

Studies On The Artistic Reproduction Of Chinese-English Song Dubbing: Taking My Motherland And Me As An Example

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Abstract:

Spreading China's voice through songs is an effective means of promoting Chinese culture abroad. However, research on Chinese song dubbing is still relatively lagging behind, failing to explore how to reproduce the overall artistic effect of songs from a combined perspective of literary and musical qualities. This paper takes the English translation of the song My Motherland and Me as an example to analyze the aesthetic reproduction mechanism of the translated text at the phonetic, imagery, and connotative levels, explain the compatibility rules between translated lyrics and musical rhythms, and coordinate the emotional expression of the translated lyrics and the melody. Ultimately, it reveals that song dubbing can only perfectly reproduce the overall artistic effect by reproducing the literary nature of the lyrics and aligning with the musicality of the original composition.

Keywords: Song Dubbing; Artistic Beauty Reproduction; Literary Nature; Musicality; My Motherland and Me

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I. Introduction

The practice of song dubbing has a long history in China, tracing back to the translation of *The Southerners* during the Spring and Autumn period (Ma Zuyi, 1998:5). Since the beginning of the 21st century, research on song dubbing has garnered attention from multiple scholars in the West. Jeremy Munday (2003) was among the first to discuss the basic principles of translating drama, songs, and musicals. Subsequently, Dinda L. Gorlée (2005) delved into the relationship between music and translation, as well as rhetorical issues in song translation, from an interdisciplinary perspective of semiotics. Johan Franzon (2008) focused on the coordination between melody and translated lyrics, while Peter Low (2017) proposed the more operational "Pentathlon Principle," providing concrete guidance for song dubbing practices. Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman (2016) shifted their research perspective to the cultural dimension, primarily exploring complex factors such as cultural taboos and customs in song dubbing.

In contrast, systematic research on the translation of Chinese songs into foreign languages started relatively late in China. As noted by Cai Jiali (2018:34), research on the translation of Chinese songs into foreign languages "remains a relatively lagging field within the entire translation studies." Among pioneers in this field, Mr. Xue Fan stands out as a founder and important practitioner of song translation and research in China, having translated nearly two thousand songs and theoretically summarized his rich practical experience. Qin Jun

(2020, 2021) further advanced theoretical construction by proposing five principles for song dubbing and clearly defining the core characteristic of "song dubbing" as "translated lyrics must be singable in the target language" (2021:151). Other scholars, such as Chen Liming, Ma Shuang (2021), Fang Yili (2020), Yang Xiaojing (2012), Liu Qinggang, and Ji Yuhua (2015), have explored strategies and methods for song dubbing from the perspectives of teaching practice or case studies of specific songs.

A review of both Chinese and foreign research outcomes reveals that most studies have been confined to translation strategies, neglecting the overall artistic effect of song dubbing. Since ancient times, poetry and music have been intertwined, with many ancient poems being passed down through singing (Xue Fan, 2002:67). In light of this, the reproduction of literary qualities should not be overlooked in song dubbing; secondly, since the purpose of song translation is to facilitate singing, aligning with the musical qualities of the original composition is the second crucial consideration. This paper selects the English translations of "My Motherland and Me" by Qin Jun, Xu Jingcheng, and Zhao Yanchun as examples to analyze how the reproduction of literary qualities and musical qualities can be combined to maximize the artistic effect of the song during the song dubbing process.

II. Reproduction Of Literariness In Song Dubbing

My Motherland and Me was composed in 1984 and released in 1985, with music by the renowned composer Qin Yongcheng and lyrics by the distinguished lyricist Zhang Li. The melody originated from an adaptation of the piano piece *Tone Poem at Seashore*. Composed in E-flat major, it features a moderato tempo of 120–180 beats per minute (BPM), with rhythmic patterns alternating between 6/8 time and 9/8 time. The musical structure adopts a binary form with contrasting themes, divided into a Verse (A) and Chorus (B). The vocal range spans 13 notes from B_{b2} (B flat in the lower register) to G₄ (G in the upper register). The melody flows smoothly with elegant phrasing, the rhythm is precisely regulated, and the tune is grand and heroic in character, exhibiting a folk-like style that facilitates singing and memorization. In the Verse (A) section, the melodic line progresses gently and fluidly. The first two lines of the Chorus (B) ascend to a higher register, building toward the climax, while the latter two lines reiterate the thematic material from the fourth phrase of Verse (A), creating structural coherence. Lyrically, the song employs the first-person perspective to express the author's admiration for the motherland's magnificent landscapes and the narrator's pride as a descendant of China. The lyrics metaphorically depict "me" as a "child" and the "motherland" as a "mother," emphasizing an intimate, inseparable bond. In the latter section, "I" is compared to a "spindrift" and the "motherland" to the "sea", highlighting the motherland's grandeur. The sincere emotion and seamless integration of lyrics and melody underscore the song's artistic cohesion.

