

# Presentation of Poetic Space in Chinese Classical Poetry and its English Translation: A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

Chinese classical poetry is often discussed in relation to paintings, which involves the presentation of space. Studies on the establishment of space in Chinese poetry and its representation in translation have been rare. This research provides a case study on the Chinese classical poem “The Waterfall in Mount Lu Viewed from Afar” and its translation. It aims to investigate how poetic space, which can be defined as the world presented in a poem, is established via the organization of language, and how the poetic space is re-established in translation. In this investigation, the presentation of poetic space is analyzed with reference to the two perspectives of parts of speech and word order which have direct influences on the construction of poetic space. It has been found that even when the semantic meaning between the original poem and its translation is equal, the poetic spaces in the two versions may still vary. Therefore, analyzing poetic spaces can provide a different perspective on guiding and evaluating the translation of Chinese classical poetry.

## KEYWORDS

part of speech, poem, presentation, space, translation, word order

## 1. Introduction

The remark by Robert Frost that “poetry is what gets left out in translation” or “what gets lost in translation” appears in variant forms on a number of websites, though it does not have a source in Frost’s published prose writings (Robinson 2010: 23). Such untranslatability is mainly because the specific effects of form, structure, and meaning of a poem cannot be “reconstituted using the materials of another set of interrelations from a different culture” (Robinson 2010: 24). However, there is something in common across cultures, such as the existence and description of space as a perspective to perceive and understand the world, and poems are translatable in this sense. Chinese ancient poetry and Chinese paintings are regarded to be “interchangeable modes of expression” and there is often “poetry in painting and painting in poetry” (Murck & Fong 1991: xv). Chinese classical poems tend to be concise and there are fixed numbers of Chinese characters in each line. A picture of the world as perceived by the poet can be established in a Chinese poem via limited number of words. The presentation of a picture involves and sometimes depends on spatial relations. The picture in a poem is composed of different objects which coexist in the poetic space and provides readers with aesthetic enjoyment. For illustration, in the following lines of a Tang poem, “大漠孤烟直，长河落日圆(*da mo gu yan zhi, chang he luo ri yuan*; on the great desert a single plume of smoke rises straight up, while the setting sun, big and round, goes down the long river)”, the space is formed via a contrast between the vastness of the desert and the loneliness of the plume of smoke as well as the contrast between the straightness of the smoke and the roundness of the setting sun. Taking into account this special feature of Chinese classical poetry, exploring the space presented in a poem and its

translation can provide reference as to how well the picture in a poem is transferred in translation. This research aims to investigate how poetic space is constructed in Chinese classical poetry and how it is represented in translation via a case study on the Tang poem “The Waterfall in Mount Lu Viewed from Afar” and its English translation.

## 2. Research background

Research on space in Chinese classical poems and their translations is rare. Current studies are mostly done from the aesthetic and emotional perspectives. Li (1993) studies the characteristics of space in Tang poems and draws the conclusion that Tang poetry lays much emphasis on vastness, magnificence, profoundness, and farness. Our analysis of the poetic space in the Tang poem and its translation to be presented in section 5 will prove to be in line with this point of view. Liu (1979) discusses a prominent feature in Chinese ancient poetry, the spatialization of time and temporalization of space, or the use of spatial terms to describe time and that of temporal terms to describe space. The focus of his research is on the application of uncommon wording, syntax, or imagery, and the term space is used in its most general sense. There is no analysis of specific presentations of space in the poems and more consideration is given to temporal-spatial relations. Zhao (1997) analyzes the conveyance of the sense of distance, stratification, and solidity in poetry, but as in Li (1993) and Liu (1979), the space discussed here is in its general sense. Zhang (2002) explores the natural and artistic beauty of space in Tang poetry, the qualities of being quiet and flowing in the space as described in the poems, and how the magnificence of natural sceneries and architectures in

gardens is demonstrated via unique angles. The space discussed here is more specific than that in Liu (1979), but it is not specific enough to be related to the use of language in a poem. Wang (2012) investigates the spatial beauty and cultural implications of windows as well as the objects around windows in Tang poetry, but there is no discussion on the presentation of space via language either. Zhao (2004) studies space from a broader point of view, which includes space on the geological, emotional, philosophical, and aesthetic levels, and analyzes the influence of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism on the composition of the idea of space in Tang Dynasty. In this research, the poetic space is intended to cover what is presented in the poems, which also includes the imaginary space that is beyond the actual world, and the construction of space is analyzed with reference to the organization or application of language such as word order.

