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# 戏剧翻译研究

XIJU FANYI YANJIU

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## 内容简介

本书从戏剧文本的双重性——文学性与舞台性、戏剧语言的特点、戏剧翻译的独特性入手,涉及了戏剧翻译的原则标准、策略方法等,以语用学理论为基础,探讨了戏剧翻译要遵循的可表演性原则、戏剧翻译中介入语用学理论的必要性。以大量的实例分析以及《茶馆》两译本的对比分析证明了语用翻译对戏剧翻译的适用性以及如何翻译戏剧的可表演性。

# 前言

戏剧是世界文学和艺术的重要组成部分,世界各国之间的戏剧翻译已经进行了几个世纪,但对戏剧翻译的学术研究仍然相对欠缺。英国翻译理论家苏珊·巴斯尼特(Susan Bassnett)指出:“以体裁为中心的翻译研究主要涉及诗歌翻译的具体问题,很显然,戏剧是最受翻译研究冷落的一个领域,而且有关戏剧翻译的资料也很少。很多戏剧翻译者的陈述表明,他们的戏剧翻译方法和散文翻译方法是一样的。”造成这一现象的原因在于戏剧文本的二重性:文学性和舞台性。

这种二重性使译者处于两难境地:戏剧翻译应该以读者为中心还是以观众为中心?文学性与舞台性孰轻孰重?一般而言,除书斋剧之外,戏剧主要是为演出而作,而演出基于剧本之上并受其限制。诚然,一部戏剧可以当作文学作品供人阅读,但这并不否定其潜在的舞台性。在某种意义上,剧本的文学性在于舞台性,舞台性以文学性为基础,二者是密不可分的。正如特恩奎斯特(Tornqvist)所言:“对于文学文本与演出文本孰轻孰重的长期争论,仅仅通过承认戏剧有两种或混合存在形式就可以得到解决。一方面,读者必须承认剧本通常是演出而作的。另一方面,观众必须明白一部戏剧的不同演出是以同一剧本为基础的。”在戏剧翻译及其研究中,两者都应该考虑,因为“好的戏剧作品应该同时具有很强的文学性与舞台性。古今中外那些经典的戏剧作品,都是既经得起读,又经得起演的”(董健,马俊山,2004)。

戏剧作品的二重性决定了戏剧翻译的复杂性,使戏剧翻译成为问题最大而又受翻译研究冷落的领域,因此关于戏剧翻译的研究一直比较匮乏。然而,近年来,关于戏剧翻译的研究越来越多。在国内,一些文章以戏剧文本的演出性为中心,分析了某些戏剧译作。但是,有文献表明研究结果还不尽如人意:对“可表演性”这一术语的界定很模糊,而且对于如何在翻译中呈现可表演性鲜有提及。在国外,戏剧翻译的复杂性备受关注,但学者们仍旧深陷戏剧翻译的迷宫,找不到出路。

除了舞台说明,戏剧语言主要由戏剧对话组成,戏剧情节的展开、人物性格的刻画、主题的表达等都是通过戏剧对话实现的。可以说,戏剧文本的文学性及舞台性主要体现于戏剧对话之中。因此,戏剧对话的研究对于戏

剧翻译有着极其重要的意义。奈达曾经说过:翻译就是翻译意义。戏剧翻译尤其如此,因为戏剧演出的即时性、视听性和无注性决定了观众对戏剧意义的即刻理解。戏剧对话是戏剧人物之间的交流互动,语用学研究语言使用者如何在特定场合运用语言进行交流,因此语用学为戏剧对话的分析提供了很好的理论基础。

本书主要探讨语用翻译对戏剧翻译的适用性,并通过对《茶馆》两个英译本的比较研究,探讨如何翻译戏剧的可表演性。全书共分五章:第一章介绍了戏剧及戏剧语言;第二章是文献综述,包括国内外戏剧翻译研究综述,戏剧翻译的独特性,戏剧翻译的原则、标准、角度、策略及方法;第三章从语用学的角度探讨了可表演性的翻译:首先论证了将语用学理论用于戏剧翻译的必要性,并介绍了言语行为理论、合作原则、礼貌原则、语境理论,然后结合大量实例,从语用学的视角对戏剧翻译进行了详细的分析;第四章通过对比分析《茶馆》的两个英译本,探讨了戏剧翻译中可表演性的呈现;第五章结语部分对全书进行了总结,并指出了本书的局限与不足。