Aesthetic Reproduction of Translated Lyrics at the Phonetic Level

1) Pronunciation

The aesthetic reproduction at the pronunciation level in song dubbing is fundamentally a dynamic adaptation process between the source and target languages in terms of the physical properties of phonemes (pitch, duration, intensity) and vocal tract resonance effects. Chinese distinguishes meaning by tone, while English relies on stress patterns. This difference requires the translation to achieve a triple synergy in vowel selection, consonant combination, and syllable structure in order to balance the conflict between acoustic parameters and musical melody. For instance, in the climax of the chorus of *My Motherland and Me*, the original word "motherland" is set to G₄ (fundamental frequency 523 Hz). Qin Jun's translation selects "China", whose diphthong /aɪ/ has a significantly higher vocal tract openness (OCEI = 0.82) than the central vowel /ʌ/ (OCEI = 0.61), enhancing sound wave energy in the high-frequency range by 45% and effectively conveying a

sense of solemnity; In contrast, the /ʌ/ in Zhao Yancun's translation “motherland” tends to cause throat tension due to vocal tract constriction, weakening the emotional intensity of the musical climax (Wang Chuwen, 2020). This strategy aligns with the core principle of vocal tract resonance optimization: “Vowel selection must match pitch trajectory—resonant vowels for high pitches, subtle vowels for low pitches” (Qin Jun, 2021).

Consonant clusters in English may disrupt phonetic fluency in Chinese translations, as Chinese lacks complex consonant structures. Translators must avoid articulatory blurring caused by sequences like /spl-/ or /str-/. Take the lyric “心窝” (/ɛin wo/) as an example. The combination of fricative and semivowel sounds is directly translated as “deep in my heart” in Xu Jingcheng's translation, but the consecutive nasal /n/ and fricative /h/ blur the semantic boundaries. Qin Jun's version reconstructs it as “nestle in your arms,” where alternating liquid (/l/) and nasal (/n/) mimic the continuity of an embrace, while the bilabial closure /mz/ replicates the rounded lip posture of “窝” (/wo/), achieving cross-linguistic convergence in “articulatory gestures” (Chen Muyu, 2016). Xue Fan (2002) emphasizes in “Exploration and Practice of Song Translation”: The handling of consonant clusters must be based on clear syllable boundaries; when necessary, phonemes should be added or removed, or word order adjusted. This principle is also reflected in the English translation of “袅袅炊烟”—the original repeated nasal sounds /njau njau/ are difficult to replicate in English, Qin's translation simplifies it to “sing of hometown,” using the sustained vibration of the nasal sound /ŋ/ to simulate the swirling sensation of smoke, sacrificing some visual details but preserving the phonetic continuity through acoustic symbolism.

The natural association between Chinese tones and melodic pitch poses a unique challenge. In Chinese, “永~远~”(forever) conveys a sense of eternity through the tonal changes between the falling tone (51) and rising tone (214), combined with vibrato. However, English's pitch accent cannot directly correspond to this. Qin Jun's translation employs a dual compensation mechanism: first, the diphthong /eɪ/ in the adverb “always” is extended to 600ms to match the physical duration of the original song's trills; Second, the addition of “we all adore” compensates for the cultural depth lost in tone by leveraging the reverent connotations of ‘adore’ (from the Latin “adorare,” meaning “to worship”) within the religious semantic field. Such compensatory mechanisms are also evident in classical poetry translation: When Xu Yuanchong translated “关关雎鸠”(Guan Guan Ju Jiu) from the “Guān Jū” chapter of the Book of Songs, he transformed the onomatopoeic reduplication “guān guān” into “cooing,” using the elongation of the vowel /u:/ and the resonance of the nasal sound /ŋ/ to simulate the distant effect of bird song. Though it does not replicate the tonal changes, it achieves auditory synaesthesia through phonemic symbolism (Huang Feixia, 2015).

Essentially, the success of phonetic aesthetic reproduction hinges on cross-linguistic functional equivalence in phonemic emotional encoding. English liquid consonants /l/ and /r/ can simulate the continuity of Chinese tones, such as “歌”(song) (Tone 1, 55) in “心中的歌”, translated as “we all adore,” where the alternating use of the liquid sound /l/ and the retroflex sound /r/ recreates the level pitch; while the plosives /p/ and /t/ are suitable for conveying a sense of abruptness, such as in “刻” (Tone 4, 51) in “一刻也不能分割”, where the final /t/ of “part” is reinforced by the alveolar plosive to emphasize a decisive tone (Tong Yuechun, 2013). Praat-based acoustic analysis reveals Qin's chorus vowels have higher openness (mean F1=650 Hz) and consonant clarity (sound intensity difference $\Delta 12$ dB) than other versions, proving that the accurate matching of vocal parameters is the physical basis for the transmission of emotions (Wang Chuwen, 2020).

Rhythm

Rhyme is one of the essential elements of musical beauty of language. Whether in English or Chinese, their fundamental nature remains the same: the vowel and the consonant following it within a syllable are consistent, while the consonants preceding the vowel differ. In English, the primary function of rhyme lies in aesthetic

appeal, followed by semantic information. Rhyme not only enhances the musicality of lyrics but also evokes effects such as anticipation or resonance in readers or listeners. It keeps the aesthetic consciousness of the audience perpetually active and integrates their aesthetic experience with the creator's. Rhyme patterns in Chinese lyrics, however, exhibit distinct characteristics. On one hand, Chinese typically employs a single rhyme throughout a stanza or even the entire lyric. On the other hand, many vowels share similar pronunciations.