### 3. Research objectives

From the review it can be seen that there are two prominent characteristics concerning the current studies on space in Chinese classical poetry and its translation. First, space is discussed in its general sense like its relations with time (See Liu 1979), and what is explored about space is mostly its general features like its vastness and farness or its flowing or quiet qualities (See Li 1993 and Zhang 2002). Wang (2012) gets more specific and focuses on space related to the image of window in Tang poetry, but what is discussed is still general cultural implications. Second, while the expression of the solidity or stratification of space is explored (See Zhao 1997), space in poetry is seldom studied in relation to its presentation via the

organization of language or its representation in translation. Taking into account these limitations, this study aims to realize the following two objectives. Firstly, space is to be explored in its specific sense and a framework of poetic space is to be established with reference to the organization of language in classical Chinese poetry. The poetic space in this research differs from the space in the studies as reviewed in section 2, which mostly investigates space in its abstract or general sense as in relation to time and does not explore how the space is established with reference to the specific application of language, in that it is more concrete to be related to the world as presented in poems, it is presented via the organization of language such as word order and parts of speech, it has specific characteristics such as being dynamic and statistic, and it can be re-established in translation. The framework of poetic space has advantages over the discussion of space in its general or philosophical sense in that it makes the research on space more applicable to the evaluation of the translation of Chinese classical poetry, because space can be considered in relation to the specific wording of different poems. In this sense, exploring poetic space can provide a new perspective on analyzing and evaluating poetry translation. Secondly, this study also provides a case study according to the framework of poetic space in an attempt to demonstrate the applicability and suitability of the perspective of poetic space to Chinese classical poetry and its translation. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Chinese poetry is often regarded as paintings and analyzing the poetic space presented in a poem is one way to treat a poem as a painting. Accordingly, investigating the poetic space presented in a poem and its translation can provide a new dimension to poetry translation. As in Zhao (2004), where space is studied from a broad perspective covering such levels as emotional and philosophical ones, what we are

going to explore about poetic space is not limited to the actual world and the imaginary space as described in the poems is also included.

## 4. Poetic space

### 4.1. Definition

Space is one of the most important dimensions for humans to perceive, understand, and express the world. As mentioned earlier, Chinese classical poems are often considered to be related to paintings, or rather the poems set up different pictures. In a poem, the poet may unfold a scene “like a scroll of Chinese painting” (Liu 1962: 42). This painting metaphor shows that space is closely related to Chinese classical poetry, for paintings involve the presentation of space. A poem establishes a space where specific objects or people exist and different events take place. We prefer to use the term “poetic space” rather than painting, because what is unfolded in a poem is very often three-dimensional and there are different sceneries and dynamic changes. The basic idea of poetic space is similar to the mental space perspective in linguistics. According to the theory, mental spaces are set up via space-builders and get linked under grammatical, contextual or cultural conditions as we talk and think, thus creating a network of spaces through which discourse unfolds (Fauconnier & Sweetser 1996: 11). The term space-builder refers to such grammatical expressions as may establish a new space or refer back to an old space. For example, in the sentence “I believe it will be ok”, the word “believe” has set up a mental space of “my belief” world. During the unfolding of a discourse, mental spaces elements and relations holding between them can have new elements and relations

introduced (Fauconnier 1994: 16). It is the same with poetry. When writing poems, poets try to reconstruct the space in the real world, including what they see, hear, and think, using the poetic language. As we read and appreciate a poem, we set up a poetic space referring to the words and expressions in it. Therefore, in this study, by poetic space we mean the world that is established by the poetic language. Different aspects of poetic space can be investigated, such as high, low, near, and far according to distance, in, out, up, and down according to position, as well as dynamic and static or the combination of the two according to state.

