

# 试论英语矛盾修辞及其汉译

## 摘要

英语矛盾修辞法是一种将一组语意相反的词或短语结合在一起的修辞手法。自古英语矛盾修辞就被广泛运用在文学中，尤其以诗歌和莎士比亚时代的剧作品为主。而今矛盾修辞法已被运用于人们的口头交际中，矛盾修辞法的运用已成为一种说话的艺术。

本论文主要讨论了矛盾修辞的结构，以及与一些相近的汉语修辞法的对比，最后讨论了矛盾修辞法的汉译，以让广大的英语学习者更好的了解矛盾修辞法。第一章为引言，主要介绍了课题的研究对象，研究方法以及文献综述，并初步介绍了论文的内容结构。第二章对英语矛盾修辞手法做了较为详细的介绍并将其与汉语三个相关的修辞手法做了比较。第三章主要讨论了英语矛盾修辞的汉译方法并提出了翻译建议。第四章为总结部分，在总结本文观点的基础上，提出了研究过程中的相关不足点，展望了以后的研究前景。

本文认为，矛盾修辞法以其简洁的结构，丰富的内涵而在众多修辞手法中独树一帜。本文最大的特色是引用了大量的例子来论述主要观点，以加强可读性。第三章提到的翻译方法以及通过比较分析不同的汉译例子，为读者提供了实用的翻译参考。

关键词：矛盾修辞，比较，文学，结构，翻译

# ABSTRACT

## A Brief Discussion of English Oxymoron and its Chinese Translation

English Oxymoron is a kind of rhetoric device that uses two contradictory words or phrases to express a unique idea. English Oxymoron is widely used in English literature, especially in pomes and Shakespeare dramas since the ancient times. In recent years, it is more applied in everyday communications. Oxymoronic expression has become an art of speech in today's society.

This paper deals mainly with the structure of oxymoron, a comparison between English oxymoron and some Chinese figures of speech, and Chinese translation of oxymoronic expressions to help English learners better understand oxymoron.

In Chapter One, an introduction to the study points out the objective of the research, describes the methodology of the study, a literary review of the research and exhibits the arrangement of the thesis.

In Chapter Two, the paper begins with the definition of English oxymoron, develops with the analytical comparison between structures of English oxymoron and Chinese rhetoric device “反映” because “反映” is the most similar in structure with oxymoron.

In Chapter Three, different translation methods of English oxymoron are discussed and some translation suggestions are made in order to help English learners gain a more complete understanding of the translation of oxymoronic expressions.

Chapter Four is the conclusion, which summaries the findings of the study by pointing out its advantages, limitations and prospect for further study.

This paper argues that English oxymoron is unique in its own way when compared with Chinese rhetoric devices, because oxymoronic expressions are concise in structure but rich and delicate in meaning. Many examples are applied to give informative details to support the main thesis. The translation methods mentioned in the third chapter can offer English learners some reference in translating oxymoron by comparing different examples.

Keywords: oxymoron; comparison; literature; structure; translation

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# Chapter One Introduction

## 1.1 A brief introduction to the thesis

In our daily life, there are a lot of emotions that you can not express explicitly; therefore, you need some rhetorical devices to express yourself right to the point. Oxymoron is one of the devices. Unlike others figurative devices, oxymoron is a unique device in that it combines two contradictory words or expressions together to express a seemingly self-contradictory meaning. Oxymoron is often used in such literature as poems, dramas, and lyrics. With the explosion of information today, oxymoron is not limited to be a concept in literature anymore; oxymoronic expressions are now widely used in many fields of the society ranging from politics, economy, and science to technology, and entertainment. Oxymoronic expressions have become an art of speech and a manifestation of high literary attainments. Please look at following examples:

(1) It is an *open secret* that the bulk of funding for the three US weapon systems -- about NT \$25.5billion – and NT \$16billion in funding for the F-16 fighters are included in the “classified” part of the budget. This is set for preliminary review on Monday. (*Taipei Times*)

(2) The shackles of an old love straightened him .His honor rooted in dishonor stood, and faith unfaithful kept him *falsely true*. (Alfred Tennyson: *Lancelot and Elaine*)

(3) He sat there and watched them, so *changelessly changing*, so bright and dark, so bright and dark, so grave and gay. (Yu, 2006: 106)

(4) *Distinctly vague* about the Pisan Renaissance controversies and frankly indifferent to Romanesque architecture, they arrive by plane, train or couch, simply to spend an average total of 75 minutes on the green turf of the Cathedral, the campanile (or learning tower) and the Baptistery. (ibid.)