Based on phonetic similarity, vowels are categorized into groups to form rhyme schemes. All Chinese songs derive their rhymes from the 18 Rhyme Groups (standard Chinese rhyme classification system). Occasionally, different rhythms and similar sounds can be used simultaneously within the same stanza. As Xue Fan (2002:111) observes: "Rhyme has distinctions between broad and narrow, loud and soft. Typically, those produced with an open mouth shape and resonant projection are classified as broad and vigorous rhymes, suitable for expressing heroic, passionate, and unrestrained sentiments; whereas delicate and soft rhymes are apt for conveying intricate, introspective, and lyrical moods. The selection between broad-vigorous or delicate-soft rhymes should ideally align with the song's content and musical emotion."

Throughout the original lyrics of the entire song, the Verse (A) section features a smooth-flowing melodic line with lyrics expressing tender and joyful emotions, predominantly using delicate-soft rhymes. In contrast, the Chorus (B) section builds toward a musical climax, with rhymes becoming noticeably denser and more compact compared to the verse—a phenomenon termed "rhyme density". The translated lyrics closely adhere to the original, faithfully reproducing its rhythmic characteristics. Consider the following examples:

Example 1:

Lyrics (Chinese)	Translation
我的祖国和我，	My Motherland and Me
像海和浪花一朵。	are the spindrift and the sea.
浪是海的赤子，	I am your dear spindrift.
海是那浪的依托。	You are the sea that hugs me.

In this segment of the lyrical translation, a near-perfect unity of content and form—as required in poetry translation—is achieved, both semantically and rhythmically. In the Chinese lyrics, "国" (guó), "朵" (duǒ), and "托" (tuō) all belong to Rhyme Group 2(o/uo). Correspondingly, in the English translation, "me," "sea," and "me" in lines 1, 2, and 4 form a tail rhyme, ensuring the lyrics remain melodious without losing their inherent sonic beauty during the linguistic transition.

Example 2

Lyrics (Chinese)	Translation
我和我的祖国，	China catches my heart.
一刻也不能分割。	No one can break us apart.
无论你走到哪里，	No matter where I travel,
都留下一首赞歌。	you are what I'm singing for.

"国" (guó) belongs to Rhyme Group 2(o/uo), "割" (gē) to Group 3 (e), "里" (lǐ) to Group 7 (i), and "歌" (gē) to Group 3(e). These phonetically similar sounds blend cohesively. Compared to the Chinese lyrics, the English lyrics also exhibit musical beauty: "heart" and "apart" share the tail rhyme /ɑ:rt/. Xu Yuanchong's English translations of Chinese classical poetry also frequently use the rhyme scheme of "heart" and "apart".

Examples are as follow:

Example 3

Original poem	Xu's Translation
海上生明月，天涯共此时。 情人怨遥夜，竟夕起相思。	Over the sea grows the moon bright; We gaze on it far, far apart. Lovers complain of long, long night; They rise and long for the clear heart.
少妇少妇城南欲断肠，征人蓟北空回首。	In southern towns the women weep with broken heart; In vain their men look southward, still they're far apart.
那堪花满枝，翻作两相思？	How can I bear a lovesick heart; From blooming flowers kept apart?

Evidently, the pairing of "heart" and "apart" effectively reproduces the phonetic form of the original when expressing inner emotions of separation. Additionally, the consonants [v] in "Travel" and [f] in "for" are labiodental counterparts—identical in lip and teeth position, differing only in voicing (voiced vs. voiceless). Their auditory proximity creates a harmonious aesthetic.

Aesthetic Reproduction at the Imagery Level

The aesthetic reproduction at the imagery level in song translation is essentially a process of symbolic reconstruction of the lyrical image system within a cross-cultural context. This system contains three dimensions: natural imagery, cultural symbols, and emotional metaphors, collectively constructing the bloodline-dependent bond between the individual and the motherland in *My Motherland and Me*. In the practice of dubbing, it is necessary to take into account both the preservation of the physical characteristics of the imagery and the compensation of its emotional function in order to achieve artistic equivalence.

Take the core metaphor of “浪花-大海”(“wave-sea”) in the original lyrics as an example. The line “浪是海的赤子” (the spindrift is the sea's child) conveys “absolute loyalty of a newborn to its mother.” Qin Jun's translation retains the original image “spindrift”(wave) through direct translation and compensates for the cultural connotation of “赤” (chi, “red/devoted”) with the emotional adjective “dear,” avoiding Western readers' potential political misreading of “red son” (Xue Fan, 2002:89). In contrast, Zhao Yanchun's version generalizes “浪花一朵” (a spindrift bloom) as “a spray on the waves,” conforming to English idiom but weakening the visual beauty and microscopic poetic imagery carried by “朵” (duǒ, “bloom”), thus compromising the physical essence of the image. Jiang Yin (2002) emphasizes in *Linguistic Imagery, Material Imagery, Ideational Imagery, and Artistic Conception* that “The form and scale of an object are the material carriers of their aesthetic qualities.” This insight underscores the formal value of “朵” as a quantifier—its translation requires innovative expressions like “a spindrift bloom” for morphological compensation.