The poetic space established by readers may or may not be the same with the poet's perceptions. That is why we choose to stick to the organization of language when analyzing the presentation of poetic spaces in this study. The major difference between the space established in poems and that in other genres such as novels or daily conversations lies in that poems, which tend to be concise, rhymed, and rhythmic, need to construct the poetic space via limited number of words. This is especially the case with Chinese classical poetry where the number of Chinese characters is fixed in each line and poem and for some types of poems the rhyme and level or deflected tones are supposed to be strictly regular. (See Liu 1962: 21-38) For that reason, poets need to make a choice as to the world they choose to put into a poem, which must have aesthetic beauty, value, or meaning, and they have to establish the poetic space they have chosen to write about via the fixed number of words according to the rules of rhyme, rhythm, and tones. In this study, our discussion of poetic space is based on language organization, and our analysis is mainly done from the two major perspectives of parts of speech and word order which influence the presentation of poetic space and play a unique role in Chinese classical poetry.

## 4.2. Parts of speech and word order

### 4.2.1. Grammar in Chinese poetry

On the whole, the Chinese grammar is more flexible than English, as Chinese is “a completely uninflected language” and is not “burdened with Cases, Genders, Moods, Tenses, etc.” (Liu 1962: 40). Grammar in Chinese poetry is even more fluid than that in prose. It is very common to see the flexible application of parts of speech, word order, and unconventional collocations, which are mostly intended to adjust to the rules of rhymes and rhythms in poetry. For example, some grammatical parts of a sentence such as conjunctions, subjects of verbs, and particles are often omitted. In the following lines of a Tang poem mentioned in section 1, “大漠孤烟直, 长河落日圆(*da mo gu yan zhi, chang he luo ri yuan*; on the great desert a single plume of smoke rises straight up, while the setting sun, big and round, goes down the long river)”, there are only nouns and adjectives. The grammatical parts such as linking verbs and prepositions are omitted and the word order is also adjusted.

Despite the lack of grammaticality, Chinese poetry possesses expressive force and can demonstrate the poets' special feelings and experiences, being “without reason yet clever” (Tan 2006). In Chinese poetry, poets are purely concerned with “the universal rather than the particular” (Liu 1962: 40). For example, the subject of a verb is often omitted in Chinese poetry, the poet does not have to “intrude his own personality upon the scene, for the missing subject can be readily identified with anyone, whether the reader or some imaginary person” (Liu 1962: 41), which further enhances the conciseness and sense of timelessness and universality. All in all, the fluidity of grammar and lack of inflection intensifies the “potential multiplicity of meaning” (Yu 1979: 263), and the interpretation of a poem depends more on word



order and context. As to be further elaborated in the coming sections, there are scholars paying attention to and studying the word order and parts of speech in Chinese classical poetry; however, the studies, focusing on the grammar in the poems, have not explored the features in relation to the presentation of poetic space or touched upon the issue of translation. In this research, we have chosen to consider word order and parts of speech in exploring the construction of poetic space, because these two aspects are typical of and very common in Chinese classical poetry and they are relevant to the establishment of poetic space. Word order plays a role in presenting poetic spaces in that what comes in first and what does later is concerned with the unfolding of poetic space. Parts of speech also influence the presentation of poetic space because they help to signify the qualities of the space. Therefore, we will consider both of the two parameters, parts of speech and word order, in exploring poetic space.