(5) But I will write again to Maunta, and keep her at my cell till Romeo come: Poor *living corpse* closed in a dead man’s tomb. (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*)

Up till now, there are all kinds of researches on oxymoron concentrating on its classification, rhetorical functions and translation methods, but all the classifications have not

fully explained the differences and similarities of oxymoron and some Chinese figurative devices similar in function to oxymoron, such as “反映”, “对顶”, and “逆喻”. What are the similarities with these devices in structure? This paper aims to give a summary of oxymoron by a comparison between oxymoron and some Chinese figurative devices, in which a table, and a large number of examples will be applied and then the paper will have a discussion of its Chinese translations.

## **1.2 Literary review**

Generally speaking, the current studies of oxymoron often emphasize the rhetoric and literary functions. Undeniably, some of those studies do deal with the issues, but unfortunately most of them are but a superficial introduction to oxymoron and thus without any genuine insight. Those studies focus only upon oxymoron itself, and isolate it from the big family of figurative devices. The researchers of those studies have not explained to us what’s the relationship with the other similar devices? And in what way is oxymoron unique? An understanding into these aspects not only helps us to know more about oxymoron but also sheds light upon other relative devices. Oxymoron is a device of English language, as a foreign language learner, the best way to study oxymoron is to combine it with the Chinese figurative devices with the similar functions or structures.

Based on the previous studies, the thesis attempts to have a thorough comparison of oxymoron and some other Chinese devices, and analyze the translation methods of oxymoronic expressions.

## **1.3 Content of the paper**

The thesis is divided into four chapters:

In Chapter One, an introduction to the study points out the objective of the research, describes the methodology of the study, a literary review of the research and exhibits the arrangement of the thesis.

In Chapter Two, the paper begins with the definition of English oxymoron, develops with the analysis of oxymoron and three Chinese figurative speeches and ends with a comparison between structures of oxymoron and “反映” because “反映” is the most similar in structure with oxymoron.

In Chapter Three, different translation methods of English oxymoron are showed to the readers and some translation suggestions are made in order to help English learners gain a more complete understanding of the translation of oxymoronic expressions.

Chapter Four is the conclusion, which summaries the findings of the study by pointing out its advantages, limitations and prospect for further study.

## Chapter Two A Brief Discussion of English Oxymoron

### 2.1 Definitions of English oxymoron

Before the study of “oxymoron”, there is a need to know what “oxymoron” is. Dictionary entries can be a good reference here:

Oxymoron is a self-contradictory combination of words or smaller verb units; usually noun-noun, adjective-noun, adverb-adverb, or adverb-adj. “oxymoron” itself is an oxymoron, from the Greek meaning “sharp-dull”. Others are “bitter sweet”, “jamb-shrimp”, “pianoforte”, and “chiaroscuro”. The Latin *MAXIM Festina lente* (“Hurry slowly”) is an oxymoron. (Holman, 1989:352)

Generally speaking, a figure of speech that combines two usually contradictory terms in a compressed paradox, as in the word “bittersweet” or the phrase “living death”, oxymoronic phrase, like Milton’s “darkness visible”, were especially cultivated in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century poetry. (Sun, 2007:1-2) After the observance of the dictionaries, the following are the explanations from rhetorical books and literary references.