由于本人学疏才浅,书中不足之处在所难免,希望专家同行批评指正。

王桂芳

2012年12月

## Preface

Drama constitutes an important part of world literature and art. The translation of drama between countries has been going on for many centuries. Yet there remains a relative lack of scholarly interest in drama translation studies. Susan Bassnett (2004: 119) reminds us of this phenomenon: "Whilst it seems that the bulk of genre-focused translation study involves the specific problem of translating poetry, it is quite clear that theatre is one of the most neglected areas. There is very little material on the special problems of translating dramatic texts, and the statements of individual theatre translators often imply that the methodology used in the translation process is the same as that used to approach prose texts." The reason mainly lies in the dualistic identities of drama; on the page and on the stage.

This dualistic nature of drama presents the translator with central problems: should drama translation be reader-oriented or spectator-oriented? Which aspect should be put first? Generally speaking, except closet drama, dramatic text is mainly composed for performance and performance is based on and constrained by dramatic text. A dramatic text can be read as a piece of the literariness work, but this does not deny the potential theatrical aspect of it. In a certain sense, the literariness of a play lies in its theatrical potential, and stage performance is based on the play, thus theatrical potential is based on its literariness. So the two aspects are inherent and can't be divided. As Tornqvist (1991:3) puts it, "the old controversy about whether the readers or the spectators should have priority can be best settled simply by recognizing that a play has a double or hybrid existence. On the one hand, readers of drama must admit that plays are usually written to be performed. On the other, playgoers must acknowledge that different productions of the same play are based on the same text." In



drama translation studies, both sides should be considered, for “excellent dramatic text should possess strong flavor of both literary value and theatrical viability. Those typical classics of drama can stand both reading and acting.” (Dong & Ma, 2004: 66)<sup>①</sup>

The dichotomy of drama as literature on the one hand, and as script for the theatre on the other complicates the study of drama translation and renders it to be the most problematic and neglected area of translation studies. Accordingly, there remains a regrettable lack of scholarly interest in drama translation studies. However, more and more researches have been made on the issue of drama translation in recent years. In China, there are some articles analyzing certain translated play texts either from English to Chinese or from Chinese to English, with theatrical aspects embedded in the dramatic texts as focus. However, the literature shows it is far from satisfactory because the focus “performability” is still a blurred one. Moreover, how to represent performability is rarely touched. Scholars abroad have paid much attention to the complexity of drama translation and seem to “be still trapped in the labyrinth of drama translation studies” (Bassnett, 2001:90) and unable to find a way out.

Dramatic language is mainly composed of dramatic dialogue which is communicative. It is usually through verbal interactions between characters that the plot gets advanced and characterization realized. So it is safe to say that literary value as well as theatrical potential of a dramatic text is mainly embodied in dramatic dialogue. Accordingly, the study of it is of great significance to drama translation. Nida (1982) once said, “Translating means translating meaning.” This is especially true for drama translation, for stage performance demands the meanings to be caught immediately by the spectators. Pragmatics, mainly concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener, is inter-related with dramatic dialogue and may provide a good way for the interpretation of ST and rendering in TT in drama translation.

In the book the author will explore the applicability of pragmatic theories in drama translation. Also, the rendering of performability is discussed

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① 中文原文：“好的戏剧作品应该同时具有很强的文学性与舞台性。古今中外那些经典的戏剧作品，都是既经得起读，又经得起演的。”文中的英文系作者翻译，下同。



with a comparative case study of the two English versions of *Teahouse*. This book consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 gives a general introduction to drama. Also, in this chapter, features of dramatic language are explored so as to connect these features to some pragmatic theories. Chapter 2 is the literature review, including a survey of previous drama translation studies both in and outside China and particularities, principles and criteria, perspectives, strategies and methods of drama translation. Chapter 3 explores the rendering of performability from a pragmatic perspective. It first justifies the necessity to apply pragmatic theories to drama translation and gives introduction to Speech Act Theory, Cooperative Principle, Politeness Theory and Context Theory. And then with a lot of examples, a detailed analysis of drama translation from pragmatic view is conducted. In Chapter 4, a comparative case study of the two English versions of *Teahouse* is provided to show the translation of performability. Chapter 5 is concluding remarks. It first gives a summary of the book, and then points out the limitations of the book.