#### 4.2.2. Parts of speech

Parts of speech have a direct effect on poetic space. Under general circumstances, noun phrases set up static spaces and verb phrases establish dynamic spaces. Meanwhile, there are also cases where dynamic space is presented via noun phrases and static space is expressed via verb phrases. In Chinese classical poetry, the application of a Chinese character's part of speech is flexible. Actually, a Chinese word cannot be "pinned down to a 'part of speech, 'gender, 'case, etc." (Liu 1962: 46). Parts of speech are fluid in Chinese prose and more so in Chinese poetry where the same word can be used as noun, verb, or adjective according to the context. (Liu 1962: 45-46) Aside from the flexible application of parts of speech, some parts are often omitted in Chinese poetry as mentioned in section 4.2.1. As adverbs and prepositions as well as subjects of verbs

are usually absent in Chinese classical poetry, the time and space become vague and there are multiple perspectives to interpret a poem depending on individual readers. (Ge 1989: 85) This is one of the reasons that the poetic space in Tang poetry is endowed with the qualities of being vast, magnificent, profound, and far as summarized in Li (1993). The poetic space in Chinese classical poetry is mostly presented via nouns, verbs, and adjectives and other grammatical parts are often omitted. As a result, “the essence of a scene, a mood, a whole experience” (Liu 1962: 47) can be compressed into a sequence of twenty or thirty words in Chinese classical poems and it is not too much to claim that in a Chinese classical poem one can “see a world in a grain of sand” (Liu 1962: 47).

#### 4.2.3. Word order

As language is the embodiment of thoughts, word order in poetry shows the poets thinking process, and readers tend to establish the poetic space as they read, so what comes in early and what does later affects the construction of poetic spaces. There are some general rules for the order of presentation in Chinese. For illustration, the superior, older, and higher is supposed to be said earlier than the inferior, younger, and lower; what is seen first is supposed to be said earlier than what is seen later; what is bigger and taller is supposed to be said before the smaller and shorter; the old and less important information is supposed to be said before the new and more important information. (Zhao 2008) However, as we have emphasized throughout this paper, the presentation of poetic space in Chinese classical poetry does not follow the rules, which leaves much leeway for interpretation. Word order in Chinese classical poetry is flexible and sometimes the organization of words or phrases “takes orders from imagination” (Zhao 2008: 213). Instead of obeying the rules or

conventions in terms of grammar, poets may design the word order in a poem at random. When people study Chinese classical poetry and try to figure out some “general rules of language”, they often find that “none of the keys provided by linguists can open this ancient lock” (Ge 1989: 79). The loose organization of language shows that Chinese classical poetry keeps “the deep structure of thoughts, which is the outstanding characteristic of the Chinese classical language” (Ge 1989: 82). As mentioned in section 4.1, reading a poem is like unfolding a scroll of Chinese painting, and readers’ attention moves from one object to the next. (Liu 1962: 42) While readers may consider the whole poem when establishing the poetic space, they will add the elements to the poetic space as presented in the poem step by step according to the word order. Furthermore, the adjustment of word order including inversions in poetry contributes to greater compression and economy of words and achieving variation in rhythm and rhyme. (Liu 1962: 42) In the next section, we will provide a case study to analyze the presentation of poetic space in Chinese classical poetry and its translation.

## 5. A case study

### 5.1. Data and Methodology

In this research, we have studied 76 Tang poems and their English translations collected in Xu (2006), which involve the construction of poetic space. As mentioned in section 1, Chinese classical poetry is related to paintings and the establishment of poetic space is an important aspect of the poetry. In this study, we have chosen to explore Tang poetry, which is called a “gem of traditional

