

The “Very Faithful” Blessing: On the Singable Japanese-English Translation between YOASOBI’s *Shukufuku* & The Blessing

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Received: 18.01.2026 • Accepted: 25.02.2026 • Published: 28.03.2026 • Final Version: 04.04.2026

Abstract: Song translation is heavily constrained by the linguistic differences between the source and target languages, often struggles to achieve a balance between the lyrics’ lexical meaning and the song’s overall singability. However, the Japanese duo YOASOBI takes advantage of the flexibility of fast-paced music and employs tactics such as adding of complete translation strategy, including explicitation of pronouns, adding function words and synonymous repetition to remain faithful to the source lyrics’ (SL) meaning while preserving singability. When complete translation strategies could not meet the need of singing performance, they resort to variational translation strategies including imitating, trans-writing and altering, maintaining singability while trying their best having the core meaning of the source lyrics retained in the target lyrics. In this way their *The Blessing*, English version of their Japanese pop-song *Shukufuku* was a hit, while succeeded in retained most of original lyrics’ meaning. The latter achievement was always viewed as a “mission impossible”, given the substantial lexical and grammatical differences between languages like Japanese and English, and thus offer valuable insights for Chinese practitioners and researchers major in song translation.

Keywords: Singable Translation, *The Blessing* & *Shukufuku*, Complete Translation, Variational Translation, Breath of Life in Lyrics

1. Introduction

According to common definitions, translating the general meaning of lyrics for listener comprehension is relatively simple, but difficult as singable adaptation(s). This is not only because singable translation requires the lyrics to possess the dual value of literary aesthetics and musical performability, which increases the difficulty exponentially; it is also because the vast differences in rhetoric, grammar, and cultural context between languages often make it nearly impossible to preserve the original meaning. For this reason Xue (2002:45) had to admit that wordplay lyrics (written in source languages) in songs are entirely “untranslatable” in target languages that are not relevant in compare with the source ones. Low (2017) also pointed out that it is difficult for translators to achieve high marks across singability, sense (meaning), naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme simultaneously, often necessitating the sacrifice of meaning to reach the “optimum compromise”. The latter view was further demonstrated in depth by Huang & Zhang (2020: 93-94+106) through case studies: even for pop songs, their singable translations must compromise to

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<i>Shukufuku</i>	Musical Phrase Number	18	12	6	2	8	2	1
	Percentage (%)	36	24	12	4	16	4	2
<i>The Blessing</i>	Musical Phrase Number	12	18	6	3	6	4	0
	Percentage (%)	24	36	12	6	12	8	0

Two sets of differences in Table 1 are noteworthy: First, both *Shukufuku* and *The Blessing* are dominated by phrases where the number of syllables exceeds the number of notes, accounting for 40% and 54% respectively. Second, compared to *Shukufuku*, the proportion of phrases in *The Blessing* where the number of syllables is fewer than the number of notes decreased from 22% to 20%. Furthermore, the difference between notes and syllables in both songs is mostly controlled within a fluctuation range of -2 to 2 (40 phrases each, reaching 80%), which corroborates the viewpoint in other language-pair song translation cases that syllable correspondence should be maintained as much as possible. This illustrates two points: first, YOASOBI intentionally increased the lyric capacity of the music by accelerating the tempo when creating *Shukufuku*; second, they subconsciously utilized this ample creative space to achieve a balance between singability and semantic integrity in the adaptation. This can be glimpsed from the changes in the translated version of two relatively extreme phrases from the original lyrics:

Figure 1 shows a musical phrase with 12 notes and 15 syllables. The lyrics are: 誰かが描いた イメージじゃなくて、この世界で生き続けること。 The translated lyrics are: Not to be part of those images someone paints To keep on living in this world, as time is flowing on.

Figure 2 shows a musical phrase with 17 notes and 14 syllables. The lyrics are: 誰かが描いた イメージじゃなくて、この世界で生き続けること。 The translated lyrics are: Not to be part of those images someone paints To keep on living in this world, as time is flowing on.

