

On the Performability of Drama Translation: A Case Study of Zhu Shenghao's and Liang Shiqiu's Versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

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Received: September 20, 2022

Accepted: November 7, 2022

Online Published: November 23, 2022

doi:10.5539/ells.v12n4p65

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ells.v12n4p65>

Abstract

Drama translation, as a part of visual art, is more than just textual translation; it is a component of dramatic performance portrayed in the form of verbal action. Lines in drama translation are thus dialogues that render the drama performance rather than descriptive languages that provide information. Translators must use a variety of translation strategies to achieve performability in drama translation. Following Levy's (2011) translation theory, the paper conducts a contrastive analysis of Zhu Shenghao's and Liang Shiqiu's Chinese versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from the aspects of the acquisition of speakability and intelligibility, restoration of semantic contexts, reflection of verbal action, and achievement of characterisation, exploring how the performability is satisfied in drama translation, and summarising strategies for fulfilling performability in drama translation. It is discovered that Zhu Shenghao (Zhu) insisted on his principles for drama translation, placed emphasis on performability in his translation, and used the following strategies to achieve performability in his translation: using colloquial style language, adjusting the order of sentence segments, reconstructing the syntax, uncovering the indeterminacy for different contexts, using modal particles, using dialects of the target language, and revealing characters' intentions. However, in order to achieve speakability and intelligibility, Zhu abandoned the stichomythia rhyme, failing to present the verbal action. On the other hand, Liang preserved the stichomythia rhyme, reflecting the verbal action. Furthermore, Zhu replaced the personal pronoun in the original text with notional terms, resulting in the loss of semantic contexts, whereas Liang Shiqiu (Liang) preserved the personal pronoun, restoring the semantic contexts.

Keywords: drama translation, performability, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Zhu Shenghao, Liang Shiqiu

1. Introduction

Drama translation, which serves for performance, is more complex and challenging than literary translation, and the concept of performability in drama translation cannot be overlooked. According to Levy (2011), drama translation should achieve performability by acquiring speakability and intelligibility, restoring semantic contexts, reflecting verbal action, and achieving characterisation. However, so far, little research has been conducted about drama translation strategies used by translators to achieve performability. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate how performability is achieved in drama translation.

The research is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Zhu Shenghao's and Liang Shiqiu's versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is selected as a case study. Many studies on these two versions were undertaken from diverse angles, indicating that Zhu Shenghao (Zhu) chose to practice performability in his translation. However, few studies examine his version from the perspective of performability and investigate how Zhu achieves performability. Previous research, on the other hand, has found that Liang Shiqiu (Liang) did not consider performability in his version and strove to fully restore the style of the original version. In accordance with Levy's (2011) drama translation theory, the drama translation strategies used by Zhu to achieve performability will be revealed by comparing Liang's version, which restored the original structure with the Chinese language style.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Performability in Drama Translation

“Performability” is derived from the word “performable”, which refers to the realisation of performance potential. Thus, the “performability” of drama refers to its ability to be performed. The foundation of performability in drama translation is action (Aristotle, 1996). According to Aristotle (1996), drama is named “drama” because it imitates the characters’ behaviours. The impromptu performances of ancient Greece that used human movement to communicate art are where drama first began (Aristotle, 1996). Yu (1986) added that human movement and its artistic function constitute action, and that the artistic function may be seen in the intentions, feelings, thoughts, and personality traits of the characters. Additionally, in terms of the word’s origin, the Greek word “drama” comes from the word “dran”, which means “action”. That is to say, “drama” is synonymous with “action”. Therefore, it can be concluded that the essential characteristic of drama is “action” (Aristot, 1996).

Drama language, as the most important medium of drama art, is expected to effectively express the true force of events, which is constituted by human actions, so that events become visible (Lawson, 1961). Therefore, dramatic language must embody human action, and translated dramatic language must reproduce human action. When the translated dramatic language is performed on stage, it reproduces human action. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that action is also at the heart of performability in drama translation. Drama translation is intended to embody or assist in reflecting human action in order to achieve performability.

Bassnett first proposed the concept of performability, but she then alternated between admitting and rejecting it. Drama translation, according to Bassnett (1991, p. 105), can be divided into two types: aesthetic text and commercial text. The aesthetic text is intended for reading, whereas the commercial text is designed for the drama performance. However, most researchers believe that drama translation should end with the goal of achieving performability. According to Newmark (2001), the drama translation ensures the success of its performance. Furthermore, he emphasised the differences between drama and fiction translation. Drama translators face more challenges than novel translators in achieving performability because there is no annotation for the audience, making it challenging to explain puns, ambiguities, or cultural differences. Moreover, Pavis (1992) proposed that translators reconstruct drama texts according to the original version, emphasising gesture fulfilment and the importance of audience reception in drama translation. He identified the two most important factors influencing performance. First, drama translation is supposed to be in line with the audience’s perception through the bodies of the actors. Therefore, drama translation should allow actors to perform their roles. Second, because diverse cultures and enunciation contexts are separated by both time and space, a literal translation in drama translation is inappropriate (Pavis, 1992).

