

# 系统功能语言学视角下李白《长干行》两译本评价

夏缓缓

(湖南大学, 湖南省长沙市, 410082)

**摘要:** 李白的《长干行》是一首非常有名的中国诗歌, 讲述了一个妻子和他的河商丈夫之间的故事。它被许多著名的翻译家翻译成英文。本文将从韩礼德系统功能语言学中的三大元功能分析庞德和小畑薰良的英文版本, 以找出它们之间的差异以及它们与原始版本偏差。通过详细分析, 本文发现这种偏差和差异是由不同的语言结构、不同的说话方式、译者独特的翻译风格以及对文化和诗歌本身的理解造成的。

**关键词:** 系统功能语言学; 《长干行》; 翻译; 三大元功能

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## 1. Introduction

Li Bai (701-762) is a great romantic poet of the Tang Dynasty (618 AD -907 AD). He is hearty and frank, liking drinking, writing poems and making friends. During his life, he created numerous poems which receive great reputations and enjoy an important position in Chinese ancient poems. Li Bai's poems are recognized to be of great cultural value and are still studied by researchers in China and abroad today. *Changgan Xing* is one of Li Bai's famous poems which described the love and miss between a wife and her husband who had to go far to do business in order to make living. Changgan was a place name which located near Yangtze River, whose residents took profit from the water and formed a strong business style. Businessmen often suffer from long journeys in the water so that love life among couples is disturbed. Businessmen can seek lucrative profits and enrich their material life through goods, but they cannot use money to subsidize the deficit of love. In the tide of business, people who lived in Changgan often bear the pain of losing love. Because of his family background and business background, Li Bai showed a rare sympathy for businessmen who were busy living for their livelihood and could not enjoy a happy love life. Because he also had business family background, Li Bai showed sympathy in his *Changgan Xing* for businessmen who were busy living for their livelihood and could not enjoy a happy love life (Li, 2018:20-21). *Changgan Xing* mainly described the different life stages of the business woman and her love and misses for his husband from the perspective of the woman's inner monologue and created an artistic image of a business woman who persists in ideal love life.

Translation, as complex it does, is the process of the special usage of language in which the meaning carried by one language is reproduced in another language.

Therefore, it is possible to describe and explain some translation phenomena from linguistic perspective and it is proved that some linguistic theories can indeed bring guidance and insights to translation (Si & Tao, 2014:99). SFL was first established by English linguist M.A.K. Halliday and it tries to study languages in actual use. After its proposal, many studies of its application in translation have been done. Huang Guowen (2004), Zhang Meifang (2002) and Si Xianzhu (2004), etc. are first persons who try to study translation in SFL perspective in China. Huang Guowen (2004) put forward six steps of analyzing English translation versions of two poems using knowledge in SFL and proved the feasibility of this new attempt in his article: "A functional linguistics approach to translation studies". Zhang Meifang (2002) investigated causes to the translator's "unfaithfulness" within the SFL framework. Si Xianzhu (2004) analyzed how to develop a translation study based on SFL. Through more than ten years of research, the study of translation from perspective of SFL has made much progress. Generally speaking, researchers study translation using SFL from five aspects: SFL and construction of translation quality evaluation model, metafunction and translation studies, context theory and translation studies, evaluation analysis and translation studies and grammatical metaphor and translation studies (Si & Tao, 2014:99) (Peng, 2014:139-141). Among the five perspectives, the study of translation from metafunction often analyzes translation from the metafunctions used in source text and target text and finds and explains the difference and deviation between them, which is the method used in this paper.

As mentioned above, the paper will try to evaluate Pound and Arthur Waley's English translations of Li Bai's *Chnaggan Xing* by interpreting the three metafunctions used in the source text, describing the respective metafunctions in the target texts, finding out the difference between them and explaining the deviations based on language system and cultural background the texts are in.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

SFL was founded by M. A. K. Halliday in the 1960s and it also inherited from previous ideas of some influential linguists such as Bronislaw Malinowski's centrality of the context of situation and J.R. Firth's notion of system (Almurashi, 2016:71). Contrary to Chomsky's transformational generative grammar, SFL studies the functions of language in use and context is therefore an important notion in Halliday's SFL. According to Halliday (2014:33), there are three categories of context in which any situation type can be characterized. Field refers to "what's going on in the situation". Tenor refers to "who is taking part in the situation" and mode refers to "what role is being played by

language and other semiotic systems in the situation". The three parameters of context of situation affect our language choice precisely because they reflect three main functions of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions.

## 2.1 Ideational Metafunction

There are two metafunctions in the ideational metafunction: experiential and logic metafunctions.