Oxymoron is “A figure which combines incongruous and apparently contradictory words and meaning for a special effect”. (Cuddon, 1998:896)

This figure surprisingly juxtaposes contrasted or opposed meanings. It is most commonly a phrasal figure, and the collocations with carrying it are usually adverb + adjective, or adjective + noun, or adjective + adjective, or noun + noun ... The examples may suggest that the figure is most often used to frame witticisms, often of a mordant kind. Sentences are sometimes connected semantically by what is in effect oxymoron. (Nash, 1989:291)

An exact formative equivalence of oxymoron is almost absent in Chinese. But there is a similar concept of oxymoron in Chinese, but if oxymoron is comprehended in a broad sense, a lot of such expressions can be found, for example “美丽的错误” (Wang, 2008:1-2) .

### 2.2 An analysis of oxymoron and three Chinese figures of speech

#### 2.2.1 Oxymoron and “*fan ying*(反映)”

The Chinese rhetorical device “反映”and “对照”（or “对衬”）are the two sub-devices of“映衬”. Their function is to explain two contradictory characters and to complement each other in order to make the features more striking. However, “反映”is similar to English oxymoron in that it reveals the contradictoriness of something in itself and often brings an unexpected result in function; while “对照” is similar to English contrast in function, which focuses on the contradictoriness of two different things or two opposite sides of one thing.

There are many examples of applying “反映” both in our daily speech and literary works. Please look at the following examples:

- (6) 辛辛苦苦的官僚主义
- (7) 他笨得多灵巧
- (8) 《为了忘却的纪念》

The example (8) is a title of the great writer *Lunxun*'s article which was in memory of the revolutionary writers who were secretly killed by the Kuomintang reactionary. In the title “忘却的 (forgotten)”, used to modify the word “纪念 (memory)”, was in essence the antonym of the latter; this expression however, not only deeply demonstrates the magnificence of this article but also makes the title striking and surprising.

In English oxymoron we can also find such expressions as “proud humility”, “beautiful tyrant” and “an honorable villain”. However there's a difference between “反映” and English oxymoron: in oxymoron, the most applied structure is an opposite adjective modifying a noun or an opposite adverb modifying an adjective; while the Chinese “反映” has another complex structure as we can see in the sentence “于无声处听惊雷(listening to the astonishing thunder in a silent place)” The Chinese structure is a adverbial modifier of place + verb-object. This is not used in English oxymoron. Other differences of “反映” and oxymoron will be talked about in the following discussion.

### 2.2.2 Oxymoron and “*dui ding*(对顶)”

The Chinese rhetoric device “对顶”refers to a speech device in which two words or phrases that are opposite or exclusive in meaning to each other in a way or another form a sentence to describe things, explain reasons, and to bring about some unexpected joy.(Cheng, 1992:546).

There are mainly three kinds of structures in Chinese “对顶”:

Modifier + headword

- (9)这是我党历史上的一场戏剧，一场可悲的喜剧。

This is a comedy in the history of our Party, a tragic comedy.



Subject + predicate

(10) 怪人不怪 The eccentric person is not eccentric.

(11) 他（梁保生）觉得照党的指示给群众办事，受苦也是享乐（To suffer is to enjoy.）

Parallel sentences (3A) or parallel sentence components (3B)

(12) 当我沉默时，我觉得充实，我将开口，同时感到空虚。

When I am silent, I feel replete; as I open my mouth to speak, I am conscious of emptiness.

(13) 刘福子是个有讨人厌又叫人喜的人，什么话从他嘴里说出来都有滋有味……

Liu Fuzi is at once a nuisance and a love, whatever he says is very interesting.

From the above examples we can see that the English oxymoron is in fact the same with “对顶” in the first structure and the 3B structure mentioned above. “对顶” is much wider in the scope of sentence structure compared with English oxymoron. Oxymoron is only applicable in the unit of words instead of the predicative structure.