Chinese literature” and occupies a significant position in Chinese classical poetry (Xu 2006: 1). After analyzing the data, we have selected the following poem “The Waterfall in Mount Lu Viewed from Afar” as an example to discuss the construction of poetic space. This poem is representative in that it provides a clear standpoint of observation, describes the dynamic and static qualities of the space, and involves the imaginary or legendary space beyond the actual space. There are alternative versions of the English translation of the poem, but we have chosen to discuss Xu’s work which is highly acclaimed in this field and embodies the beauty of sound, form, and meaning (Peng 2010). In addition, the semantic meaning of Xu’s translation is equal to the original poem, which provides the basis for our further comparison concerning the presentation of poetic space. As this study involves the discussion of poetic space and its reproduction in translation in relation to word order and parts of speech, we will first of all analyze the poetic space established in the original poem, referring to word order to demonstrate how the poetic space is unfolded and referring to parts of speech to describe the qualities of the poetic space. Secondly, the same method will be applied to describe the poetic space established in the English version and our alternative translation will be provided to serve as reference. Thirdly, the poetic space in the original poem is compared with that in the translation in the hope of working out their similarities and differences. As pointed out in Kim (2000), it is hard to analyze literary works such as lyrics in an objective way. The discussion of poetic space in this study is relatively more objective, for it relies on analyzing the specific use of language, namely word order and parts of speech. If there are still differences in terms of poetic space between the original poem and its translation when the semantic meaning of the two versions is equivalent, it would mean that the

analysis of poetic space can provide a new perspective on analyzing and evaluating poetry translation.

## 5.2. Analysis of the original poem

In this section, we will analyze a poem entitled “望庐山瀑布(*wang lu shan pu bu*; The Waterfall in Mount Lu Viewed from Afar) by Li Bai in Tang Dynasty (618-907) when the Chinese lyrical poetry reached “its peak” (Yu 1979: 261).

### 望庐山瀑布

日照香炉生紫烟，  
遥看瀑布挂前川。  
飞流直下三千尺，  
疑是银河落九天。

(Back translation of the Chinese version:

#### **View from Distance Mount Lu Waterfall**

The Sun shines Censer rises purple smoke,  
Afar look at waterfall hung front river.  
Flying flow directly descending three thousand feet,  
Doubt is the Silver River fall the Ninth Heaven.)

Translation:

#### **The Waterfall in Mount Lu Viewed from Afar**

The sunlit Censer Peak exhales incense-like cloud;  
Like an upended stream the cataract sounds loud.  
Its torrent dashes down three thousand feet from high,  
As if the Silver River fell from the blue sky. (Xu 2006: 22)

As far as parts of speech are concerned, the poem mainly consists of adjectives, verbs, and nouns. In the title, “望庐山瀑布(View Mount Lu Waterfall)” is a verb phrase. The word “望(view from distance)” appears before the object Mount Lu Waterfall, which makes clear the

poet's position of viewing the waterfall from afar and implies that a bigger scenery is included in his field of vision. For the same reason, the title shows that the poetic space to be presented in the poem is high and far, which is characteristic of the space in Tang poems. (Li 1993) In the first line, “日照香炉生紫烟(The Sun shines Censer rises purple smoke)”, the phrase “日照香炉(The Sun shines Censer)” that appears at the beginning of the line is a verbal one, which adds to the dynamic quality of the space, for readers' attention is directed to the top of the mountain and the word “照(shine)” implies that the weather is sunny and the sunshine is bright. The expression “香炉(Censer)”, which is short for the Censer Peak, is a noun and presents the image of a censer in the poetic space, as is connected with the rest of the line, “生紫烟(rises purple smoke)”, a verb phrase which adds to the dynamic quality of the space. The peak looks like a censer and the cloud flying around the peak is like the smoke rising from the censer. Up till now, the poetic space is composed of the Sun high up in the sky, the Censer Peak, and the purple cloud hanging around the Peak. This space is connected with another compressed picture where a quiet censer slowly exhaling purple smoke. In the second line, “遥看瀑布挂前川(Afar look at waterfall hung front river)”, the first word “遥(afar)” reiterates the standpoint as clarified in the title, but the poet's viewpoint is lowered here and focuses on the waterfall. The word “挂(hang)” is a verb and is embodied with a metaphor, for generally speaking only those with a soft quality like cloth and silk can be hung somewhere. Saying that the waterfall is hanging there implies that the water has a beauty of being flowing and smooth. Therefore, within the poetic space presented in this line, the waterfall is like a ribbon hanging in front of the peak. In the third line, “飞流直下三千尺(Flying flow directly down three thousand feet)”, the focus is still on the waterfall particularly the qualities of its water flow. Two verb