When interpreting a clause experientially, the clause construes a quantum of change in the flow of events as a figure – the figure of happening, doing, sensing, saying being or having (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999:), or configuration of process, participants involved in it and any attendant circumstances (Halliday, 2014:212-213). The figure includes three elements: process (nominal groups), participants (verbal groups) and circumstances (adverbial groups or prepositional phrases) among which process is centered. There are six process types describing the different degree of dynamic of the flow of events and different names of participants are given in different clause types as can be seen in Table 5-27 on page 311 in the book: *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (Halliday, 2014). Generally speaking, there is one or more participant in each clause type and circumstances are optional. Sometimes there can be a process in a clause only, as can be seen in imperative clause: "Stop!"

## 2.2 Interpersonal Metafunction

Grammar is also a resource for communicating our attitude toward and expectations of those with whom we are interacting. The principal grammatical system is that of Mood. The Mood element carries the burden of the clause as an interactive event and includes: the Subject (a nominal group by reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied) and the Finite (a verbal group expressing tense or modality). The other parts are Residue element. There are two main mood types: indicative (including declarative and interrogative type) and imperative which have different speech functions. Polarity (as the opposition between positive and negative, "yes" or "no") and modality (the speaker's judgement, or request of the judgement of the listener, not "yes" and not "no"). Modalization and modulation are two types of modality. Modalization involves probability and usuality in a proposition and modulation involves obligation and inclination in a proposal (Halliday, 2014:135-184). Modality has three functions: 1) hedging, avoiding take responsibilities for the statements; 2) dialogic, polite, respecting the hearer and giving him/her the freedom to make judgement; 3) in combination with Mood types,

realizing speech functions in a metaphorical way. The author or writer or translator may utilize certain mood types and modality to achieve his goal of expressing idea.

### 2.3 Textual Metafunction

Textual metafunction of language is to organize our experiential and interpersonal meanings into a linear and coherent whole to ensure their readers and listeners well informed about where they are and where they are going. There are two central terms: Theme (the element that serves as the point of departure of the message) and Rheme (the remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed). There are three types of Theme: Topical Theme (the first item in the experiential meaning), Textual Theme (Conjunctions, conjunctive Adjuncts) and Interpersonal Theme (Finite, Vocatives, Mood and Comment Adjuncts) (Halliday, 2014:105-114). Themes often include unmarked Themes which are most expected and common and marked Themes which are unusual and should be noticed as can be seen in Figure 3-12 on page 106 in the book: *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (Halliday, 2014). Another two terms: Given Information (information that is already known to speakers and listeners) and New Information (information that is unknown to listeners) are often included in Theme and Rheme correspondently in unmarked pattern (Halliday, 2014:114-121). The choice of marked and unmarked Themes is related to the text types and the writer's or the author's particular inclination of expressing idea.

## 3. Analysis of Li Bai's *Changgan Xing*

This part will give the detailed analysis of *Changgan Xing*.

### 3.1 The Experiential Metafunction in *Changgan Xing*

The experiential line of meaning is to portray some process in ongoing human experience and it is achieved by transitivity which is concerned with who does what to whom/what, where, when, how and why (Hasan, 1989, 36). As has been discussed in part two, there are three parts (participant, process and circumstance) in a transitivity structure and there are six process types. The analysis of transitivity structure is to analyze the three elements in a clause, so we need to identify how many clauses are there in *Changgan Xing*. Table 1 below is about the clause types involving participants, processes, and circumstances in *Changgan Xing*.

Table 1: PROCESS TYPES IN *CHANGGAN XING*

	Material	Behavioral	Relational	Mental	Verbal	Existential	Total
22	4	4	4	2	0	36	

As can be seen in table 1, the poem can be divided into 37 clauses among which there are 22 material processes, 4 behavioral processes, 4 relational processes, 4 mental processes, 2 verbal processes and there is no existential process.

The material process, the major process in the poem, is said to be the most dynamic and unmarked process. Among the 22 material processes, the wife or her bodily parts appears as actor for 8 times, the husband appears as the actor for 9 times and 1 is the two as the actor. It corresponds with the narrating of the story between a river-merchant and his wife at different stages of their lives since the poem about a story certainly has many actions and moves elicited by the couple. The other process types are relatively marked than material process and they draw our attention when they appear because the author often uses them for certain specific purpose. For example, among the 4 behavioral processes, 3 of them take the wife as the behaviorer and 1 is “猿声” and the mental processes are all about the wife’s mental feeling, which is related to the theme of the poem, that is, the wife is in a deep painful state of longing for her husband.

### 3.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction in *Changgan Xing*

The interpersonal line of meaning views clause as exchanging information. As mentioned above, it is achieved by the Mood element which consists of Subject and Finite. The Subject is often the nominal group which is responsible for the functioning of the clause as an interactive event (Halliday, 2014:146). Finite serves to specify the proposition or the proposal, indicating the tense, polarity and modality of the clause. Generally, in the interpersonal sense, different meanings can be achieved with the change of subject and the switch of the positions of subject and finite, the former highlighting the focus of the clause and the latter leading to four types of mood (Jiang, 2019:46). The analysis of the subject, mood types, tense, polarity and modality in *Changgan Xing* is in the Table 2.