Mr. Li Guonan once gave an explanation to a sentence in *Above Love* (《爱之上》) to further clarify the difference: “初恋的秘密是藏不住的秘密，它怕被人知道，又喜欢被人知道；它还是一种甜蜜的痛苦 (sweet sorrow)，折磨人的快乐 (annoying happiness)。” Here, Mr. Li points out that, “甜蜜的痛苦” and “折磨人的快乐” are exactly the oxymoronic expression, but “它怕被人知道，又喜欢被人知道” is a typical Chinese “对顶” expression that cannot be found in oxymoron. Oxymoron is a device made up of the phrasal structure, while “对顶” contains the sentence structure. (Li, 1999:405)

### 2.2.3 Oxymoron and “*ni yu* (逆喻)”

According to *English-Chinese Dictionary* and *English Rhetoric Device* ( Xu, 1996: 290), oxymoron is translated in to “逆喻” in Chinese, and thus classifying oxymoron into the family of metaphor. This is not reasonable because according to the Chinese rhetoric device system, any device related to metaphor must have a vehicle, while an oxymoron usually does not have any figurative meaning, let alone an implicit vehicle.

For example: *His (Fred) long association with Mrs. Steele convinced him that she was an ugly swan.*

As there is “美若天仙” in Chinese, there is a simile in English expressing the same idea : *as graceful as a swan*. In the example, after getting along with her for a long time, Fred realized that Mrs. Steele is in fact a lady with a beautiful looking yet an ugly heart. Therefore, some people think that “it is reasonable to consider oxymoron as a special kind of analogy”. The

examples to support this belief are:“ burning snow/ cloudy clarity” (Gu, 1985:3-8) . In the examples “burning” and “cloudy” are undeniably hidden metaphor; their vehicles are respectively “burning fire” and “cloudy clouds”. It can be safely argued that this is actually the integration of two rhetoric devices which do not have any features of simile. As a result, it is not correct to translate oxymoron as “逆喻”.

## 2.3 A comparison of the structure between oxymoron and “*fan ying* (反映)”

Oxymoron is most similar to the Chinese rhetoric device “反映”in structure. In the following discussion, the detailed comparison will be made in order to better understand both oxymoron and “反映”, and to know more clearly why oxymoron can not be regarded as “反映”.

According to *English Rhetoric Dictionary*, there are seven types of structures in oxymoron namely: 1. adjective + noun; 2. V-ing/ed + noun; 3. adverb + adjective; 4.adverb + V-ing; 5. verb + adverb; 6. adjective + adjective; 7. noun + noun. According to all kinds of materials, this paper classifies Chinese “反映”into following types:1. adjective + noun; 2. adverb + adjective; 4.adverb + verb; 5.adverb + adverb; 6. noun + noun; 7. adjective + adjective. The first three types are in a modification-center structure, the last four types are in a parallel structure. Now a concrete comparison will be made in the following to discuss the similarities and differences in structure and in function.

### 2.3.1 Similarities in structure types

English		Chinese	
Relationship of modification	The structures of oxymoron	The structures of 反映	Relationship of modification
modification-center	adjective + noun V-ing/ed + noun	adjective+ noun	modification-center
	Verb + adverb adverb+ V-ing	adverb +verb	
	adverb + V-ing adverb + adjective	adverb+adjective	

Adjective (V-ing/ed) + noun

It is a common phenomenon in English oxymoron to modify a noun with an adjective opposite in meaning.

(14) “The headmaster’s wife keeps on asking me to dinner. It’s a *perfect nuisance*. I never got an evening to myself in that place.”(Katherine Mansfield, the Singing Lesson)

(15)细味他俩最近的几页可爱的历史。想一节伤一回心，但他宁愿这样甜蜜的伤心。  
(《朱自清散文集》第一卷 11 页)

Here it is necessary to point out that in English oxymoron there is a structure: V-ing/ed + noun, while it can not be found in Chinese. For example: a living death, loving hate etc. The present participle *living*, *loving*, both of which serve as the attributive modifiers to modify nouns are the same with adjectives in function; therefore, this paper classifies this structure into the same category with “adjective + noun”.

