Review of: "Gestalt-based Research on the "Tian wen" Translation: A Theoretical Framework"

Iryna Morozova[1]

1 Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper focuses on the delicate problem of conveying to the reader the proper mental pictures and emotions while translating mythological and historical images of romantic poetry in Chinese literature, the "Tian wen". The authors make an attempt to reverse the process of translation through the prism of Gestalt image reconstruction.

Strengths and academic contribution: The subject matter chosen by the authors belongs to the*urgent* topics of today's academic interest. The authors' having chosen the Gestalt approach for their investigation is already an evidently new step in translation studies. Nowadays Gestalt analysis as an efficient methodological instrument has been successfully used in many branches of sciences and has acquired a great popularity in different fields of humanities. Since it is considered possible to create a whole and centred Gestalt-construct of the object under study, it is clear that a specialized Gestalt practice is a promising future for linguistics. Any world vision can be contrasted with the Gestalt wholeness built up in the human consciousness. In other words, a Gestalt is a mental model, specifically organized by putting together its parts which make up an organic wholeness bigger than the sum of such parts.

Thus, the translation problems viewed in the paper from the angle of Gestalt analysis are interesting, original and new. The authors consider advantages of the Gestalt-approach in linguistic studies and demonstrate a practical appliance of this method. The paper rests on *a solid platform* of basic Gestalt principles accepted in psychology of perception, interprets *"psychological mechanism of Gestalt image reconstruction in literary translation and emphasizes how readers reconstruct the whole image of the source text (ST) and achieve aesthetic equivalence between the target text (TT) and the ST."* The authors are knowledgeable about the subject matter and sound as if emotionally involved in the problems discussed.

Challenges:

The key tenet of the paper reviewed is the assumption that in accordance with the principle of Gestalt closure, humans reconstruct the missing Gestalt elements in their brains, restoring the Gestalt wholeness of the object under analysis. Grounding upon the principle of Gestalt isomorphism, the authors rightly believe that *"Exploring image-G actualization in literary works can drive translators to reproduce the closest natural equivalent of the source language message so that source and target readers can enjoy the same aesthetic feelings."* This hypothesis echoes the main idea of the investigation and, in fact, speaks for itself. A close philological analysis of the text permits the author to penetrate into the intricate psychological atmosphere of the lyrics and imagery under study and to focus upon the symbolic roles of details.

At the same time, I would like to draw the authors' attention to the following facts. With all due respect to Mary Snell-Hornby (1988), who introduced Gestalt theory into translation studies, the authors ought to have mentioned other scholars and scientists who actually founded the general principles of Gestalt analysis. Here I mean the well-known German psychologist Max Wertheimer (1880-1943) who, developing the ideas of Christopher von Ehrenfels, stated the following: *"Any image, or picture of the world, regardless of its simplicity or complication, can be contrasted by the human consciousness with an integral phenomenon, which is termed 'its Gestalt'" (Wertheimer, 1923).* Into linguistic research, the notion of Gestalt was introduced by George Lakoff in his work "*Linguistic Gestalts*", where he claimed that all our thoughts, perceptions, emotions, and processes of cognition are organised with the help of the same patterns which are termed Gestalts. (Lakoff, 1977). Nowadays, Gestalt analysis is being developed by such researchers as D. Häffler (1998), F. Perls & P. Goodman (2001), A. Ramat (2002), Erving and Miriam Polster (1975/2004), J. Skilters (2007), B. Brownell (2008). I. Morozova (2010, 2011, 2019, 2021) and others.

Format and style: The style and general composition of the paper corresponds to the academic demands of publishing the results of scientific investigation. The article is presented in English and is clear enough for the reader to grasp the author's message. The conclusions are logically grounded and sound sincere and convincing. However, there are some grammatical mistakes in the narrative, requiring eliminating. The logical coherence between sentences is sometimes also unclear, e.g.:

"Based this classification, a theoretical framework for the "Tian wen" translation research is established". –There is a dangling participle in the sentence.

"*This article is aimed to establish a theoretical framework for studying the understanding…"*– The sentence is stylistically clumsy.

"Some words which denote a thing or an action may mean nothingwhen they are not put together. In this condition,…" – There is no logical clarity in the sentence.

General decision & suggestions:

Accepted (minor revisions needed, but worth publishing)

Overall score (out of 10): 8

Suggestions: The authors may wish to add some Western Gestalt researchers and make some corrections in the English version of presenting their scientific findings.