Table 2: SUBJECT, MOOD TYPES, TENSES AND MODALITY IN *CHANGGAN XING*

Subject	Mood Types	Tense		Non-finite
Modality				
Husband: 11	Declarative: 34	past: 22		
Wife: 16	Interrogative: 1 (clause 18)	present: 10	0	0
We: 2	Imperative: 1 (clause 34)	future: 4		
Others: 6				

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Total: 36                      36                      36

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The table shows that there are 34 declarative clauses, 1 yes/no interrogative clause and 1 imperative clause. With regard to the position of the subject, there are 16 clauses in which it is the wife or her bodily part that serves as subject, 11 in which the husband is the subject, 2 in which the husband and the wife are the subject, 6 in which the objects in the environment are the subject and 1 in which a present participle is the subject. In terms of tenses, there are 22 finites indicating past tense, 10 indicating present tense and 4 finites indicating future tense.

As the poem is telling a story between a wife and his husband at their different life stages, the clauses that are not declarative, the clauses in which it is not the husband and the wife serve as the subject and the finites that do not indicate past and present tense are taken to be marked. Again, the marked clauses have something to do with the idea the poet wants to express. For example, the change of the position of the subject, that is, from the husband (clause 22) to “绿苔” (clause 23,24 and 25) is to make a forlorn atmosphere to reflect the low mood of the wife through describing the object in the environment.

### 3.3 The Textual Metafunction in *Changgan Xing*

According to the statement by Halliday (1973: 66), textual function “has an enabling function, that of creation text, which is language in operation as distinct from strings of words or isolated sentences and clauses”. That is, textual metafunction is to combine words into phrases, phrases into clauses, clauses into sentences and sentences into coherent texts. The thematic structure, concerning with what the clause is about and how it delivers information, is a main representation of textual metafunction. As said above, Theme and Rheme are two important elements in a clause and they often interweave with New and Given information. The choice of marked or unmarked Theme and putting New information in Theme or Rheme will cause different effect of delivering information. Because the poem is narrating a story and is very limited in its length, the poem does not have much given information and almost every line is delivering new information. Thus, the analysis is only based on its thematic structure (see Table 3).

Table 3: THE MARKED THEMES IN *CHANGGAN XING*

Clause	Marked Themes
10	十四
15	十五
19	十六

20	五月
22	门前
23	生
25	(苔)
26	落
27	八月
29	感此
33	早晚
Total	11

As is shown in Table 3, there are 11 marked Themes among which some are used for emphasizing information (clause 10, 15, 19, 20, 22, 27, 29 and 33), some are out of Chinese particular way of speaking (clause 23 and 26) and one is passive voice (clause 25). It is worth mentioning that the marked Themes that are used for emphasizing information are almost the Themes representing time (clause 10, 15, 19, 20, 27 and 33). The author put these Themes into the beginning is to tell readers that the couple has had a deep relationship since they were young (clause 10, 15 and 19) and that the wife really waited for her husband for a very long time (clause 20, 27 and 33).

#### 4. The Deviations of Ezra Pound's and Shigeyoshi Obata's Translation from the Original Poem and the Comparison between the two Translations

The chapter will analyze the three metafunctions in Ezra Pound's and Shigeyoshi Obata's translations of *Changgan Xing* to find their deviations from the original poem and the differences between the two translation versions.

##### 4.1 The Comparison of Process Types in Experiential Metafunction

The sentences in Pound's *The River-merchant's wife: A Letter* can be divided into 48 clauses and Shigeyoshi Obata's: *TWO LETTERS FROM CHANG-KAN- I* can be divided into 49 clauses. Together with Li Bai's original poem, Table 4 summarizes process types in the three versions of *Changgan Xing*.

Table 4: PROCESS TYPES IN POUND'S AND OBATA'S TRANSLATION

	Material	Behavioral	Relational	Mental	Verbal	Existential	Total
Pound 26 (72.2%)	4 (11.1%)	3 (8.3%)	2 (5.6%)	1(2.8%)	0	36 (100%)	
Obata 26 (53.1%)	7 (14.3%)	8(16.3%)	6 (12.2%)	2(4.1%)	0	49 (100%)	
Li Bai 22(61.1%)	4(11.1%)	4(11.1%)	4(11.1%)	2(5.6%)	0	36(100%)	

First of all, this part will make a comparison of the process types between Pound's and Obata's translations and the original poem to find out the deviations. From the table, there are 36 clauses and these total numbers of clauses are the same in Li Bai's *Changgan Xing*. In terms of the proportion of each process type in the whole, the material process in Pound's translation is higher than Li Bai's (72.2%>61.1%) and the proportion of the other four process types are all lower than or equal with Li Bai's. From the data, we can now that Pound changed some of the four process types into material process or he added material processes in one clause and reduced other processes in another clause. The higher proportion of material process in Pound's translation may imply that there are many actions elicited by the couple in their early or today's life which portrays a very vivid picture between vibrant young boys and girls or a sorrowful wife and a husband in a long journey.