phrases are placed together here, “飞(Flying)” and “直下(directly descending)” present the poetic space as more dynamic by describing the waterfall’s momentum, speed, and direction. The expression “三千尺(three thousand feet)” does not mean the exact height of the peak; instead, it is intended to show how high the peak is. According to the normal word order in Chinese, this line would put the height in front of the verbs, but moving the two verbs ahead gives more prominence to the dynamic quality of the waterfall. Compared with the first two lines where the poetic space is mostly static and quiet, the space gets more dynamic in this line. In the fourth line, “疑是银河落九天(Doubt is the Silver River fall the Ninth Heaven)”, the associations that people make when watching the waterfall are presented, and the reason or effect of the waterfall’s grandeur is explained. People would doubt whether the waterfall is the Milky Way coming down the Ninth Heaven which is the highest of heavens in Chinese legends. Therefore, in this line, the poetic space is expanded to include legends and the poet’s imaginary world.

### 5.3. Analysis of the translation

By comparing the literal back translation of the poem and its English translation, we can see that the English version is equivalent to the original poem in terms of semantic meaning. However, the poetic space in the English translation is slightly different from that in the original poem. First of all, the title “The Waterfall in Mount Lu Viewed from Afar” is a noun phrase, where the waterfall appears before the poet’s viewing position. In this title, the key expression is “The Waterfall in Mount Lu” which is modified by the following phrase “Viewed from Afar”. So the space here is mostly static, a waterfall viewed from a distance. If the title is translated as “Viewing the

Waterfall in Mount Lu from Afar”, the space constructed will be more dynamic as in the original poem. In the first line, “The sunlit Censer Peak exhales incense-like cloud”, what appears first is also a noun phrase, “The sunlit Censer Peak”, which presents the static image of Censer Peak in the sunshine in the poetic space. If translated as “The Sun shines upon Censer Peak”, the space constructed in the first part of the line would be more dynamic and similar to the original poem. The rest of the line “exhales incense-like cloud”, a verb phrase, adds dynamic movement to the space where censer-like cloud rises around the censer-like peak. In the second line, “Like an upended stream the cataract sounds loud”, the first part of the line “Like an upended stream” adds a different image to the poetic space via the simile of a vertical stream. The word “stream” implies steadiness in a flow of water. It is different from a waterfall which is a rush flow of water. However, even if it is a stream, it would become a rush once it was turned upended. Therefore, readers need some transition to comprehend the simile and establish the image in the poetic space. The latter half of the line, “the cataract sounds loud”, adds sound to the space and uses the loudness of the waterfall to express its grandeur. The translation of this line does not convey the waterfall’s appearance as hanging on the peak and the poet’s standpoint of viewing the waterfall from afar; instead, it adds sound effect and transition of visual effect. To present the space in the original line more faithfully, the translation would be “Viewed from afar, the waterfall is hanging on the front of the peak”. The third line, “Its torrent dashes down three thousand feet from high”, continues with the dynamic presentation of the poetic space. While the word “torrent” is a noun, it has the quality of being fast and turbulent, and it is dynamic in this sense. The verb “dash” also shows the rapidity of the water flow. The expression “three thousand feet” stresses and expands



the height of the space. The words “from high” does not refer to anything concrete and are mainly used here to cater to the rhyme. The space established in this line is similar to the original poem. In the fourth line, “As if the Silver River fell from the blue sky”, the expression “Silver River” is a direct translation from the Chinese wording “银河(the Milky Way)” which is a fixed phrase. The translation takes the expression apart and only conveys the literal meaning. The two words of “silver” and “river” are end rhymed, but in the poetic space silver is solid and does not have the quality of flowingness and softness. In this sense, silver and river are not compatible. However, another interpretation would be that the word “silver” is applied here to refer to the color of the river. Still the presence of the word “silver” influences readers’ cognition. Comparatively speaking, the English expression the Milky Way can better demonstrate the qualities of the river. The rest of this line “fell from the blue sky” further expands the height of the poetic space, but it is only the description of the actual world and does not include the legendary world of the Ninth Heaven as in the original poem. Therefore, if translated as “As if the Milky Way fell off from the Ninth Heaven”, the line would present a space more in keeping with the original poem.

