Alliteration
 - 4) Assonance
 - 5) Consonance
 - 6) onomatopoeia

The translator must be use the sound pattern in his translation to produce a good sound.

c. The Criteria in Beauty in Sense

1. Figurative Languages, such as:
 - 1) Metaphor and Simile
 - 2) Personification
 - 3) Synecdoche
 - 4) Symbol
 - 5) Allegory

It means that a figure of speech is more narrowly definable as a way of saying one thing and meaning another, and we need be concerned with no more than a dozen.

2. Denotation, this is the dictionary meaning or meaning of the word.
3. Connotation, it is one of the criteria of beauty in sound because the translator expresses his feeling like what he suggests beyond what he expresses.
4. Perception of Experience, it is the criterion of beauty in sound because the translator attempts to capture the social background of the poet. (the translator knows the socio-cultural background of the poet)
5. Accepted and understood by the readers. If it can accepted and understood by the readers so it fulfill the criteria of beauty.

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

6. The diction is clear and idiomatic. It means that no ambiguous words.
7. The original meaning is conveyed clearly in its translation version. It means that the meaning is not lost in the translation version.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a descriptive qualitative analysis. In doing the research, the researcher presented The Malay Poetry and their translations which are taken from The Poetry of Singapore (Anthology of ASEAN Literatures). The poetry was analyzed by using the three beauty principles namely; beauty in form, beauty in sound and beauty in sense.

In analyzing the collected data, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative method was used to analyze the data by describing the Malay poem's verse translations. It was carried out by using narration in presenting and analyzing the data that have been collected. The descriptive qualitative method was used in this research with the following work procedures.

FINDING AND DISCUSION

There were 3 selected poems and their translation versions which are taken from the book of The Poetry of Singapore (Anthology of ASEAN Literatures). One poem is

written in a free verse or blank verse and two of them are written in formal verses. The selected poems are dealing with different subject matters that are much related to contemporary situations and phenomena, in terms of their exiting and emotional mood that captures the present circumstances. One of these selected poems "Dunia Puisi Bisikan Hati Penyair" or "The World of Poetry a Whisper from the Heart of a Poet" shows how the world of a poet never ceases speaking on humanity in a way that is typical of human behavior, thoughts and feelings. This chapter presents the analysis of the three beauty principles in each poetry translation namely beauty in form, beauty in sound and beauty in sense.

HIDUP BAGAI BUNGA

By: A Salam

LIFE LIKE A FLOWER

Translated by: Hamed Ismail

Stan za	Origi nal Poem	Rhy me	Translat ion	Rhym e
1	Hidup ini bagai bunga pagi	a	This life, like a flower in the morning	A
	Terbu ka diri meng ejar waktu	b	Open to the heat of the sun	B
	Yang	a	Races	C

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

terdedah disinar mentari		against time		i			
				Demi kian hidup ini	a	So life,	c
Kisah berbicara dari kuntum	c	Life is a story of the bud	D	Yang elok dalam bicara	e	Though perfect in unfolding	a
Hingga kembang mekar	d	Becoming flower	e	Cuma seketika saja	e	Is a moment only	g
Dan bila senja mengusik diri	a	When twilight comes slowly on	b	Tiada yang kekal dan abadi	a	Nothing lasts, or is eternal	h
Kelopak pun terkulai layu	b	Petals droop and	d				
Lalu gugur satu demi satu	b	One by one they wither	e				
Berserakan dibumih	a	Scattering on the earth	f				

The analysis of beauty in form; the first criterion is line length. The line length between the original meaning and the translation version is different.

It can be seen from line one until line four in the original poem, all lines are pentameter because it has five feet, while in the line one until line four in the translation version, they are different to each other, such as line one is pentameter because it has five feet, line two is tetrameter because it has four feet, line three is trimeter because it has three feet and line four is tetrameter because it has four feet.

Line one in the original poem and in the translation version are the same

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

where the translator does not shorten and lengthen the line, but in line two, the translator shorten the line from pentameter (five feet) becomes tetrameter (four feet). It also happens in line three, the translator shorten the line from pentameter (five feet) in the original poem becomes trimeter (three feet) in the original poem.

The line length of this poem does not meet the criteria of beauty in form because this poem is written in the blank verse where the length of the line is not determined by the form but by other consideration, which may be complex. In some free verse, the length of the lines seems arbitrary. The structure of blank verse differs from that of rhymed verse, which tends to break into stanzas. Poems written in blank verse are often divided into "verse paragraphs" of varying lengths, as distinct from stanzas, which usually have regular lengths and are defined by their rhyme scheme and metrical pattern. (taken from www.essortment.com).