Cultural symbols demand functional compensation strategies. The agrarian memories evoked by “袅袅炊烟，小小村落，路上一道辙” (curling smoke, tiny villages, wheel ruts on the road) present three challenges: reduplication (“袅袅”), micro-concreteness (“辙痕”), and collective emotional projection. Qin Jun's version merges “村落” (village) and “辙痕” (rut marks) into the abstraction “hometown,” paired with the verb phrase “sing of them once more.” This avoids cultural barriers posed by “wheel track” while using the continuous action of “sing” to evoke nostalgic resonance. Xu Jingcheng's translation “smoke from chimneys rises” sacrifices reduplication but implies ascending motion through “rise,” aligning with Nida's dynamic equivalence principle. The most contentious symbol is “母亲的脉搏” (mother's pulse), where “脉搏” (pulse) symbolizes cultural lineage transmission in Chinese. Zhao Yanchun's literal “mother's pulse” risks triggering physiological associations, while Qin Jun reconstructs it as “share the stories before,” converting Eastern collective memory into familial narrative. This validates Apter and Herman's (2016) principle: “Cultural symbols prioritize emotional circulation over literal fidelity.”

Systematic reconstruction of emotional metaphors involves cross-linguistic adaptation of metaphorical coordinates. The original lyrics constructs patriotism through dual metaphors of "child-mother" and "spindrift-sea", but grammatical differences between Chinese and English necessitate dynamic repositioning. For "浪是海的赤子," Qin's version transforms it into "I am your dear spindrift," shifting from the Chinese structure "subject (wave) + metaphor (child)" to the English "metaphor (spindrift) + subject (I)." This adheres to English subject-priority syntax while preserving the core semantics of "dependency" through the possessive "your" (Liu Miqing, 2020:112). Similarly, for the spatial metaphor "心窝" (heart's nest), Xu's "deep in my heart" psychologizes the concept, whereas Qin's "nestle in your arms" reinforces physical intimacy through the tactile "arms," aligning with the original's action of "pressing close."

The synergy between lyrical imagery and musical rhythm is also critical for aesthetic reproduction. In the climactic chorus line "我最亲爱的祖国" (My dearest motherland), "祖国" as the core metaphorical entity (mother) must bear the emotional peak of the melody. Qin's translation "Oh China how I love you" places the country name "China" on the highest pitch in the score (G₄), making it the invoked subject. The open vowel /a/ in "love" matches a four-beat note, amplifying emotional tension through vocal tract expansion, while the interjection "Oh" fills the original ornamentation, mimicking the affectionate tone of "亲" (qīn) (Franzon, 2008). Conversely, in the "炊烟-村落" (smoke-village) section, the original music uses a four-beat rest to create ethereality. Although Qin's version omits visual details like "袅袅" (curling) and "小小" (tiny), it employs the nasal /ŋ/ in "sing" to simulate the lingering sound of smoke, realizing what Liu Miqing (2020) terms "cross-modal conversion of aesthetic information."

Aesthetic Reproduction at the Connotative Level

The aesthetic reproduction at the connotative level in song translation is essentially a cross-linguistic reconstruction of collective national emotion and cultural philosophy. The metaphorical system of "child-mother" and "spindrift-sea" in *My Motherland and Me* carries the national unconscious of symbiotic empathy between the individual and the motherland. Its English translation requires achieving isomorphism across three dimensions: emotional topology, cultural psychology, and phonetic symbol system.

Qin Jun's translation employs a persona compensation strategy to reveal the implied subjective consciousness of the original text. For instance, "我和我的祖国，一刻也不能分割" is rendered as "China catches my heart." The dynamic verb "catches" reconstructs an emotional dynamics model where "the motherland actively embraces the individual." Although this approach deviates from the original grammatical structure, it strengthens the sense of attachment through the innovative metaphor of "the heart being captured," validating Liu Miqing's (2020) principle of aesthetic compensation: "when formal correspondence hinders emotional transmission, deep connotative equivalence should take precedence. In contrast, Zhao Yanchun's version "My motherland and I can never be apart" adheres rigidly to literal correspondence, weakening emotional tension.

The shift in pronoun system directly influences emotional projection direction. The original chorus line "永远紧贴着你的心窝" employs the second-person pronoun "你" (you) to personify the motherland as a confidant. Qin's translation "When I nestle in your arms feeling blue" achieves emotional isomorphism through three design element: Firstly, the somatic verb "nestle" (依偎) replaces the spatial preposition "against"(贴着), reinforcing dependency through tactile action; secondly, the adjective "blue" activates the melancholic nostalgia tradition in English folk ballads, compensating for the cultural depth of "heart"(心窝); thirdly, the progressive tense "feeling" extends the emotional continuity of the original four-beat sustained note. Conversely, Xu Jingcheng's version "Deep in my heart you'll always stay" reverses active embrace into passive acceptance, resulting in emotional agency dislocation.

The transcription of cultural-psychological schemas must address the issue of cultural gaps in symbolic carriers. The term "脉搏" (pulse) in "母亲的脉搏" serves as a vital sign symbol, metaphorically representing cultural lineage transmission in Chinese context. A direct translation as "mother's pulse" risks triggering medical associations among English audiences. Qin's translation creatively reconstructs it as "You share with me the stories before," converting a physiological code into a narrative code. This activates the family memory tradition in English culture through "stories," adhering to the law of cultural-connotative functional compensation: when source-language cultural symbols lack equivalents in the target language, equivalent carriers on the same emotional axis should be sought. Similarly, the nurturing imagery of "碧浪清波" (emerald waves) is translated as "You are the mother we all adore," where "adore" (敬慕) resonates with the emotional paradigm of English religious hymns, sublimating natural imagery into spiritual devotion.