## 6. Discussion

The analysis in section 5 shows that poetic space is not equal to semantic meaning. A poem and its translation may be equivalent in terms of meaning, but the poetic spaces presented in the two versions still differ in some nuanced aspects. The poetic spaces in the poem “The Waterfall in Mount Lu Viewed from Afar” and its translation have some qualities in common. For example, in both versions, there are

transitions between static and dynamic states, and the images of the Censer Peak and the cloud rising around it are the same. However, the two spaces are different in terms of the flowing quality of waterfall, sound effect, and transcendence of the actual word. Firstly, the flowing quality of the waterfall is more prominent in the original poem. The expressions “挂(hang)” and “银河(the Milky Way)” in the original poem are both concerned with the softness and flowing beauty of the water flow. The word “挂(hang)” is omitted in the translation and the direct translation of the phrase “银河(the Milky Way)” has lost some of the flowing quality as we have analyzed in section 5.3. The word “stream” in the English translation also implies the flowing quality of the river; however, it is put as the “upended stream” which shows more of the speed and rush. Secondly, there is no overt wording on sound effect in the original poem, but the expressions of “飞流直下三千尺(Flying flow directly down three thousand feet)” and “银河落九天(the Silver River fall the Ninth Heaven)” also imply the speed and loudness of the water. In the English version, there is the direct description “the cataract sounds loud” which gives more prominence to the sound effect. Thirdly, the last line of the poem, “疑是银河落九天(Doubt is the Silver River fall the Ninth Heaven)”, introduces a legendary world which is beyond the actual word to the poetic space. The English translation mentions the “Silver River”, but the concept is new and what comes later in the line, “blue sky”, is also about the actual world. In this sense, the poetic space in the original poem has surpassed the actual world more than that in the English version does. In one word, reading a poem is like unfolding a painting, as mentioned earlier, and analyzing poetic spaces can provide a different perspective on guiding and evaluating the translation of poetry.

## 7. Conclusion

To summarize, this study is a preliminary attempt to explore the poetic space established in Chinese classical poetry and its translation with reference to the organization of language. Chinese classical poems often present a picture via a limited number of words and the presentation of the picture involves the construction of space. Investigating the poetic space established in the original poem and its translation can provide a new perspective on evaluating and guiding poetry translation. The poetic space discussed in this research refers to the world established by poetic language and perceived by readers. Word order and parts of speech play an important role in presenting the poetic space in a poem, with the former determining what comes in earlier and what does later in the space and the latter determining the static or dynamic qualities of the space, and this study mainly analyzes the presentation of poetic space in the translation of Chinese classical poetry from the two perspectives of parts of speech and word order. This is a preliminary study to analyze how poetic space is presented via the organization of language and we have not been able to find similar explorations. The studies reviewed in section 2 mostly investigate space in its abstract and general sense, and they have not touched upon the use of language or the issue of translation, while this study discusses poetic space in a more concrete sense in that it investigates the specific space established in poems and studies the presentation of such poetic space in relation to language use and translation. The analysis has shown that poetic space is not equal to semantic meaning and even when the semantic meaning of the translation is equal to that of the original poem, there may still be differences in terms of the poetic space. In this sense, analyzing poetic space can provide reference for evaluating the translation

quality of Chinese classical poetry. Generally speaking, exploring the poetic space involves the positioning of time and space and developmental changes. The poetic space may have various qualities, such as the dynamic and static states as analyzed in the case study. There are many other qualities that the poetic space may possess, apart from those discussed in this paper, which could be studied in the future research on this field. Besides, there are also other perspectives to analyze the presentation of poetic space, in addition to parts of speech and word order. Therefore, more studies can be done in the future to further explore the composition and qualities of poetic space and the language organization tools.

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