The number of words is different between original poem and translation version. Such as in line one of original poem consists of five words and line one in translation version consist of eight words. This shows us that they are different. A good translator must produce a good translation by noticing the number of words in the original poem. They should be the same between the original and its translation.

This happen because the original poem consists of a group of lines which the number of each lines is different because some lines are written in long sentences such as "dan bila senja mengusik diri" and its translation is "when twilight comes slowly on" and others using in short sentences such as "demikian hidup ini" and its translation is "so life". It is a heavy work for the translator to make it the same.

Talking about repetition of word, phrase, line, stanza or metrical pattern, the translator only uses the repetition of the word; they are "life" and "flower". The poet emphasizes those words because the main idea in this poem is about life of a human being which is drawn as a flower, starting from the bud, becoming flower and drooping, like our life, nothing lasts or is eternal. So, that is why the poet stresses and repeats the words life and flower.

Why does the poet does not use the repetition of phrase, line and stanza because the poem is written in blank verse where in the blank verse, the poem is written in verse paragraph, that is a group of lines of verse which form a unit within a poem especially common in long narrative poems. (taken from www.essortment.com). In the narrative poem, it is usually tells a story using a poetic theme and it was created to explain oral traditions. (Wikipedia Foundation, Inc). it means that it is not necessary to

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

repeat the phrase, the line and the stanza.

The last criterion in beauty in form is parallelism in structure. In the translation version, the parallelism in structure is not beauty; it can be seen in line three, four, five and six:

- L3: Races against time
- L4: Life is a story of the bud
- L5: Becoming flower.
- L6: When twilight comes slowly on

It is parallel in structure if the word “becoming” in line five is “becomes”. Line five should be a clause because it does not belong to the line four and from line three until six, they are written in a clause.

Beauty in sound analysis; the first criterion is rhyme schemed. The rhyme scheme in the original poem is “abacdabbaeaa” and it is different than in the translation version, that is “abcdebdefcagh”.

In the original poem, the poet does not make the rhyme scheme because he writes his poem in a blank verse or free verse where the poem which is written in blank verse are often divided into “verse paragraphs” of varying lengths, as distinct from stanzas, which usually have regular lengths and are defined by their rhyme scheme and metrical pattern. (taken from www.essortment.com).

In this case, the translator also translates the original poem into

blank verse where there is no rhymed schemed in his translation version.

The next criterion is sound patterns. In the translation version, the translator only uses the alliteration and consonance for the sound pattern, such as life/like for the alliteration and open/sun/one, morning/becoming/scattering/unfolding/nothing for the consonance.

The researcher only found two sound patterns here because the translator is not a native speaker, if such other sound patterns are included, the translator should also come across different sound patterns such as reverse rhyme, pararhyme, rhyme. (Leech: 89). This needs more information related to the sound and meaning in which they have to know, for example, differentiate between onomatopoeic and phonetic intensives. Onomatopoeic relates to the use of words which at least supposedly sound like what they mean snap and bang, phonetic intensives relates to the sounds, by a process, to some degree suggests their meaning. For examples, initial *gl-* frequently accompanies the idea of light, usually unmoving, as in *glare, gleam, glow*. Medial suggests some kind of particular movement as in *scatter, shatter, rattle* and final indicates the repetition as in *glitter, twitter, bubble*. These all will be of some trouble one for non – native English speakers (Perrine, 1974: 753-755).

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

In the sense of beauty; the first criterion is the using of figurative languages. The use of figurative language occurs in both of the original poem and in the translation version that is simile. That is using the word “seperti” or “like” in comparing things that are essentially unlike, such as life and flower.

The translator work uses the connotation in his literary work, because each line has the meaning behind the line. For example, the word *flower* means the phase of human life from young and then old and then death, and during we alive in this world, the poet suggest to the people to be like a flower where the flower always give a beautiful panorama to the people and it is fragrant before it drooping. It means that the people always do the best put their self in the right place before they die.

The translation version is accepted and understood easily by the readers because the diction is clear and idiomatic, no ambiguous meaning is found in the poem translation version. The original meaning is conveyed clearly in its translation. because both of them tell us about the life which is start from the emptiness up to the existence and back to the emptiness like the life of a human being which starts from the baby and then becomes teenager and then becomes adult and old and then dead.