The distinct different process types between Obata's and the original poem are material, behavioral and relational process. Obata's translation has lower proportion of material process (53.1 %< 61.1%) and higher proportion of behavioral (14.3%>11.1%) and relational process (16.3%>11.1%) than the original poem. The higher proportion of behavioral process may indicate that there are many descriptions about the wife's physiological and psychological behavior which possibly have something to do with her longing and missing for her husband. Also, the higher proportion of relational process is probably to indicate the relations between the husband and the wife on the one hand. On the other hand, the relational processes appear also in the description of the objects in the environment, which may make a particular setting for the story to reflect the mental state of the wife.

Looking the two translations separately, Pound's translation has distinct higher proportion of material process than Obata's and relatively distinct lower proportion of the other four process types. Pound focused on describing actions and the interactions of the couple to make their relations closer. As the total number of the material process is very close between the two, Obata added some behavioral, relational, mental and verbal process. As the behavioral verbs in Obata's version almost all concerns with the wife's behavior, such as, "I could not look", "I sit", "at seeing them" and "and watch for you", Obata described more about the wife's behavior elicited for the husband and her loneliness during anxious waiting. As discussed earlier, Obata's utilization of the relational verbs appear in the describing of the relations between the couple and the description of environment. Besides, Obata's utilization of mental process is also more



than Pound's. Some is to describe the feelings between them ("suspecting", "love") and some is to describe the wife's mental state ("aches", "sorrowing"), which implies that Obata focus more on the expressing of the mental feelings than Pound.

#### 4.2 The Comparison in Interpersonal Metafunction

The analysis of subject, mood types, tense and modality of Pound's and Obata's are in the Table 5 and Table 6 respectively.

Table 5: SUBJECT, MOOD TYPES, TENSES AND MODALITY IN POUND'S TRANSLATION

Subject	Mood Types	Tense	Non-finite	Modality
Husband: 12	Declarative: 34	past: 14		
Wife: 18	Interrogative: 1 (clause 20)	present: 7		
We: 1	Imperative: 1 (clause 34)	present progressive: 1	10	3
Others: 5		present future: 1		
Total: 36		36		

Table 6: SUBJECT, MOOD TYPES, TENSES AND MODALITY IN OBATA'S TRANSLATION

Subject	Mood Types	Tense	Non-finite	Modality
Husband: 12	Declarative: 46	past: 14		
Wife: 23	Interrogative: 3	present: 11		
We: 4	Imperative: 0	present progressive: 2	10	10
Others: 10		past future: 2		
Total: 49		49		

Compared with the original poem, the distribution of subjects in the clauses in both translations does not have distinct differences from the original poem, that is, the wife appears most as the subject, the second frequent subject is the husband and the objects subjects are the least. In terms of the mood types, Pound's translation is exact the same as Li Bai's, while Obata changed three declarative clauses into a three interrogative and an imperative one into a declarative one, which need to be given attention. When it comes to tenses, both translations have less past tense and future tense than the original poem which can find the reason in the finites indicating modality and the non-finite clauses in both translations. For example, there are two past tenses in the sentence "折花门前剧", it becomes one past tense plus one non-finite clause when it is translated into English. In addition, the future tense in the original poem does not have

clear markers indicating it and we can only infer that they are future tenses instead of thinking of whether they involve modality. But in the translations, the translator use specific finites to express modality according to their own understanding of the poem. For example, “早晚下三巴，预将书报家” was translated into “If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang, Please let me know beforehand” by Pound and “If you will write me a letter beforehand” by Obata in which the “are coming” and “will” indicate modality of probability.

Looking separately, Obata use more “we” than as subject than Pound, which may imply that Obata emphasize more about the closeness between the couple. In addition, Obata used more objects in the environment as subject than Pound. Obata use the objects in environment when describing the travel of his husband, such as, “Where the giant rocks heap up the swift river, and the rapids are not passable in May”, which may indicate the difficulty and hardship in the husband’s journey. With regard to mood types, Pound’s is the same as the original poem and there are four clauses that Obata made change. That is, he changed the declarative clauses “猿声天上哀，门前迟行迹，一一生绿苔” into interrogative: “Did you.....wailing? Do you.....moss”, which enlarges the wife’s missing and worries for the husband. Also, Obata changed imperative clause: “预将书报家” into declarative: “If you will write me a letter beforehand” and this expresses the wife’s has strong desire for her husband’s coming back since she makes a nice hypothesis. Concerning with modality, Obata used more finites to express modality and this difference is mainly in Obata’s inclination to express the usuality of actions in the early years of the couple. For example, in the clauses: “I would play”, “you would come”, “you would call me” and “But I could not look back....”, Obata used these finites to express the modality of usuality in order to indicate that the couple have lived together for a very long time, experience a lot and know very well about each other.

#### 4.3 The Comparison of Marked Themes in Textual Metafunction

Again, Table 7 represents the marked Themes in Li Bai’s poem and Pound’s and Obata’s translations.