Figure 1. SL has 3 Syllables more than Notes Numerically^① **Figure 2.** SL has 3 Syllables less than Notes Numerically

Figure 1 shows the first line of the chorus containing 12 notes in total, while the SL of *Shukufuku* for this line consist of 15 syllables. The distribution of notes across different parts of the lyrics is uneven; in particular, the four-syllable word "描いた" (to paint) is allocated only one eighth note. In performance, the syllable "た" is easily confused with "た", and the following *kana* is "イ", which is not clearly articulated in the song. Consequently, listeners hearing this fast-paced track for the first time may fail to clearly distinguish the word "イメージ" (image), leading to a misunderstanding of the phrase's meaning. The translated lyrics theoretically contain 13 syllables. However, if the singer employs linking (*liaison*) techniques, the consonant /t/ in "Not to" at the beginning of the sentence can be articulated only once, saving time and making the translated version more pleasant to the ear and easier to understand during performance. Figure 2 is taken from the ending section of the song, totaling 17 notes. The original lyrics consist of 14 syllables, where the phrase-final "こと" is a pure formal noun attached to the attributive form of a verb (Modern Japanese Grammar Manual Writing Group, 1985: 455), occupying the final four eighth notes. This means the first 12 syllables of the sentence are distributed across 13 notes, making the sustained notes of the last two syllables feel abrupt compared to the compact singing style of the preceding part, which can easily lead to rhythmic errors if not handled well. Based on meaning, the translated lyrics can be roughly divided into two clauses separated by a comma: the first clause happens to correspond to the segment from the beginning of the phrase to its highest pitch (8 syllables distributed over 12 notes), while the second clause corresponds to the segment from the peak pitch to the end (7 syllables distributed over 5 notes). In terms of vocal effect, the first half of the phrase averages 1.5 notes per syllable, making it relatively smooth and steady, while the second half accelerates, requiring each syllable to be sung in less than the time of an eighth note to

build momentum for the final climax. The meaning of the latter clause is similar to the former; this kind of synonymous repetition is one of the key translation techniques used by YOASOBI in this song and will be discussed specifically in later sections.

The fast tempo allows *Shukufuku* to accommodate rich lyrical content within a relatively short duration and provides ample creative space for the adaptation. Even if the majority of musical phrases must slightly exceed the number of notes in terms of syllable count to preserve the original meaning, the normal performance remains unaffected. However, following this logic, the data for d=0 and d=1 in the translated lyrics in Table 1 should have shown a more significant increase compared to the original. Why did this not occur? This may be related to the linguistic characteristics of the source and target languages.

2.2. The Law of Conservation in Lyrical Morphology

Modern English retains a relatively complete set of rules regarding word order, morphological variations, and function words, making it a typical synthetic language (Lian, 2010:25). Furthermore, influenced by the modern Plain English Movement, its morphological features are concise, and its sentence structures are relatively brief (Jin, 2011:8-9). In contrast, Japanese is an agglutinative language that expresses grammatical shifts through the free combination of morphemes; theoretically, a single sentence can be extended significantly through the attachment of various suffixes. When *Shukufuku* was adapted into *The Blessing*, the content reflecting the original's morphological aesthetic was either expressed through a form of compromise or directly dissolved.

At the lexical level, this transformation is concentrated in the usage of Japanese verbs. The general situation can be observed from the data compiled in Table 2:

Table 2. The Conversion of Verbs from *Shukufuku* to *The Blessing*

Usages of Various Verbs in <i>Shukufuku</i>			What They're Converted into in <i>The Blessing</i>		
Types Data	Numbers	Percentage (%)	Types Data	Numbers	Percentage (%)
Attributive Form of Verbs	13	33.34	Verbs Combined with Function Words form Phrases that Express Meaning	20	50
Te (て)-form (Suspensive or Conjunctive Function)	9	23.08			
Negative/Potential/Passive Form	6	15.38	Translated as Verbs Only	9	22.5
Terminal Form	5	12.82			
Imperative/Volitional Form	3	7.69	Verbs Work Together with other Elements of A Sentence to Convey Meaning	8	20
Nominalization (Deverbal Noun)	2	5.13			
Hypothetical/Conditional Form	1	2.56	Completely Omitted	3	7.5