From the explanation above, the researcher can conclude that beauty in form and beauty in sound does not fulfill all the criteria in the translation version, only beauty in sense is fulfill in the translation version.

Besides that, after analyzing the poem by using the three principles of beauty, the researcher found in the line two of the original poem “*terbuka diri mengejar waktu*”, the translator puts it in the line three of the translation version, that is “*paces against time*”. And in the line three of the original poem “*yang terdedah disinar mentari*” becomes line two in the translation version that is *open to the heat of the sun*.

L1: This life, like a flower in the morning

L2: Open to the heat of the sun

L3: Races against time

It should be written:

L1: This life, like a flower in the morning

L2: Races against time

L3: Open to the heat of the sun

The translator changes the position because the translator wants to explain that flower in line one will open to the heat of the sun. After that races against time. It is more meaningful in the translation version if the translator changes the position.

Besides that, in line eight of original poem “*lalu gugur satu demi satu*”, it is translated as “one by one they wither”.

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

OP: Lalu gugur satu demi satu
TV: One by one **they** wither

If the original poem (OP) translated literally, it should be “then wither one by one” not “one by one they wither”. The translator here uses the free translation, where in the free translation, the translator produce different versions of the original based on their different interpretations of the poem. (Levefere: 1975).

The translator adds the word “they” because “they” refers to the petals in the line seven. Syntactically, if the word “they” deletes such as “one by one wither”, it makes the clause incomplete because minus subject.

One more problem that the researcher finds in the translation version, that is in the line eleven. Between original poem and the translation version is totally different in words.

OP: Yang elok dalam bicara
TV: Though perfect in unfolding

The original poem and the translation version has no word equivalency because the translator does not literally translation which is translated word by word (Levefere: 1975), but the translator uses free translation, where in the free

translation, the translator produce different versions of the original based on their different interpretations of the poem. (Levefere: 1975).

Unfolding here refers to the perfection of the petals or buds of a flower which is successfully grow up before they wither.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

After having analyzed the translation versions of ten selected poems of Malay Poetry, the conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. The theory “Three Principles of Beauty” which is proposed by Xu is not universal. Because all the criteria in the three principles of beauty are not fulfilled by the translation versions
2. The other significant factors apart from the Xu’s three principles of beauty that are likely to play important role as well in creating the beauty of a poem are:
 - a. Making the poem meaningful is by changing the position of lines in the original poem to the translation version.
 - b. Changing the class of word from the original poem to the translation

REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS

version as long as the meaning is not lost when it is transferred to the translation version and make the form of the poem better.

- c. The translator focuses on the meaning to be transferred in the translation version.
- d. The translator has the poetic license to disobey the rules of the language syntactically.
- e. Adding and deleting the words if needed.

Suggestions

The suggestions that can be put forward in this research are as follows:

1. In translating a poem, the translator should notice the three principles of beauty, namely beauty in form, beauty in sound and beauty in sense. These three principles cannot be separated one another in order to produce a good translation.
2. In fulfill all the criteria in the three principles of beauty is not an easy one, but this is a big challenge for all translators to produce a standardized poem translation.
3. We as translators should be aware of what Nida quoted:

“Translation are like women – homely when they are faithful and unfaithful when they are lovely”.

References

- Bujing. 2007. *A Comparative Analysis of The Three Vrsions of A Psalm Of Life*. Canadian Social Science Article Vol 3 No. 4. China.
- <http://www.geocities.com/paris/bistro/2207/apoetrytr.htm>.
- <http://www.translationdirectory.com/article640.htm>
- Larson, Mildred. 1988. *Meaning Base Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence*. USA: SIL.
- Lefevere, Andre. 1975. *Translating Poetry, Seven Strategies and a Blueprint*. Amsterdam : Van Gorcum,
- Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (10th ed.). 1993. Markham, Ontario: Thomas Allen & Sons.
- Perrine, Laurence. 1974. *Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense*. Harcourt Brace: Joovanovich Inc.
- Xu, Y. 1984. *The Arts of Translation*. Beijing: China Translation and Publishing Corporation.

**REVISITING THE UNIVERSALITY OF XU'S
THREE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN TRANSLATING THE POEMS**

Xu, Y. 2005. *On Translation Theory of the Classical Chinese Poetry. Foreign Languages and Their Teaching, 11*, 41-44.

Xu Ghuangqian. 1987. (written in Chinese Language)