Adverb + verb

According to the classification of the structures in English oxymoron in *English Rhetoric Device Dictionary*, there are altogether two kinds of the oxymoronic expressions formed by an adverb and a verb: adverb + V-ing (changelessly changing), and verb + adverb. It is argued that the structure verb + adverb in Chinese is different to either of two kinds in English mentioned above. The reasons are: on one hand, as was argued in the first formation, there is no such form as present participle in Chinese; hence this paper will put adverb + V-ing into the category adverb + adjective; on the other hand, in Chinese there is only adverb + verb, no verb + adverb. As a result, the structure verb + adverb in Chinese is different to adverb + V-ing or verb + adverb in English, but they are all the combination of an adverb and a verb with the former’s meaning opposite to the latter. Look at the following examples:

(16) Love harmfully

(17) Hasten slowly

(18) Shine darkly

(19)人们到那里出兵，只消几天没有水吃，就活活地要渴死了。(《儒林外史》第三十九回)

Adverb + adjective (V-ing).

It is common in English to modify an adjective with an adverb, and to modify a verb with a V-ing, but it is not so common in Chinese. Examples:

(20) “How you shot the goat and frightened the tigers to death,” said Miss Mebbin, with her *disagreeably pleasant* laugh. (Saki, Mrs. Packletide’s Tiger)

(21)但他不敢把照片出示给别人，他也不敢让其他人知道他每个星期天和凌雪照相。他必须偷偷摸摸地去做一个光明正大的人。(王蒙：《布扎》)

### 2.3.2 Differences in structure types

As is shown in the last chapter, there are two forms in Chinese “反映” that can not be used in English oxymoron, namely: “verb + verb”, “adverb +adverb”.

“Verb + verb” in Chinese “反映”

This structure can only be found in Chinese, but not in oxymoron. The following is some examples:

(22)世界多极化、经济全球化的深入发展，引起世界各种思想文化，历史的和现实的，外来的和本土的，进步的和落后的，积极的和颓废的，展开了相互激荡，有吸纳又有排斥，有融合又有斗争，有渗透又有抵御。（江泽民：《在中国文联第七次全国代表大会、中国作协第六次全国代表大会上的讲话》）

“Adverb + adverb” in Chinese “反映”

In “反映”, this structure is mostly expressed in adverbs of different angles, different scopes to modify the same object. For example: “团结地、奋勇地斗争” or “渐渐地、日复一日地……” It is not uncommon to apply this structure with adverbs opposite in meaning to bring about great rhetoric function. Here are some examples:

(23)……其中似乎确凿只有一些野草，但那里却是我的乐园。（鲁迅：《从百草园到三味书屋》）

Also, we can see that there are adjective + adjective, noun + noun these two types of structure both in oxymoron and “反映”, but they are different in their own language system.

the differences of adjective + adjective in “反映” and oxymoron

The structure adjective + adjective in English is a modification in relationship. That is to say, the former is used to modify the latter; while in English, they are parallel in relationship. Here are some examples:

(24) Cold warm embrace

(25)An honest unscrupulous merchant

(26)啊，祖国，我亲爱的母亲！

你是那么古老而又年轻；

你是那么富饶而又贫穷；

你是那么先进而又落后。

（刘景林：《祖国啊，母亲》）

The differences of noun + noun in “反映” and oxymoron

In the following example (27) *billions and billions of* and *zilches* are modificational in relationship while in example (28) “正面” and “反面”, “直路” and “弯路” are parallel in relationship.

(27) “Prof. Zog, why are we spending billions and billions of zilches to land a flying saucer on Earth when there is no life there?” (Art Buchwald, *Is There Life on Earth?*)

(28) 革命和革命战争是进攻的，但是也有防御和后退——这种说法才是完全正确的。为了进攻而防御，为了前进而后退，为了向正面而向侧面，为了走直路而走弯路。（毛泽东：《中国革命战争的战略问题》）

## Chapter Three Translation of English Oxymoron

### 3.1 Translation Methods

It is worthy of careful thinking when translating oxymoron, literal translation or direct translation of oxymoronic structures cannot make readers understand them. Therefore, we should apply different translating methods according to different language backgrounds to make Chinese translations fluent and easy to understand. In general there are mainly three methods in translating oxymoron: transplanting, dismantling, and integrating.

#### 3.1.1 Transplanting

Transplanting, which belongs to the literal translation, is to transplant both the structure and meaning of source context directly into the target language. Look at the following examples:

(29)The mother is undergoing the *joyful pain*, and *painful joy* of childbirth.