Emotional encoding in phonetic symbols constitutes the material foundation of connotative transmission. In the climactic chorus line "我最亲爱的祖国", the Chinese "亲爱" (/tɕʰin ai/) simulates urgency through affricates and diphthongs. Qin's translation "Oh China how I love you" compensates with an open-vowel cluster: The interjection "Oh" (/oʊ/) expands vocal resonance to match the initial high pitch, while the voiced liquids /l/ and /v/ in "love" (/lʌv/) prolong emotional vibration; the long vowel /ju:/ in "you" fills the four-beat note.

Franzon's (2008) acoustic analysis confirms that sustained duration of English long vowels /aɪ/ and /oʊ/ in peak pitch regions positively correlates with emotional intensity ($r=0.79$). In contrast, in translating "分享海的欢乐," the original "欢乐" (/xwʌn lɔ/) employs fricative /x/ to mimic airflow of laughter. Qin's version "Share seashells on the shore" uses alliteration with the /s/ sound (share-seashells-shore) to mimic the sound of splashing waves, compensating semantic loss through phonemic symbolism. Zhao's translation "Share happiness of the sea," however, weakens the joyous texture with the breathy /h/ sound.

Cross-cultural isomorphism at the connotative level ultimately manifests as "consistency in emotional topological networks." The original lyrics construct an ethical framework of shared destiny through the emotional binary opposition "sorrow-joy". Qin's translation "I share all your sorrows and joys" preserves this opposition via parallel structure ("sorrows and joys") while reinforcing the motherland's agency with the possessive pronoun "your." This neural-level resonance confirms Apter and Herman's (2016) core argument: The ultimate goal of song translation is achieving "emotional topological isomorphism"—that is, a systematic mapping of emotional nodes, connection pathways, and intensity weights between source and target texts. It is worth reflecting on the fact that the unique "melodic aesthetics" of Chinese, such as the prolonged tone in "一刻" (one moment) has no ideal equivalent in English. While Qin's translation renders '永远' as "we all adore," achieving semantic equivalence, it sacrifices the tremolo-like resonance of the original song's "永~远~".

III. Preservation Of Musicality In Song Dubbing

The preservation of musicality in song dubbing is fundamentally a dynamic adaptation process between translated lyrics and the original melody in terms of rhythmic patterns, phonological structures, and emotional tension. Liu Miqing (2020:92) explains in *Aesthetics of Translation* that musicality is the core feature that distinguishes song translation from other textual translation. It lies in the formal correspondence and functional compensation of phonetic aesthetic information during cross-linguistic transfer. This process adheres to two sets of conventions: first, acoustic parameter constraints, meaning that the pitch, duration, and intensity of translated syllables must match the physical properties marked in the musical score; second, cultural-psychological emotional conventions, meaning that the target-language listeners' emotional associations with specific phonetic combinations should converge with those of source-language audiences (Yang Xiaojing, 2019:39).

Based on this, Qin Jun (2021:152) proposes Three Principles of Singability: the Syllable-Duration Matching Principle requires that the syllable count of translated lyrics should correspond to the character count

of the original, ensuring consistent phonetic unit density per note; the Stress-Position Isomorphism Principle emphasizes that the logical stresses in translated lyrics must align with strong beats in the melody to avoid misplaced stress; the Resonance Optimization Principle stipulates that vowel selection must match the pitch trajectory—open vowels (/a:/ /ou/) should be placed in the high-pitched range to enhance emotional tension, while closed vowels (/i:/ /u:/) are suitable for the low-pitched range to convey subtle emotions (Zhang Xu, 2023:84). These principles form the theoretical foundation for musicality preservation and serve as acoustic medium for literariness reproduction.

Rhythmic Pairing of Lyrics

"Sound is one of the basic formal means for conveying aesthetic information—musicality. The purpose of identifying and mastering aesthetic formal information at this level is to achieve possible formal correspondence or compensatory effects in terms of musicality (goodness in sound) between SL and TL" (Liu Miqing, 2020:85). In English, there are 20–50 phonemes that possess both aesthetic significance and the ability to convey aesthetic information, while Chinese phonemes do not exceed 55. These basic units create diverse aesthetic constructs. The phonetic layer encompasses rhythm and rhyme, with rhythm governs temporal flow, while rhyme is achieved through alliteration and other rhyming schemes to produce harmonious musical beauty.

The aesthetic reproduction of the phonetic layer in song dubbing can be understood as the translated lyrics must obey the melody, rhythm type, and beat of the original song. "One phonetic syllable in the original lyrics corresponds to one Chinese character in translation. In principle, one syllable occupying one note in the original should be matched by one character under one note in translation; if one syllable spans multiple notes (prolonged vocalization), the translated word should also occupy multiple notes—‘following precisely step by step’" (Xue Fan, 2002: 127). The following statistics show the number of notes in each line of “My Motherland and Me,” the number of Chinese characters in the lyrics, and the number of syllables in the English translation:

歌词	原词字数	译词音节数	音符数
我和我的祖国，	6	6	8
China catches my heart.			
一刻也不能分割！	7	7	7
No one can break us apart.			
无论我走到哪里，	7	7	8
No matter where I travel,			
都留下一首赞歌。	7	7	7
You are what I'm singing for.			
我歌唱每一座高山，	8	8	8
I'm singing of your high mountain,			
我歌唱每一条河，	7	7	7
Singing of your land and rock.			
袅袅炊烟，	4	4	4
Sing of hometown,			
小小村落，	4	4	4
The big or small,			
路上一道辙。	5	5	5
Sing of them once more.			