Table 7: THE MARKED THEMES IN LI BAI’S POEM AND THE TWO TRANSLATIONS

Li Bai		Pound		Obata	
Clause	Marked Themes	Clause	Marked Themes	Clause	Marked Themes
10	十四	3	pulling	2	plucking

15	十五	5	playing	5	riding
19	十六	7	playing	9	suspecting
20	五月	9	at fourteen	10	at fourteen
22	门前	11	being	16	at fifteen
23	生	12	lowering	36	to sweep
25	(苔)	14	called	40	seeing
26	落	16	at fifteen	42	sorrowing
27	八月	17	scowling	44	some day
29	感此	21	at sixteen	45	to meet
33	早晚	27	by the gate now		
		28	to clear		
		36	to meet		
Total	11		13		10

As is shown by the table, Pound's translation has more marked Themes than Li Bai's while Obata's has less than Li Bai's. The distinct deviation of marked Themes in the two translations from the poem is almost in the translators' utilization of English non-finite to replace serial verbs in Chinese, such as, "play about..., pulling flowers" and "I would play..., plucking flowers..." for "折花门前剧" and some same structures: "郎骑竹马来" and "绕床弄青梅". Some marked Themes do not appear in the translations, such as, "生" "落" since it is because English does not have the same way to say "生绿苔" as "grow the mosses" and "落叶" as "fall the leaves". Other Themes, such as "五月" and "八月" also do not turn up in the translations and both translators replace them with nominal phrases, which may be the result of the translators' different understanding of the poem and inclination of delivering information. In particular, Pound translated "五月不可触" as "you have been gone five months", which emphasizing the husband has gone for a very long time. Obata translated it as "the rapids are not passable in May", which emphasizes the difficult environment the husband are in.

Comparing the utilization of marked Themes in the two translations, Pound used more non-finite marked Themes than Obata and almost all of these them are about the behavior of the husband and the wife. Instead, Obata used many conjunctions to link the verbs with the subjects to make them less marked. For example, Pound translated clauses: "羞颜未尝开, 低头向暗壁, 千唤不一回" as "I never laughed, being bashful. Lowering my head, I looked at the wall" and Obata translated them as: "And so bashful

that I could never bare my face, but hung my head, and turned to the dark wall". Accounting for the difference, Pound focused more on the description of the couple, especially the wife's action while Obata payed more attention to the coherence and logical relations of the text.

In summary, Pound used lots of material process type and focused more on the description of actions while Obata payed more attention to the coherence of the text and possible modality of the person under discussion.

## 5. Contextual Interpretation

From the discussion above, we can see that whichever translations may have deviations from the original text and different translators will chose different words or expressions to translate a same text, thus creating different images of a same person. Accounting for the deviations and differences between translation versions, we need to take the differences between different language structures and different context or background the translators are in into consideration to find out their particular translation style.

It can be said that most deviations are caused by People's different ways of speaking and it is the same as in this discussion. Chinses and English are two different language families and there are great differences of the way of speaking, not to mention the differences between Chinses ancient poem and English. As discussed before, Chinese have many serial verbs that elicit a series of actions and they become non-finite when they are translated into English, which could cause different language effects. What's more, the non-equivalence or non- correspondence of verbs between Chinese and English will cause the addition or reduction or change of process types. In addition, Chinese tend to put the time and place phrases into the first place just out of habit but English is to emphasize the information when they are put into the beginning.

As for the difference between the two translations and the deviations that is not cause by different language structures, they have close relations with the translator's translation style and their particular understanding of the text.

Ezra Pound (1885-1972), the main representative of 20th-century Imagist poetry, is also the main founder of British and American modernist poetry. Pound argues that it is not necessary to emphasize the loyalty to the original meaning when translating. What he seeks is to reproduce the details and images of the original in the translation. Imagery is the soul of poetry translation. Without imagery, poetry translation loses meaning (Liao& Luo, 2018:104). Pound chose words carefully to reproduce the imageries in the original.

For example, “bamboo stilts”, “plums”, “two small people” ect. To make the imageries more vivid, he used many material processes to create artistic conception. In addition, Chinese classical poetry happens to focus on imagery as a unit, connecting the entire poem by juxtaposed images. At the same time, another characteristic of Chinese classical poetry is that images are juxtaposed and do not require any conjunctions to connect them. Based on this, Pound completely retained the image of poetry when translating Chinese classical poetry, and also followed the principle of connecting them without using conjunctions (Liao& Luo, 2018:104). That is why there are fewer conjunctions in his translations than Obata’s.