It is evident that Japanese verbs express a rich variety of meanings by altering their suffixes to modify different sentence elements. In contrast, since the inflectional changes of English verbs cannot directly fulfill this specific semantic function, the translation employs three strategies for conversion: First, the grammatical meanings expressed by Japanese verb endings are absorbed by the morphological changes of English verb phrases or the inflection of the verb itself, and occasionally by both. Second, the mutual conversion between (abstract) verbs. Third, the verb and its meaning are collectively expressed by one

or more non-verb components within the sentence. Among these, cases where conversion is restricted to the lexical level primarily utilize the latter two strategies. This is exemplified in Figure 1, where the verb 描いた in attributive form is translated as “paints”. There are other examples can be seen:

[1] SL: 遙か遠くに浮かぶ星を

TL: As you are now thinking of that **star**, so remote

Back-translation of SL: The **stars** (are) **floating** far away

The term 浮かぶ (floating), used to describe the state of the planet, is directly dissolved in the translation. Both the SL and TL consist of 13 syllables; translating the sense of “floating” would occupy additional syllables and hinder the singability. Consequently, it is left untranslated, leaving the audience to imagine the distant, ethereal sense of floating inherent in the original lyrics through the celestial concept of “star” in English. As seen in Example 1, to maintain the lyrical structure and ensure singability, TL undergoes more significant adjustments at the clause and even the passage level compared to SL, which is reflected in both rhetoric and sentence patterns.

As a fast-paced song, *Shukufuku* infuses a relatively massive amount of lyrics within less than three and a half minutes, which also results in rather singular rhetorical devices: (1) Leveraging the inherent phonological harmony of Japanese without intentionally pursuing rhyme (Gong, 2017:15). (2) It purposefully employs repetition at the beginning or end of the verses and choruses to reinforce the audience's impression of the lyrics and music in sync with the powerful rhythm (Yang & Liu, 1992:67-68). While similar rhetorical strategies exist in English, their application in this song has been compromised to varying degrees, as shown in the following example:

[2] SL: 誰かが描いたイメージじゃなくて / 誰かが選んだステージじゃなくて

TL: **Not** to be part of those images someone paints / **Not** advancing in that show chosen by someone else

The repetitive structure used here is “誰かが (someone) + verb (attributive form, past tense) + noun + negative form じゃなくて (not)”. In TL, this repetitive structure is reconstructed using the “Not + clause” format. However, the two clauses do not maintain consistency in terms of tense and form. Given that TL faithfully conveys the semantic meaning of the SL, this can be considered a relatively successful instance of recreating the rhetorical device of Japanese repetition.

[3] SL: 逃げる様に / 隠れる様に

TL: As to scoot, holing up as you ran up to me

The repetitive structure here is “verb (attributive form) + 様に”, but it has been completely eliminated in TL, and its meaning has changed accordingly. If the translator had attempted to mimic the structure of the original lyrics here, it might have resulted in insufficient syllables or failed to transition smoothly into the subsequent phrase starting with “So.” Furthermore, as the opening line of the third verse, this phrase features a gradually accelerating rhythm that builds momentum toward the climax. Lacking a better alternative, YOASOBI compromised by abandoning the rhetorical device while retaining the core meaning of “hiding,” allowing the TL to function primarily as a structural transition. Similar compromises also occur at the level of sentence patterns, as shown in the following example:

[4] SL: 遙か遠くに浮かぶ星を / 想い眠りにつく君の / 選ぶ未来が望む道が / 何処へ続いていても / 共に生きるから

TL: As you are now thinking of that star, so remote / You're dozing off to be sleeping through with the thought / And the future you decide, The way you want to stride / Wherever you choose to set off to go / Together, I'll be there by you