## Abbreviations

ST	source text
TT	target text
SC	source culture
TC	target culture

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# Chapter 1

## Drama and Dramatic Language

### 1.1 Drama, Play and Theater

The three terms in English, namely, “play”, “drama” and “theater”, are correlated and somewhat overlapping and rather confusing. Thus, it is necessary to differentiate them to clear the ground by presenting definitions.

Etymologically, “drama” comes from the Greek word “dran”, which means “thing done”, “action” or “deed”. Drama, whose Chinese translation is “戏剧”, refers to “both a written text and a theatrical performance” (Aaltonen, 2000: 33). According to *Oxford Dictionary of Theatre* (2000), *drama* is a term applied loosely to the whole body of work written for the theatre or to a group of plays related by their style, content, or period, as Restoration drama, realistic drama. It is also referred specifically to any situation in which there is conflict and for theatrical purposes, resolution of that conflict. In a narrower sense the word is applied to plays of high emotional content, which at their best may give us literary masterpieces and at their worst degenerate into melodrama (130). According to *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2000: 61), drama is a “general term for performance in which actors impersonate the actions and speech of fictional or historical characters” for “the entertainment of an audience, either on stage or by means of a broadcast; or a particular example of this art, i. e. a play.” Drama, a major genre of literature, usually represents stories showing conflicts between characters (*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 2000: 61). Drama focuses on the verbal interaction and the way relationships between characters are constructed and

negotiated through what they say (Thornborrow & Wareing, 2000: 121).

*Play* is applied to any work written to be acted, and entirely or mainly spoken. (Plays written to be read—closet drama—remain outside the mainstream of the theatre.) A play may require some music, but if music is paramount the work becomes an opera; if dancing is the main attraction the work becomes a ballet, or a mime. A play may be either a tragedy, with subdivisions into epic, historical, or neo-classical, or a comedy, which includes farce. In most cases, *theatre* refers to a building with a stage where dramatic literature is performed by actors. When used in some academic writings on literature and art, it means dramatic literature itself, or dramatic representation as a form of art.

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Sixth Edition, Oxford University Press, 2000), *drama* is a play for the theatre, television or radio, as a costume drama, history drama; or plays considered as a form of literature; classical drama, Elizabethan drama or modern drama, a drama critic, a drama student. *Play* is a piece of writing performed by actors in a theatre or on television or radio; to put on (perform) a play, a play by Shakespeare. *Theatre* is used in three ways: (1) a building or an outdoor area where plays and similar types of entertainment are performed; West End Broadway theatres, an open-air theatre. How often do you go to the theatre? (2) plays considered as entertainment; an evening of live music and theatre. I like music, theatre and cinema. (3) the work of writing, producing and acting in plays; I want to work in theatre. He was essentially a man of theatre. (1345)

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Second Edition, 1989), *play* is “a literary composition in the form of dialogue, adapt for performance on the stage with appropriate action, costume, scenery, in imitation of real events; a dramatic piece, with accompanying gesture, costume, and scenery, as in real life; a play”; *theatre* is “dramatic performance as a branch of art, or as an institution; the drama”; *drama* is “a composition in prose or verse, adapted to be acted upon a stage, in which a story is related by means of dialogue and action, and is represented with accompanying gesture, costume, and scenery, as in real life.”

*Encyclopedia Americana* (1986) explains and distinguishes drama

from theatre;<sup>①</sup>

Some confusion exists about the relation of “theatre” and “drama”. Normally, “drama” refers to the literary basis of a theatrical presentation, the assumption being that the written record contains the essential elements of the human experience enacted in the theatre. In this view, “theatre” is merely the physical expression of the play script... It is better, therefore, to define theatre as the embracing art of presentation that includes the enactment of mimetic activity. In this view theatre comprises not only drama but also circus, dance, opera, and puppetry.

From above definitions and references, it can be concluded that *play* mainly refers to the dramatic text while *theatre* mainly concerns about the physical realization of the dramatic text. *Drama* has dual reference to both a written literary text and theatrical performance. This point is agreed on by Williams (1968:70): “the word drama is used in two main ways: first, to describe a literary work, the text of a play; and second, to describe the performance of this work, its production.” In Chinese, the term *play*, *drama* and *theatre* is “话剧剧本”, “话剧”, “话剧演出” respectively.