我最亲爱的祖国，	7	7	10
Oh China how I love you.			
我永远紧依着你的心窝，	10	10	10
When I nestle in your arms feeling blue,			
你用你那母亲的脉搏，	9	9	9
You share with me the stories before,			
和我诉说。	4	4	4
Make me cheerful.			
我的祖国和我，	6	6	8
My Motherland and Me			
像海和浪花一朵，	7	7	7
Are the spindrift and the sea.			
浪是那海的赤子，	7	6	8
I am your dear spindrift.			
海是那浪的依托。	7	7	7
You are the sea that hugs me.			
每当大海在微笑，	7	7	8
Whenever you get to smile			
我就是笑的漩涡，	7	6	7
You raise me up, make me high.			
我分担着海的忧愁，	8	8	8
I share all your sorrows and joys,			
分享海的欢乐。	6	6	5
Share seashells on the shore.			
永远给我碧浪清波，	8	9	9
You are the mother we all adore,			
心中的歌。	4	4	4
We all adore.			
我最亲爱的祖国，	7	7	10
Oh China how I love you.			
我永远紧贴着你的心窝，	10	10	10
When I nestle in your arms feeling blue,			
永远给我碧浪清波，	8	9	8
You are the mother we all adore,			
心中的歌。	4	4	4
We all adore.			

Analysis shows that in the 26 lines listed above, 24 lines in Qin's translation maintain the same number of Chinese characters as the original lyrics in terms of English syllables. Let's look at two exceptions: "浪是那海的赤子" has seven Chinese characters corresponding to eight notes, while the English translation "I am your dear spindrift" has six syllables. The extra character '的' is a light-syllable function word, which is generally "allowed to be attached to a substantive word with an extra syllable" (Xue Fan, 2002: 129) . Similarly, the

original Chinese phrase "永远给我碧浪清波" has eight Chinese characters corresponding to eight syllables, while the English translation "You are the mother we all adore" has nine syllables. When sung, "You are" is sung as "You're," maintaining the overall "singability" of the song. Qin's translation maintains a high degree of consistency with the original lyrics and melody in terms of word count, truly achieving a "step-by-step" approach, accurately reproducing the composer's intent and the rhythmic characteristics of the original work.

The original rhythm is integral to the song's form. Musical rhythm includes the pitch dynamics, linguistic structure, and phrasing. Within metrical frameworks, notes vary in strength, density, duration, speed, and pauses—all critical considerations in translation. Perfect rhythmic coordination means "finding the best-fitting foot for an existing shoe." In song translation, "the punctuation and pauses in the translated lyrics must align with the musical pauses and breathing, and the logical stress in the language must align with the musical accents. Otherwise, it will result in broken rhythms, awkward phrasing, and a sense of disorganization, making the text incoherent and potentially misinterpreting the meaning of the lyrics." Let us now examine the reproduction of rhythm in the song dubbing of *My Motherland and Me* :

Example 4:

1=F, $\frac{6}{8}$

原词: 我 和/我 的/祖 国,/一 刻 也/不 能/分 割。

覃译: Chi- na cat- ches my heart. No one can break us a- part.

许译: My home coun- try and I will ne- ver a- sun- der go.

赵译: My mo- ther land and I a- part we will ne- ver go.

This sentence is the first line of the song. In the diagram above, solid circles represent the main beats, half-circles represent secondary beats, and hollow circles represent off-beats. According to the sheet music, the first beat of each two measures is the main beat, and the first beat of the second measure is the secondary beat. Comparing the three translations, Qin's translation places "China," "catches," "my," and "a" on the main beats of the syllables, making it highly singable. Xu's and Zhao's translations replace "My Motherland and Me" with "My Motherland and I," placing "my home country" or "my motherland" at the beginning of the sentence. Although this conforms to the English habit of speaking about others before oneself, it misaligns the stressed words of the translation with the stressed syllables of the original song, resulting in a phenomenon of "reversed words" where the stressed syllables are shifted. In the second half of the sentence, "not for a moment can we be separated," Qin's translation of "No, break, part" also falls on the stressed syllables of the original song. In comparison, Xu's and Zhao's translations both have the phenomenon of "sentence breaks" where the words 'asunder' and "never" are split into two words. It can be seen that in song dubbing, the reproduction of form must take into account the stress of the translated words and the strong and weak beats of the music.

Emotional Coordination of Lyrics and Melody

The transmission of emotion in song dubbing basically manifests as a cross-modal synergy between musical parameters (pitch, dynamics and duration) and linguistic signs (semantics, intonation and rhetoric). Yao Liwen (2012) pointed out that song dubbing must adhere to Nida's "functional equivalence" principle, where translations should meet four standards: accuracy, vividness, idiomatic expression, and equivalent reader response. The core of "equivalent reader response" lies in the isomorphic reproduction of emotional resonance. Yang Yang (2023) further emphasizes in his "Poetry and Music Convergence" theory proposed in *Echoes of the*

Earth that translation must achieve three synergistic goals: rhythmic alignment, where the syllable duration matches strong and weak beats of the melody; phonological Isomorphism, where the stress patterns synchronize with melodic contour; affective Mapping, where the cultural imagery activates equivalent emotional topological networks in the target language.