Shigeyoshi Obata (1888-1971) was born in Osaka Prefecture, Japan, and has a deep family sinology. He studied the Analects of Confucius under the guidance of his father at an early age. He was influenced by the Sinology atmosphere of his family since he was a child, and developed a strong interest in Chinese culture and Chinese poetry. During his childhood, he was familiar with the classics of Chinese literature and history, such as the Three-character Classics and the Four Books and Five Classics through which he understands China’s history and culture and imagines the image of China. His translation work “The works of Li po” is very popular among English readers. Influenced by Pound, Obata believes that translated poetry should be free from the constraints of rhythm and words, centered on the understanding and acceptance of English readers, which is the reason his translation of *Changgan Xing* has more clauses and clear logical relations. Besides, he also believes translation should take the delivering of emotion and atmosphere of the original poem as the first priority (Ge, 2015:53-54). Therefore, Obata focus on the expressing of emotion and atmosphere through his large amount usage of finites indicating the wife’s emotion.

## 6. Conclusion

Through the analysis and comparison between Li Bai’s *Changgan Xing* and Pound’s and Obata’s translations from the three metafunctions in SFG, the paper explores the deviations of translations from original poem and the difference between the two translations. More importantly, the paper tries to dig out the deviations and differences from the difference between language structures and the different translation style and inclination of the translators. Besides, it gives us the implication that SFL has some guidance towards translation and translation evaluation.

## Appendix:

## 《长干行》

李白

妾发初覆额，折花门前剧。  
郎骑竹马来，绕床弄青梅。  
同居长干里，两小无嫌猜，  
十四为君妇，羞颜未尝开。  
低头向暗壁，千唤不一回。  
十五始展眉，愿同尘与灰。  
常存抱柱信，岂上望夫台。  
十六君远行，瞿塘滟滪堆。  
五月不可触，猿声天上哀。

门前迟行迹，一一生绿苔。  
苔深不能扫，落叶秋风早。  
八月蝴蝶黄，双飞西园草。  
感此伤妾心，坐愁红颜老。  
早晚下三巴，预将书报家。  
相迎不道远，直至长风沙。

Table: Transitivity selections in *Changgan Xing*

Line	Clause	Process
1	1	覆-material
1	2	折-material
1	3	剧-material
2	4	骑-material
2	5	来-material
2	6	绕-material
2	7	弄-material
3	8	居-material
3	9	无-relational
4	10	为-relational
4	11	开-material
5	12	低-material
5	13	唤-verbal
5	14	回-behavioral
6	15	展-behavioral
6	16	愿-mental
7	17	存-relational
7	18	上-material
8	19	远行-material
9	20	触-material
9	21	哀-behavioral
10	22	行-material
10	23	生-material
11	24	(是)-relational

11	25	扫-material
11	26	落-material
12	27	飞-material
13	28	感-mental
13	29	伤-mental
13	30	坐-behavioral
13	31	愁-mental
13	32	老-material
14	33	下-material
14	34	报-material
14	35	迎-material
15	36	道-verbal

Table II: The analysis of the subject, mood types, tense, polarity and modality in

*Changgan Xing*

Clause	Subject	Mood Types	Tense	Non-finite	Modality
1	妾	declarative	past		
2	妾	declarative	past		
3	妾	declarative	past		
4	郎	declarative	past		
5	郎	declarative	past		
6	郎	declarative	past		
7	郎	declarative	past		
8	郎和妾	declarative	past		
9	郎和妾	declarative	past		
10	妾	declarative	past		
11	羞颜	declarative	past		
12	妾	declarative	past		
13	(君)	declarative	past		
14	妾	declarative	past		
15	眉	declarative	past		
16	妾	declarative	past		
17	君	declarative	past		
18	妾	interrogative	past		
19	君	declarative	past		
20	君	declarative	past		
21	猿声	declarative	past		
22	君	declarative	past		
23	绿苔	declarative	present		
24	苔	declarative	present		
25	苔	declarative	present		

26	叶	declarative	present
27	蝴蝶	declarative	present
28	妾	declarative	present
29	(感此)	declarative	present
30	妾	declarative	present
31	妾	declarative	present
32	红颜	declarative	present
33	君	declarative	future
34	君	imperative	future
35	妾	declarative	future
36	妾	declarative	future

*The River-merchant's wife: A Letter*  
by Pound

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead  
 I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.  
 You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,  
 You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.  
 And we went on living in the village of Chokan:  
 Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.  
 At fourteen I married My Lord you.  
 I never laughed, being bashful.  
 Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.  
 Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.  
 At fifteen I stopped scowling,  
 I desired my dust to be mingled with yours.  
 Forever and forever and forever.  
 Why should I climb the look out?  
 At sixteen you departed,  
 You went into far Ku-to-en, by the river of swirling eddies,  
 And you have been gone five months.  
 The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.  
 You dragged your feet when you went out.  
 By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,  
 Too deep to clear them away!  
 The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.  
 The paired butterflies are already yellow with August  
 Over the grass in the West garden;  
 They hurt me. I grow older.  
 If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,  
 Please let me know beforehand,  
 And I will come out to meet you



As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

*TWO LETTERS FROM CHANG-KAN—I*

by Shigeyoshi Obata

(A river-merchant's wife writes)

I would play, plucking flowers by the gate;  
My hair scarcely covered my forehead, then.  
You would come, riding on your bamboo horse,  
And loiter about the bench with green plums for toys.