However, in spite of the dissimilarities of the three terms, there remains an overlapping among them. As *play*, or rather, dramatic text is written for theatrical performance and theatrical performance is based on the play text, it is impossible to separate them. Also, every theatre performance is unique and “something instantaneous, perishable” (Tornqvist, 1991:2), while the literature, that is, the dramatic text remains perdurable. So in this book, what is mainly discussed is dramatic text, with its theatrical potential highlighted.

## 1.2 The Dualistic Nature of Drama

Drama differs from other literary genres in that it has dual references

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① Due to material limitation, the information is cited from Zhuang Qianhua's thesis: A Study of Mr. Ying Ruocheng's Translation of Common Sayings in *Uncle Doggie's Nirvana* from the Perspective of Dynamic Equivalence Theory. Beijing Language and Culture University, 2005.



(a literary genre as well as a performance art) and dual identities (on the stage and on the page). So the receptor of drama includes not only the reader of its play text but the audience in theatre as well. So it has dual nature; one is its literariness and the other is its theatrical characteristics. Except for closet drama which is written not for stage performance but for private reading only, a drama contains both literariness and flavor of performance art.

On the one hand, a drama is mainly composed of dramatic dialogues, which are the most important means of depicting the roles' personalities and pushing forward the development of plot. So the literariness in it is of great value. It can be read as a piece of literary work and the readers can be deeply touched. This proves that drama, like other literary genres, carries great literariness.

On the other hand, the final goal of a drama is to be staged. So it carries its particular characteristics: theatrical potential which includes audience and performance factors. Thus drama translation not only involves the transfer of a certain text from source language into target language but involves many extra-linguistic elements.

### 1.3 Features of Dramatic Language

Drama has dual references to both a written literary text and theatrical performance. This point is agreed on by Williams (1968:70): "the word drama is used in two main ways: first, to describe a literary work, the text of a play; and second, to describe the performance of this work, its production."

The characteristics of dramatic language are determined by its dual nature. On the one hand, as literary language, it is refined and carefully manipulated by playwrights so as to be rich in implicit meaning and rhetorical devices, such as metaphor, pun, irony, hyperbole and so on. On the other hand, as script for performance, its features are determined by dramatic art and stage performance. First of all, stage performance calls for the language to be colloquial, natural for speech and easy to grasp, for the language of drama "stands in a functional relationship to the speakers,

listeners and the norms of the spoken language.” (Aaltonen, 2000:42) That is to say, the language of drama is a language of action and full of gestic codes and mimicry. Last but not the least, like everyday speech, dramatic dialogue must conform to the character’s social division, temperament and the context concerned. Thus individuality is an indispensable and important feature of dramatic language.

### 1.3.1 Implicitness and Rhetoric

Though dramatic language in many ways is similar to oral language in daily life, it is not the simple duplicate of daily speech. It is dramatized, refined and processed for stage performance. Many of the problems inherent in naturally occurring speech are not present in dramatic scripts. Also, due to the temporal limitation, the lines are always well designed to stimulate the development of the whole dramatic event. And they are condensed to be rich in implied message, which enhances the charm of drama.

Meanwhile, Drama moves audience with language, so the playwrights always endeavor to enliven the language by some play of words, such as pun, metaphor, irony, hyperbole, etc. As a result, rhetoric is congenitally contained, which makes the dramatic language more impressive and persuasive with artistic effects. At the same time, the lines are made poetic and musical so that the actors can “speak the speech trippingly on the tongue” (Zatlin, 2005:1) by means of rhyme and rhythm. The following examples are from Lao She’s *Teahouse*.

#### Example 1:

李三:对,前边叫,后边催,把我劈成两半儿好不好!

Li San: I like that. Ordering me here and calling me there! You might as well cut me in half!

(Translated by Ying Ruocheng)

THIRD BORN LI: Right. Called for out back, ordered around out front. Why don’t you cut me in two and have done with it?

(Translated by Howard-Gibbon)

In the original text, “前边叫,后边催” are read in the same pace and rhythm and they share the same pronunciation of the character “边” and the structure is parallel. Both of the rendered versions have achieved the