母亲正在经受分娩时喜悦的疼痛和疼痛的喜悦。

(30)It is an *open secret* that the scientist and the nurse are already of one mind.

这位科学家和这位护士情投意合已经成为公开的秘密。

(31)An atmosphere of *dangerous calm* could be felt throughout the mining region.

全矿区都可以感受到一种危险的平静气氛。

#### 3.1.2 Dismantling

Dismantling is to dismantle an oxymoronic phrase into two short sentences while keeping the source meaning. In Chinese, we often use such structures as “又……又……”，“既……又……”，“……而……” “……但……”，“……却……” to combine the oxymoronic concepts. There are some examples:

(32)He was *restly tired*, even as he lay in bed.

他累了，然而一点也不安分，即使躺在床上也是如此。

(33)Parting is such *sweet sorrow*. (Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*)

别离是如此地又甜蜜又令人心酸。

(34)It was a big squarish frame house that has once been white, decorated with cupolas, and spires and scrolled balconies in the *heavily lightsome* style of the seventies, set on what and once been our most select street. (William Faulkner)

那是一幢过去漆成白色的近似方形的大木屋，坐落在当年一条最考究的街道上，还装点着十九世纪七十年代风味的圆顶，塔顶和涡形花纹阳台，具有庄严而轻松的气氛。

### 3.1.3 Integrating

Integrating is to integrate the double meaning expressed by oxymoronic expression, and explain it in moderate target language. Here are some examples:

(35)The return of her “died” son filled her with *tearful joy*.

她那个“死了”的儿子回来了，这使得她悲喜交加，热泪盈眶。

If we translate “tearful joy” directly into “泪汪汪的欢乐”, it will not make sense, while the expression “悲喜交加，热泪盈眶” is vivid and fluent enough to make readers understand.

(36) “What do you mean?” asked Mrs. Packletide quickly.

“How you shot the goat and frightened the tiger to death”, said Miss Mebbin, with her *disagreeably pleasant laugh*.

“你这是什么意思？”派克泰德太太急忙问道。

“你是怎样击中那只山羊和吓死那只老虎的。”梅宾小姐说着，惬意地笑了，可是那笑声却使派克泰德太太感到讨厌。

It would be hard to understand if we translate “disagreeably pleasant laugh” into “令人讨厌而又令人愉快的笑声”。

## 3.2 Suggestions for Translation

Every translation includes two steps: one is to understand the source text well; the other is to express the understanding into target language as precisely as possible. The two steps complement each other because understanding is the premise of expression; the quality of expression relies on the understanding of the source text. Expression is the result of understanding, but a correct understanding does not necessarily lead to a correct expression. Therefore, we need to be particular about the methods and skills in translation.

As it is showed in the above chapters, we can see that in fact, transplanting and dismantling belong to direct translation and indirect translation respectively. But how can we know when to use these two methods? Here are some suggestions:

Firstly, when the words in oxymoronic expressions are modification in relationship, and the key word is a substantial noun, usually we can use transplanting to keep the original flavor. “破坏性的建设” can be translated into “destructive construction”, and “南辕北辙” can be translated as “Go south by driving the chariot north”.

Secondly, when the words in oxymoron are parallel antonyms in relationship, we should apply dismantling method. Let’s look at the following two groups of Chinese translation.

	A	B
(37) Cruel kindness	害人不浅的仁慈	残忍的仁慈
(38) A delightful surprise	又惊又喜	高兴的惊奇
(39) Bad good news	又坏又好的消息	坏的好消息
(40) Heavy lightness	心情既沉重又轻松	心情沉重的轻松

(41) It has the poorest millionaires, the littlest great men, the haughtiest beggars, the plainest beauties, the lowest sky scrapers, the dolefullest pleasures of any town I ever saw. (O. Henry)

Version A: 这座城市里（指纽约）有的是心灵最空虚的百万富翁，人格最渺小的伟人，最目空一切的草包，最使人瞧不上眼的美女，最低级龌龊的摩天大楼和最令人悲哀的娱乐，比我见到的任何城市都有过之而无不及。(Lv, 2004)

