

## In retrospect

This study mainly addresses two questions: (i) what is the verse grammar that governs the modern speaker's scansion of classical Chinese verse lines? (ii) how can his apparently intuitive judgment of metrical harmony of verse lines be accounted for in a principled way? For the first question, we have argued that the modern verse grammar represents the coexistence of five minimally different sub-grammars respectively for the five genres. Formally, the grammar is couched as a partial ranking order on a set of constraints which is instantiable into five full ranking orders. The partial ranking order features one ranking skeleton shared by all the five sub-grammars and one floating constraint ANCHOR that can land in several specified positions along the ranking skeleton. The different landing sites of this floating constraint give rise to various instantiations of this grammar, i.e., various sub-grammars. That the sub-grammars are minimally different is captured by the fact that on the one hand, they all share one ranking skeleton and on the other hand, only one constraint floats with its possible landing sites restricted. The representation of the grammar as such also points to the formal elegance and explanatory adequacy of the floating constraints model, when restricted in a certain way, in dealing with variation.

Regarding the second question, we have argued that the native judgment of metrical harmony can be grounded in the verse grammar thus developed. More specifically, the metrical harmony cannot be reduced to the working of any single constraint: ANCHOR, ALIGNR (FT, IP), LONG-LAST, and BINARITY have all been shown to play a role in accounting for metrical harmony in various genres. Therefore, we deem it less productive to attempt to specify which constraint (or rule, for that matter) is responsible for metrical harmony (as in Kiparsky 1977, among others). Rather the metrical harmony is more revealingly captured by the grammar per se: for a given genre, which specific constraint is responsible for the metrical harmony of its lines follows naturally from the constraint interaction, and metrical harmony can be formally correlated with OT harmony, which refers to how well a candidate form satisfies the constraints given their ranking in the (sub-)grammar.

In addition, the following two issues are briefly discussed. First, we have suggested that classical Chinese verse features a phrasing meter which is constituted by the boundary matching between the grammatical and the prosodic structures and that the so-called 'tonal meter' is a mere myth. Lexical tones play no more than a decorative role in the meter of classical Chinese verse by serving as a melodic contour superimposed on the phrasing meter. In a related manner, the boundary matching between these two structures is also shown to contribute to the 'sense' of metrical harmony cognized by the native speaker.

The second issue dealt with is the relevance of modern constraints in ancient verse grammars. More specifically, we have argued, on the basis of the evidence from the ancient corpus per se such as rhyming patterns, parallelism and repetition, and frequency patterns constituted by lines of different grammatical structures, that all the constraints, both the violable and inviolable ones, deployed in the modern verse grammar, played a crucial role in the ancient grammars as well. However, the data falls short of enabling us to spell out the complete ancient grammars. Nonetheless, it stands to reason that the core constraints responsible for verse scansion have remained

unchanged over the time and are in fact inherited by the modern speaker in his scansion of classical Chinese verse.