So we both dwelt in Chang-kan town,  
We were two children, suspecting nothing.

At fourteen I became your wife,  
And so bashful that I could never bare my face,  
But hung my head, and turned to the dark wall;

You would call me a thousand times,  
But I could not look back even once.

At fifteen I was able to compose my eyebrows,  
And beg you to love me till we were dust and ashes.

You always kept the faith of Wei-sheng,  
Who waited under the bridge, unafraid of death,  
I never knew I was to climb the Hill of Wang-fu  
And watch for you these many days.

I was sixteen when you went on a long journey,  
Traveling beyond the Keu-Tang Gorge,  
Where the giant rocks heap up the swift river,  
And the rapids are not passable in May.

Did you hear the monkeys wailing  
Up on the skyey height of the crags?

Do you know your foot-marks by our gate are old,  
And each and every one is filled up with green moss?  
The mosses are too deep for me to sweep away;  
And already in the autumn wind the leaves are falling.  
The yellow butterflies of October  
Flutter in pairs over the grass of the west garden.  
My heart aches at seeing them. . . .  
I sit sorrowing alone, and alas!  
The vermilion of my face is fading.  
Some day when you return down the river,  
If you will write me a letter beforehand,  
I will come to meet you--the way is not long--  
I will come as far as the Long Wind Beach instantly.

Table III: The analysis of process types of Pound's translation

Line	Clause	process
1	1	cut (material)
2	2	played (material)
2	3	pulling (material)
3	4	came (material)
3	5	playing (material)
4	6	walked (material)
4	7	playing (material)
5	8	living (material)
7	9	married (material)
8	10	laughed (behavioral)
8	11	being (relational)
9	12	lowing (material)
9	13	looked (behavioral)
10	14	called (verbal)
10	15	looked (behavioral)
11	16	stopped (material)
11	17	scowling (behavioral)
12	18	desired (mental)
12	19	mingled (material)
14	20	climb (material)
15	21	departed (material)
16	22	went (material)
17	23	gone (material)
18	24	make (material)
19	25	dragged (material)
19	26	went (material)
20	27	is (relational)
21	28	clear (material)
22	29	fall (material)
23	30	are (relational)
25	31	hurt (mental)
25	32	grow (material)
26	33	coming (material)
27	34	let (material)
28	35	come (material)
28	36	meet (material)

Table IV: The analysis of process types of Obata's translation

Line	Clause	Process
1	1	play (material)
2	2	plucking (material)
2	3	covered (material)
3	4	come (material)
3	5	riding (material)
4	6	loiter (material)
5	7	dwelt (material)
6	8	were (relational)
6	9	suspecting (mental)
7	10	became (relational)
8	11	bare (material)
9	12	hung (material)
9	13	turn to (behavioral)
10	14	call (verbal)
11	15	look (behavioral)
12	16	compose (material)
13	17	beg (verbal)
13	18	love (mental)
13	19	were (relational)
14	20	keep (material)
15	21	waited (material)
16	22	knew (mental)
16	23	climb (material)
17	24	watch (behavioral)
18	25	was (relational)
18	26	went (material)
19	27	travelling (material)
20	28	heap up (material)
21	29	are (relational)
22	30	hear (behavioral)
22	31	wailing (behavioral)
24	32	know (mental)
24	33	are (relational)
25	34	fill (material)
26	35	are (relational)
26	36	sweep (material)
27	37	falling (material)
29	38	flutter (material)
30	39	aches (mental)
30	40	seeing (behavioral)
31	41	sit (behavioral)
31	42	sorrowing (mental)
32	43	fading (material)
33	44	return (material)
34	45	write (material)
35	46	come (material)
35	47	meet (material)
35	48	is (relational)
36	49	come (material)

Table V: The subject, mood types, tenses and modality in Pound's

Clause	Subject	Mood Types	Tense	Non-finite	Modality
1	my hair	declarative	past		
2	I	declarative	past		
3	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
4	you	declarative	past		
5	(you)	declarative		non-finite	
6	you	declarative	past		
7	(you)	declarative		non-finite	
8	we	declarative	present progressive		
9	I	declarative	past		
10	I	declarative	past		
11	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
12	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
13	I	declarative	past		
14	(you)	declarative		non-finite	
15	I	declarative	past		
16	I	declarative	past		
17	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
18	I	declarative	past		
19	my dust	declarative		non-finite	
20	I	interrogative			probability
21	you	declarative	past		
22	you	declarative	past		
23	you	declarative	present perfect		
24	the monkeys	declarative	present		
25	you	declarative	past		
26	you	declarative	past		
27	the moss	declarative	present		
28	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
29	the leaves	declarative	present		
30	the butterflies	declarative	present		
31	they	declarative	present		
32	I	declarative	present		
33	you	declarative			probability
34	(you)	imperative	present		
35	I	declarative			inclination
36	(I)	declarative		non-finite	