This is the only line in the entire song that constitutes a single paragraph. Aesthetically, this sentence places all modifiers and imagery at the beginning, culminating in the core promise 共に生きるから (Because [I] will live together with [you]), where the subject “I” and object “you” are omitted. This structure creates a powerful sense of suspense and emotional buildup, enhancing the weight of the pledge “I am with you.” Technically, the SL spans 50 Japanese characters, making it difficult to use

directly as lyrics. However, by leveraging the grammatical independence of declinable words (inflected words), YOASOBI organized the segments around the four bolded verbs and connected them with particles, turning each segment into a relatively independent and singable musical phrase. Since English cannot be adapted directly using a similar logic, the semantics were split into five parts. After supplying subjects and objects, these were formed into five clauses and arranged according to the logical order of English syntax in TL.

YOASOBI proactively adjusted the translated lyrics across three levels—morphology, rhetoric, and syntax. Although the formal aesthetic features of the original lyrics were largely sacrificed, this was compensated for by enhanced singability. More importantly, the core meaning of the original lyrics was preserved almost in its entirety, a feat rarely achieved in similar song adaptations. What specific strategies, then, allowed the core meaning of *Shukufuku* to be maintained in the translation of *The Blessing* while ensuring its singability?

3. Loyalty to the Source Lyrics: Expanding for Properly Expressing

After a comparison-in-depth between the original and translated lyrics, the English translation strategy of *Shukufuku* can be summarized as "Double Expansion". The first is the expansion of form, which refers to adding words or phrases within specific musical lines without increasing the information load; this falls under the category of Complete Translation. The second is the expansion of content, which involves moderately altering the information of a musical phrase or adding details to facilitate expression; this belongs to Variational Translation. Regardless of whether Complete or Variational Translation strategies are employed, both aim to ensure singability by expanding the formal or semantic elements of the original lyrics while preserving the original meaning as much as possible, thereby achieving dual fidelity to both the lyrics and the music (Qin, 2024:24).

3.1. Complete Translation Strategy: Expanding Length to Remain Loyal

Complete translation seeks maximum similarity, meaning the full transmission of the SL while accounting for its form (Huang & Li, 2004:20). In singable translation for songs, complete translation requires the lyrics not only to convey the full information of the source text but also to be performed smoothly. Regarding *The Blessing*, the primary complete translation strategy utilized is adding, manifested in three specific methods: pronoun explicitation, the addition of function words, and synonymous repetition.

The first, pronoun explicitation. It is very common in Japanese lyrics to omit personal pronouns such as "you" or "I." If a traditional literal translation strategy were used to create English clauses with similar meanings, it might lead to confusion regarding referents. Furthermore, as English verb conjugation rules are relatively simple and syllables are shorter, such clauses would often lack sufficient syllables, making them impossible to sing even with melisma. For instance, in Example 4, the phrase "遙か遠くに浮かぶ星を" could theoretically be translated as "thinking of that star, remote" to convey the full meaning. However, this would result in a phrase of only 8 syllables; if placed in a musical phrase with 13 eighth notes, the singing tempo would significantly slow down, disrupting the song's rhythm from the start. To supply the subject "you" and account for tense—while considering that this clause and the next describe two simultaneous actions by the same agent—cohesive devices must be added to the first clause. Thus, the subject "you" brings along the adverbs "as," "now," and "so," as well as the auxiliary verb "are," increasing the syllable count to 13. This creates a one-to-one correspondence with the number of notes without adding any actual semantic content. The supplementation of personal pronouns is one of the most prominent adding strategies in the English translation: while *Shukufuku* uses "君" (you) only 9 times, *The Blessing* uses "you" and "your" 41 times; "僕たち" (I/we) is used twice in the SL, whereas its English counterparts "I," "us," and "we" appeared 9 times.