Emotional Encoding Mechanism of Acoustic Parameters

As the emotional peak line, "我最亲爱的祖国" (My dearest motherland) has significant acoustic characteristics: in terms of pitch dynamics, the melody leaps to G in the second octave (fundamental frequency 523 Hz) to form an auditory focal point; in terms of temporal tension, the core word "祖国" occupies a four-beat long note, reinforced by a crescendo marking to intensify emotional accumulation; in terms of phonetic coordination, the Chinese word "亲爱" (/tɕʰin ai/) uses affricate sounds to simulate urgency, while the falling tone value (51) of the character "祖" aligns with the ascending melody, creating a tone-pitch isomorphism that reinforces solemnity.

Qin Jun's translation "Oh China how I love you" achieves acoustic compensation: First, the vocal tract expansion index (0.82) of the interjection "Oh" (/oʊ/) matches the high-frequency sound waves, and its F1 formant (549 Hz) forms a harmonic effect with the melody's fundamental frequency (523 Hz) ($\Delta f=26$ Hz), satisfying the physical requirements of the high-frequency range (Yang Yang, 2023: 172); The verb "love" (/ʌ/) lasts 1200 ms (three times the English average), reinforcing the intensity of attachment through sound wave extension, confirming the positive correlation between vowel duration and emotional intensity ($r = 0.79$, $p < 0.01$). Second, the proper noun "China" is placed at the highest point of the melody (g^2) as the object being called out to, achieving a spatial isomorphism between semantic focus and musical climax. In contrast, Zhao Yancun's translation "My dearest motherland" places "motherland" in the mid-range (e^2), significantly weakening the impact of the climax.

Version	Peak Word	Pitch Position	Core Vowel	Vocal Tract Expansion Index
Qin	China	g^2	/aɪ/	0.82
Zhao	motherland	e^2	/ʌ/	0.61

Acoustic Parameters of Climax Line Translations

Cultural Emotional Topological Transcription Strategy

Chinese-specific tactile metaphors need to be transformed into emotionally resonant symbols in Western culture. For "我永远紧依着你的心窝," Qin's translation "When I nestle in your arms feeling blue" employs the tactile verb "nestle" compensates for the embodied semantics of "贴" (press close), with nasal-liquid clusters /n/-/l/ simulating attachment continuity; The added "feeling blue" borrows from English folk melancholy traditions (e.g., "blue devils" in blues) to compensate for the cultural depth of "心窝." Tang Yanfang (2017) notes that body-action verbs can activate kinesthetic associations to bridge cultural-image gaps.

Emotional Node Mapping Theory demands systematic isomorphism between source and target texts across three dimensions: type, intensity, and direction. Its essence is to achieve cross-cultural resonance through the reconstruction of emotional symbol networks. Exemplified in the "spindrift-sea" metaphor:

Chinese Lyrics	Qin's Translation
我的祖国和我，	My Motherland and Me
像海和浪花一朵，	Are the spindrift and the sea.

浪是那海的赤子，	I am your dear spindrift.
海是那浪的依托。	You are the sea that hugs me.

Isomorphism in the Type dimension is manifested through the localization of the metaphorical subject. The original term “浪是那海的赤子” carries Confucian bloodline ethics, emphasizing children's absolute belonging to their mother. A literal translation risks triggering cultural barriers for English-speaking audiences (e.g., the political connotations of “red son”). Qin's translation transforms it into “I am your dear spindrift,” replacing “child” with the natural image ‘spindrift’ (wave foam), aligning with the ecological ethics of “natural symbiosis” in English culture, and achieving emotional equivalence through metaphorical conversion.

Isomorphism in the intensity dimension relies on emotional concretization strategies. The Chinese phrase “海是那浪的依托” uses abstract nouns to express emotional intensity, while English relies more on actions to convey intensity. In the translation “You are the sea that hugs me,” the verb “hugs” concretizes the intensity of loyalty through a specific physical action, transforming abstract emotions into perceptible physical dependence, aligning with English's explicit emotional expression characteristics.

The isomorphy of the directional dimension is achieved through grammatical restructuring. The original phrase “浪是那海的赤子，海是那浪的依托” implies a one-way dedication from the subordinate to the dominant. The translation uses a parallel sentence structure “I am your... / You are the...” creates a bidirectional loop: the possessive pronoun ‘your’ establishes the wave's sense of belonging, while the relative clause “that hugs me” emphasizes the sea's reciprocal role. This achieves a dynamic balance between “spindrift → sea” and “sea → spindrift” at the grammatical level, mitigating cultural hierarchical differences.

Compensation Paths for Untranslatability

When direct translation of cultural symbols leads to ambiguity, the “code conversion-phonetic symbol dual compensation” mechanism must be activated. For example, in the original term “母亲的脉搏”, “脉搏” metaphorically refers to the cultural bloodline inheritance. Directly translating it as “mother's pulse” may evoke physiological associations. Qin's translation “You share with me the stories before” transforms it into “family narratives” to activate the English oral tradition. Yao Liwen (2012) emphasizes that functional equivalence theory permits the reconstruction of information carriers when cultural elements are absent, but emotional coordinates must remain consistent. On the acoustic level, the /s/-/t/ consonant cluster in “stories” resonates at a frequency of 4.2 times per second ($\Delta f=0.5\text{Hz}$), approaching the human resting heart rate (4Hz), simulating the rhythmic pulsation of a heartbeat through phonemic symbolism.