Table VI: The subject, mood types, tenses and modality in Obata's

Clause	Subject	Mood Types	Tense	Non-finite	Modality
1	I	declarative			usuality
2	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
3	my hair	declarative	past		
4	you	declarative			usuality
5	(you)	declarative		non-finite	
6	(you)	declarative	past		
7	we	declarative	present		
8	we	declarative	past		
9	we	declarative		non-finite	
10	I	declarative	past		
11	I	declarative			usuality
12	(I)	declarative	past		
13	(I)	declarative	past		
14	you	declarative			usuality
15	I	declarative			usuality
16	I	declarative	past		
17	I	declarative	past		
18	you	declarative		non-finite	
19	we	declarative			probability
20	you	declarative	past		
21	Wei-sheng	declarative	past		
22	I	declarative	past		
23	I	declarative	past future		
24	(I)	declarative	past future		
25	I	declarative	past		
26	you	declarative	past		
27	(you)	declarative		non-finite	
28	rocks	declarative	present		
29	rapids	declarative	present		
30	you	interrogative	past		
31	the monkeys	declarative		non-finite	
32	you	interrogative	present		
33	foot-marks	interrogative	present		
34	foot-mark	declarative	present		
35	mosses	declarative	present		
36	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
37	leaves	declarative	present progressive		
38	butterflies	declarative	present		
39	my heart	declarative	present		
40	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
41	I	declarative	present		
42	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
43	my face	declarative	present progressive		
44	you	declarative	present		
45	you	declarative			probability
46	I	declarative			inclination
47	(I)	declarative		non-finite	
48	the way	declarative			inclination
49	I	declarative			inclination

Table VII: Themes and marked Themes in Pound's

Clause	Theme	Markedness
1	while, my hair	unmarked
2	I	unmarked
3	pulling	marked
4	you	unmarked
5	playing	marked
6	you	unmarked
7	playing	marked
8	and, we	unmarked
9	at fourteen, I	marked, unmarked
10	I	unmarked
11	being	marked
12	lowering	marked
13	I	unmarked
14	called	marked
15	I	unmarked
16	at fifteen, I	marked, unmarked
17	scowling	marked
18	I	unmarked
19	my dust	unmarked
20	why, should, I	unmarked
21	at sixteen, you	marked, unmarked
22	you	unmarked
23	and, you	unmarked
24	the monkeys	unmarked
25	you	unmarked
26	when, you	unmarked
27	by the gate now, the moss	marked, unmarked
28	to clear	marked
29	the leaves	unmarked
30	the paired butterflies	unmarked
31	they	unmarked
32	I	unmarked
33	if, you	unmarked
34	please, let	unmarked
35	and, I	unmarked
36	to meet	marked

Table VIII: Themes and marked Themes in Obata's

Clause	Theme	Markedness
1	I	unmarked
2	plucking	marked
3	my hair	unmarked
4	you	unmarked
5	riding	marked
6	and	unmarked
7	so, we	unmarked
8	we	unmarked
9	suspecting	marked
10	at fourteen, I	marked, unmarked
11	and	unmarked
12	but, hung	unmarked
13	and, turn	unmarked
14	you	unmarked
15	but, I	unmarked
16	at fifteen, I	marked, unmarked
17	and, beg	unmarked
18	(you)	unmarked
19	till, we	unmarked
20	you	unmarked
21	who	unmarked
22	I	unmarked
23	I	unmarked
24	and, watch	unmarked
25	I	unmarked
26	when, you	unmarked
27	traveling	unmarked
28	where, the giant rocks	unmarked
29	and, the rapids	unmarked
30	did, you	unmarked
31	the monkeys	unmarked
32	do, you	unmarked
33	foot-marks	unmarked
34	and, each and every one	unmarked
35	the mosses	unmarked
36	to sweep	marked
37	and, already, in the autumn wind, the leaves	unmarked (2), marked (2)
38	the yellow butterflies	unmarked
39	my heart	unmarked
40	seeing	marked
41	I	unmarked
42	sorrowing	marked
43	the vermillion of my face	unmarked
44	some day, when, you	marked, unmarked (2)
45	if, you	unmarked
46	I	unmarked
47	to meet	marked
48	the way	unmarked
49	I	unmarked



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## The Evaluation of the Two Translation Versions of Li Bai's *Changgan Xing* from the Perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics

Xia Huanhuan

(Hunan University, Changsha / Hunan, 410082)

**Abstract:** Li Bai's *Changgan Xing* is a very famous Chinese poem which tells a story between a wife and his river-merchant husband. It was translated into English by many famous translators. The paper will analyze Pound's and Obata's English versions to find the differences between them and their deviations from the original from Halliday's three metafunctions in SFL. Through detailed analysis, the paper finds that the deviations and differences are caused by different language structures, the ways of speaking in differences and the translators' particular translation style and his understanding of the culture and the poem itself.

**Key words:** SFL; *Changgan Xing*; translation; three metafunctions

**作者简介:** 夏缓缓, 在读硕士