Second, adding function words. According to the logic of Plain English, redundancy should be avoided; the more concise a sentence, the more powerful it is (Li, 2013:60-63). However, as previously demonstrated, individual phrases in a fast-paced song like *The Blessing* should not be too short. Simply using long content words to fill syllables is also inappropriate, as such words can be tongue-twisting

and prone to errors in rapid performance. Adding short prepositions and adverbs effectively solves this problem. For example:

いつかその胸に秘めた

Hidden out in your chest, and the day will come

Figure 3. How Adding Short Prepositions and Adverbs Help

The musical phrase in Figure 3 above consists of 11 notes, and both the SL and TL contain exactly 11 syllables, achieving a perfect alignment. Theoretically, the word "out" could be omitted here, as having one fewer syllable than the number of notes in a phrase generally does not hinder performance. However, if "out" were removed, the subsequent words would shift forward by one syllable, resulting in the conjunction "and" being sung on the two highest eighth notes. This function word cannot support the sustained vocal weight required at the peak stress point, which would make the singing sound weak. This would not only disrupt the rhythm but also fail to convey the firm resolve expressed in the lyrics. Consequently, the addition of function words is one of the most frequently employed amplification strategies in *The Blessing*. Although this strategy is often applied subtly, it allows for a precise one-to-one correspondence between syllables and notes, further enhancing singability without adding extra meaning or compromising the target audience's linguistic expectations.

Third, synonymous repetition. This technique was already alluded to in Figure 2. Specifically, it involves adding synonymous or near-synonymous words or phrases to the translated lines to significantly strengthen the emotional impact of the musical phrase. See another example:

[5] SL: 目一杯の / ああ / 祝福を君に

TL: May all blessings find their way to you / I'm wishing it

TL phrase "May all blessings find their way to you" already fully conveys the meaning of the SL in the form of a prayer. Technically, this sentence provides a sufficient number of syllables for the adaptation; the line could have been easily sung by simply adding a contextually appropriate 2-to-4-syllable adjective before the word "way." However, YOASOBI took an unconventional approach by adding the four-syllable declarative sentence "I'm wishing it" after the prayer. Formally, this declarative sentence is a synonymous repetition of the preceding "blessing," but its underlying purpose is more profound: it allows the audience to perceive that this is not merely a conventional closing blessing, but one backed by a concrete, sincere agent—"I." With these two short phrases placed back-to-back—the former facing the world and the latter returning to the self—the lyrics reflect the expansive and deep inner world of the agent. Consequently, in terms of aesthetics, the combination of these two sentences makes the closing lyrics not only singable but also incredibly powerful, warm, and profound, highlighting the song's themes of companionship, blessing, and growth.

The underlying logic of the three aforementioned methods can be summarized as increasing the syllable count without adding informational load to the phrase, thereby satisfying performance requirements or further improving singability. In terms of effect, this strategy not only ensures that the translated lyrics faithfully convey the meaning of the original but also effectively enhances singability. Furthermore, by leveraging the grammatical and rhetorical features of English, it reinforces SL's meaning while partially filling the "aesthetic void" left by the morphological and syntactic disparities between the two languages.

3.2. Variational Translation Strategy: Compromises for Loyalty

Variational translation seeks high efficiency, requiring the translator to extract content from the source text based on the readers' needs (Huang & Zhang, 2020: 78) and present it in a flexible form to achieve optimal communication. In song adaptation, variational translation demands that the lyrics adapt their form and content to facilitate performance while conveying the overall theme of the original. It is often a necessary compromise and remains the primary strategy observed in most cases where source and target lyrics belong to non-cognate languages. However, in *The Blessing*, only about one-third of the translated phrases were produced through variational translation. Ranked by the degree of semantic alteration from lowest to highest, these strategies can be categorized into imitating, trans-writing and altering.