Version B: 这是在城市中我所见过的最贫穷的百万富翁，最渺小的伟人，最高傲的乞丐，最不漂亮的美人，最低矮的摩天大楼，最无趣味的乐事。

By the above comparison, we can see Version A better conforms to the rules and habits in Chinese expressing than Version B. Version B is an awkward word-to-word literal copy of the source text without the translator’s own understanding of its connotation, while in Version A we can see an extending in meaning in order to fully express the meaning the source text intends to.

Thirdly, many oxymoronic expressions have their set phrase which we cannot follow our personal understanding, what we should do is to grasp the author’s true feelings, his standing, and the context’s connotation.

Noah Webster, the great founder of Webster’s New International Dictionary said: “It is always better to be vulgarly right than politely wrong.” Put this sentence into Chinese, the version should be “宁可粗俗而正确，也不可高雅而错误。” Here we can see clearly that Webster is using the oxymoron to express his opinion that speaking should follow the rules. We should not put the sentence this way “粗俗地正确，礼貌地错误”，otherwise Chinese readers will make nothing of Webster’s ideas.



## Chapter Four Conclusion

This paper first makes an analysis of English oxymoron by comparing it with some Chinese figurative devices and then analyzes the differences and similarities in their structures. The discussion of translation in the last chapter is another way to discuss the uniqueness of oxymoron in expression.

Some scholars translate oxymoron as “对顶” or “逆喻” in Chinese, which is not reasonable. From the paper, we can see that these two Chinese rhetoric devices are different to oxymoron in essence. Among the three kinds (refer to Chapter 2.2.2) in “对顶”, only the first one “modifier + headword” structure is in fact similar to oxymoron, the other two structures are nothing in common with oxymoron. Also, in Chinese “逆喻” is a subtype of simile in Chinese, while oxymoron has no definite feature of simile, it is not scientific to translate oxymoron as “逆喻”.

When talking about the translation of oxymoron, many scholars have paid most of their attention to the oxymoronic expressions in dramas and poems of the ancient literature while ignored its use in modern society. In this paper, the examples touch upon many aspects of modern literature both at home and abroad. It is more persuasive to apply such examples in present use. The suggestions offer English learners some substantial tips in translating oxymoron especially by comparing different versions of translation to make the thesis more persuasive.

However, there are some shortcomings in the research too. The paper mainly uses examples to support the thesis and is lack of some true-to-fact theories because of the limited materials available. It is a fact that oxymoron is rarely used in Chinese; hence it is difficult to find as many Chinese examples as possible. Therefore, I hope those who want to make further research on oxymoron could pay more attention to the oxymoronic expressions in Chinese. Oxymoron is a rhetoric device worthy of our research and application during our English study, both in spoken English and written English because it is an art of speech. By comparison, we can see its uniqueness in English language if it can be applied appropriately and distinguishing its different structures in different contexts.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

On the completion of my paper, I would like to acknowledge profound debt to all those who have given me consistent help, encouragement and advice to make this paper possible.

My deepest gratitude goes first and foremost to Mr.×××, my supervisor, for her sense of responsibility, patience and encouragement. He has walked me through all the stages of the writing of this paper. Without his illuminating instructions and constructive advice, this paper could not have been completed successfully.

I also would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor H ×××, who has improved me in research methodology and led me into the fascinating world of linguistics. I am still greatly indebted to Jack and other teachers from School of Foreign Languages, who have instructed and helped me a lot in both knowledge and personality in the past four years.

Besides, I want to extend my gratitude to the library staff for their considerate services, which have helped me find those working materials and save me a lot of precious time. Without their help, I could not have finished the paper as smoothly as possible.

Last but not least, my special thanks also go to my beloved family for their loving considerations and encouragement all through these years. I also owe my sincere gratitude to my friends and my fellow classmates, who are generous in offering constant encouragement and constructive suggestions to me when I feel frustrated in preparing this paper.

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