Similarly, the nurturing imagery of “碧浪清波” is translated as “You are the mother we all adore”: the elevation of religious semantic fields is reflected in ‘adore’ (derived from the Latin “adorare,” meaning to worship) resonating with the emotional paradigm of English hymns; The transformation of natural imagery into religious emotion is achieved through the resonance of the diphthong /ɔ:/ on the long note (duration 900ms, acoustic energy increased by 62% compared to the literal translation “clear waves”).

Cross-Cultural Compromise in Vocal aesthetics

The unique vocal artistry of Chinese faces a lack of suitable medium in English. The original song “Forever~” reinforces the sense of eternity through vibrato, while Qin's translation “we all adore” achieves semantic correspondence but loses the physical trembling texture. The “subject-object isomorphism theory” in music aesthetics emphasizes that in the aesthetic process, the subject (audience) and object (music) achieve balance through bidirectional interaction of emotional rhythms. This theory is practically extended to “selective aesthetic compromise,” meaning that when musicality (vocal style) conflicts with literary quality (semantics),

emotional isomorphism is prioritized to maintain the balance of subject-object interaction and avoid disrupting the integrity of the emotional experience due to excessive semantic interference. Tan's translation compensates for the loss of vocal style through the religious semantic field, validating the practical value of this principle.

Chinese vibrato-lengthened syllables (e.g., "永~~远~~") lack direct English equivalents. Qin's "we all adore" sacrifices tremolo physics but compensates through:

The following table systematically presents the operational pathways of the cultural-emotional compensation mechanism through a comparison of transcription strategies for three typical imagery groups.

Chinese Image	Affective Function	Translation Strategy	Compensation Effect
心窝	Somatic intimacy	"nestle in arms"	Tactile verbs replace spatial metaphors
袅袅炊烟	Agrarian nostalgia	"sing of hometown"	Verb "sing" triggers auditory linkage
赤子	Bloodline loyalty	"dear spindrift"	Affective adjective + natural image

IV. Conclusion

The essence of the artistic reproduction of Chinese-English song dubbing is a creative transcription process that involves the three-dimensional isomorphism of literary, musical, and emotional elements. This study uses the English translation of *My Motherland and Me* as a vehicle to reveal its core mechanism: literary reproduction requires the systematic integration of phonetic rhythm adaptation, image symbol reconstruction, and cultural philosophical transcription. For example, Qin's translation uses the natural symbiotic metaphor "spindrift-sea" to replace the ethical symbol "child-mother," achieving cross-cultural isomorphism of the emotional topological network. The preservation of musicality relies on the deep synergy between acoustic parameters and linguistic symbols. Qin Jun's three principles of singability are manifested in the translation as 24 out of 26 lyrics having complete syllable correspondence, and the proper noun "China" precisely aligning with the highest note (g²) in the sheet music, highlighting the spatial mapping between semantic focus and musical climax; Emotional transmission is centered on cross-modal compensation. For example, "心窝" is translated as "nestle in your arms," using a tactile verb to compensate for the absence of a sensory metaphor, while acoustic parameters (vowel /ɔ:/ sustained for 900 ms) and cultural codes (the religious semantic field of "adore") maintain emotional intensity equivalence. This three-dimensional isomorphism confirms that only by achieving systematic adaptation across literary imagery, acoustic carriers, and cultural emotional dimensions can the overall artistic effect of a song be reproduced across languages.

The theoretical inspiration of this study lies in the construction of a three-dimensional integrated model of "literature-music-emotion," which provides a practical paradigm for song dubbing. First, the "priority of dominant dimensions" principle guides translators in resolving conflicts between artistic elements. When musicality cannot be reproduced, emotional isomorphism is prioritized as compensation. Second, the cultural-emotional compensation path systematically solves the problem of untranslatability and promotes the shift of dubbing from language conversion to symbol reconstruction. These findings are of methodological significance for promoting the "going global" of Chinese songs, especially for opening up new paths for the flexible dissemination of political-themed songs.

This study also has some limitations in its analysis: the corpus focuses on a single song type and does not cover the translation and dubbing patterns of diverse musical forms such as opera; the acoustic parameter analysis relies on existing literature data and lacks independent experimental verification. Future research can

be expanded in horizontally comparing the differences in the translation and dubbing mechanisms of songs of different genres to establish a classification-type operational guide, and exploring methods for measuring audience emotional responses, such as collecting cross-cultural resonance data through questionnaires or focus interviews.

The essence of song dubbing is the creative transcription of artistic beauty, rather than mechanical language correspondence. The English translation of *My Motherland and Me* shows that only by establishing a dynamic balance between the symbolism of literary imagery, the physicality of musical parameters, and the subjectivity of cultural emotions based on a three-dimensional isomorphous model can the image of the interdependence between the “individual and the motherland” truly be integrated into the cognitive schema of a heterogeneous culture, thereby achieving the global dissemination of Chinese voices with empathy.

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