The translation strategy which brings lowest degree of meaning change is imitation in the form, which, as discussed in Examples 2 and 3, typically occurs when mimicking the rhetorical device of repetition found in the original lyrics. Extreme cases, represented by Example 3, demonstrate that rewriting the original content to ensure singability becomes an unavoidable compromise when formal imitation alone cannot resolve the issue. In fact, in most scenarios, formal imitation preserves singability and core meaning at the expense of specific nuances, as shown in another example below:

[6] SL: 飛び出すんだ / 飛び立つんだ

TL: It's time to fly out / to take off right now

The verbs "飛び出す" and "飛び立つ" are synonyms. Formally, both are compound verbs consisting of "飛び" (jumping/flying) combined with "出す" (out) and "立つ" (stand/rise) respectively. In the lyrical context, both denote "flying," but the former emphasizes a breakthrough from the inside out, while the latter stresses a soaring leap from low ground into the sky. Arranging them sequentially in the bridge that transitions to the final chorus is not merely for ease of singing; rather, it uses a meticulously designed semantic progression to express the declaration of "leaving the past behind and embracing the future," which significantly enhances the emotional resonance and narrative depth of the lyrics. If the formal subject "It's (time)" is set aside, TL can be seen as mimicking the SL's rhetoric by using two "to do something" structures to form a parallel. Unfortunately, due to a lack of syllables and the need for rhyme, "take off" (which has three syllables) had to be placed at the end, while "fly out" (with only two syllables) was placed at the beginning to achieve a tail rhyme with "right now." This naturally led to the dissolution of the semantic progression function found of SL in TL.

Thick translation (as trans-writing) involves a greater degree of semantic alteration, primarily manifested in expanding implicit details of the SL within TL. This method is employed because, even after applying grammatical supplements to the translated syllables, the literal content of the phrase remains insufficient or unsuitable for performance; thus, new concrete details must be introduced. Explicitly expressing the unstated implications of the original lyrics in the translation is clearly the optimal way to seek a balance between singability and content integrity. See the example below:

[7] SL: 祈り願う / 夢を描き

TL: Invoke and desire / Dream and hope you're drawing

"祈り願う" is a juxtaposition of the continuative forms of 祈る (to pray) and 願う (to wish), indicating two actions occurring sequentially or simultaneously, meaning "praying and wishing." "夢を描き" means "drawing a dream, (and then/simultaneously)...", in which the verb 描く (to draw) uses its continuative form to create a conjunctive suspension for the next phrase. These two phrases are not independent sentences, but as segments with independent meaning, they serve a transitional function. If a complete translation strategy were adopted, the TL might turn into two independent short sentences, which could disrupt the singing rhythm and damage the structural integrity of the song.

The adaptation here is quite creative: (1) The "A and B" structure is used as the basic form for both phrases, allowing them to function as flexible parenthetical expressions that link with the context while maintaining their own independence. Compared to the pious and pleading sentiments of 祈る and 願う, the intensity of "invoke" and "desire" is significantly stronger. The latter phrase is translated as "Dream and hope you're drawing," supplying the subject "you" and expanding the original "夢" (dream) into "dream and hope." Consequently, while the SL explicitly describe a series of internal psychological

activities—praying, wishing, and sketching dreams—the TL expands upon the subsequent results of these activities. It depicts a dynamic scene of summoning inner strength and ultimately creating the future with one's own hands, thereby elevating the overall artistic conception of the lyrics through an "internal-to-external" logic.

When the SL convey relatively little information using a large number of syllables due to the morphological or syntactic features of the source language—rendering the first two methods ineffective for producing satisfactory lyrics—YOASOBI decisively adopts an altering strategy, creating new expressions through creative or interpretive means. This is not arbitrary creation; preserving the core meaning of the original remains the fundamental prerequisite. An example of creative altering can be found in Example 3: when a complete translation strategy failed to produce singable TL lyrics, the author retained the core meaning of "hiding" but boldly transformed the parallel psychological activities of the characters into a description of the dynamic act of hiding. This ensured singability while maintaining structural integrity and thematic cohesion. A classic example of interpretive re-translation is shown below:

[8] SL: これは君の人生

TL: It's your life, your story, your way

The SL consists of a classic assertive sentence, using 10 syllables to make the brief yet firm statement: "This is your life." Its literal translation, "It's your life," contains only 4 syllables; moreover, compared to Example 7, the original phrasing here is more restrained, leaving little intuitive room for expansion. YOASOBI took an unconventional approach by expanding the structure of this simple assertion into an English tricolon (a three-part parallel structure). While "life" seems to be a direct equivalent of "人生" (life), it merely presents the basic dictionary meaning. What the translation achieves through the tricolon is a deep interpretation of the concept of "life": "life" here might be better understood as "vitality" or "existence," which, when paired with "your," manifests a declaration of ownership over one's own life. "Story" concretizes the abstract concept of life, likening it to a narrative written by oneself. "Way" can be literally translated as "road," but it should perhaps be understood as "the path"—the manner in which one lives or conducts their life. This translated line echoes key terms from two other phrases in the original lyrics: "僕たちが作っていくストーリー" (the story we create) and "自分で選ぶ道" (the path I choose). Furthermore, it contemplates the philosophical depth of a person's life—to whom it belongs, what it is, and how to live it—from the perspectives of ownership, concrete content, and methodology. In terms of expression, the sense of rhythm and power brought by the parallel structure in TL makes it highly suitable for vocal performance, and its motivational effect is more direct and intense than SL.

The underlying logic of these three specific methods can be summarized as follows: when SL, constrained by the morphological or syntactic features of the source language, are insufficient for complete translation, new linguistic forms and content must be introduced into TL to achieve the optimal expressive (performance) effect. In general, the flexible expressive methods adopted by YOASOBI allow the "breath of life" of *Shukufuku*—an excellent, inspiring song themed around companionship, blessing, and growth—to be effectively received by an English-speaking audience with *The Blessing*, through the preservation of singability and the retention and sublimation of core meaning (Huang & Jiao, 2011: 86).

4. Conclusions

English and Japanese belong to different language families and exhibit vast disparities. As an adapted version, the English song *The Blessing* manages to preserve "80~90%" of the original Japanese song *Shukufuku*'s meaning while keeping the musical and lyrical structures entirely unchanged. This success primarily stems from two well-executed aspects: (1) By leveraging the advantages of the track's high note density and rapid tempo, the artists boldly populated the phrases with lyrics; the fact that the translated syllables slightly exceed those of the original was accommodated by the music's vocal tolerance, thereby increasing the degree of freedom in translation. (2) Although the Japanese lyrics of *Shukufuku* possess significant aesthetic beauty in both form and meaning, YOASOBI did not obsess over preserving surface-level aesthetic forms such as rhetoric or rhyme in TL, but instead decisively prioritized the preservation of meaning.

Addressing Japanese linguistic features—such as the frequent omission of subjects, diverse verbal conjugations, and complex grammatical devices—YOASOBI employed complete translation strategies. By explicating subjects to introduce English function words into the lyrics or through the reasonable repetition of original content, they increased syllable counts to maintain singability without adding unnecessary informational load. When altering expressive means through complete translation still failed to meet performance requirements, YOASOBI made further compromises by applying variational translation across three distinct levels. Such variational translation was not “singing for the sake of singing”; rather, YOASOBI sought every possible way to retain the core meaning of the original, ultimately granting the TL a unique “breath of life.” The successful adaptation of *The Blessing* is a credit to the inclusivity of fast-paced music, but more importantly, it reflects the artists’ profound understanding and flexible application of morphology, syntax, and rhetoric in both the source and target languages. These strategies offer valuable insights for practitioners and researchers in translation, the arts, and the broader cultural industry in China as they confront the challenges of “going global.”

Due to space limitations, this paper confined itself on summarizing the translation strategies of a single song, attempting to achieve an in-depth summary of these strategies. As a matter of fact, YOASOBI is continuously translating their original Japanese songs into singable English versions. By conducting in-depth translation research on individual songs with (if possible) a series of these songs, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of YOASOBI’s translation strategies. This not only helps us objectively summarize the duo’s style of singable translation strategies, but also accumulates practical experience in song-singable translation, facilitating its application in other translation practices.

Notes

①The sheet of this piece of music is downloaded from: <https://musescore.com/user/13392936/scores/9123846> The author edited by himself. The source lyrics (SL) are in Japanese, while the target lyrics (TL) are in English.

Acknowledgment

The author completed the research all on his own.

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