Many Chinese drama translators agree with Pavis (1992) on performability when it comes to translating drama into Chinese. For example, in his translation of Shakespeare’s drama, Zhu Shenghao (1958) concluded that he would see himself as a reader and determine whether any ambiguity exists in order to achieve performability. Then he kept thinking of himself as a performer, deciding whether the translation was speakable and harmonious. To avoid ambiguity and unspeakability, changes would be implemented to preserve the original charm. Further, Ying (1999) summarised three principles of performability based on his extensive performance experience. That is colloquial style, simplicity, and personal character and activity. He also emphasised the verbal action, which revealed the characters’ inner feelings, and suggested that translation should keep subtext in mind.

2.2 Zhu Shenghao’s Drama Translations

Drama translations by Zhu Shenghao and Liang Shiqiu have a good reputation in China and have significant research value. They do, however, adhere to different principles and employ different styles in their drama translations. Zhu Shenghao considered performability during the translation process of drama. He attempted to get closer to readers by using elegant sentences with oriental aesthetics and restoring the spirit of the original version, achieving intelligibility and readability (Deng, 2011). Moreover, Zhang and Wen (2016) discovered that Zhu Shenghao amended the translation from the aspects of nouns, pronouns, syntax order, and sentence structure, revealing his goal of achieving readability and performability. The desire to be close to the reader while retaining the original spirit is a distinguishing feature of Zhu’s translation.

On the one hand, Zhu Shenghao preferred the target language style to avoid ambiguity in his translation (Liu, 2009). Therefore, Zhu altered the original text’s structure in order to make the translation clear and smooth (Chen & Duan, 2016). He was sensitive to the target readers’ thinking habits, aesthetic customs, and cognitive patterns when translating original images, and adopted corresponding translation strategies (Hong, 2015). His drama translation strategies are classified into four categories: preserving the original image, changing the original image, removing the original image, and amplifying the original image (Li, 2010). Furthermore, his

translation contains numerous rhythmic parallels and deviations. The prosodic characteristics of Tang and Song poems are all involved in the construction of multiple rhythms in the translation (Liu, 2011), which causes Zhu's translation to contain rhymes in various places with symmetrical sentence structure and a strong sense of rhythm, in accordance with the aesthetic customs of Chinese readers (Li, 2009). Especially in his translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Zhu gave full play to his poetic identity, transforming many of the lines of the characters into a poetic form full of the charm of Chinese poetry and promoting the plot's development (Lu, 2017).

On the other hand, Zhu not only translated the underlying literariness and aesthetic aspects of Shakespeare's play, but also reproduced the spirit of the original version, owing to his classical literary accomplishment and thorough grasp of Shakespeare's drama (Li, 2013). He boldly combined poetic style and spoken language to replicate the original style of poem and prose in his translation of Shakespeare's drama, thereby effectively capturing the aesthetic aspects of the original work (Yu, 2014). From the perspective of literature translation, Zhu Shenghao's translation interpreted Shakespeare's play in his style. He devoted his life to cross-cultural communication, allowing readers to better understand the true meaning of literary translation in the broader cultural context (Zhu & Xu, 2014).

However, there is an unavoidable contradiction between retaining the attractiveness of the original version and being more intimate with the reader. If it was challenging to match a word or a sentence structure in Chinese, Zhu used an extension or reorganised and readjusted the translation. This translation strategy ensures the restoration of content but loses the original text's formal elegance or literariness (Wang, 2014). Furthermore, He's (2009) research on the pun in Shakespeare's play revealed that, because the source and target languages have distinct expressions and modes of expression, some of Zhu Shenghao's pun translations are unsuitable. The majority of them can only be translated into one layer of meaning or are ignored. Many vulgar sayings and even obscene language in Shakespeare's plays that can best portray the character of Shakespeare's characters have not yet been translated, which blames the limits and conflicts of many social, cultural, and translation conventions at the time (Cheng, 2006). Moreover, although Zhu meticulously understood Shakespeare's drama style and devoted himself to reproducing it in drama translation, the sensation of joy and romance are recreated not only in the writer's style but also in his own in his translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Feng, 1991). For example, Zhu's translation of music rhythm is more accurate than the original in terms of the emotional tone of the character in the play. However, in other instances, this style involves excessive modification and even distorts the sense of the original text (Liu, 2007).

2.3 Liang Shiqiu's Drama Translations

Liang Shiqiu lived during a time of intense political, ideological, and other external manipulation. However, the external environment played a considerably less vital part in shaping his literary and translation views than his dual knowledge, which is classical, rational, and in the spirit of pure western neo-humanism. Moreover, he also embraced the rigidity and harmony of old Confucian literati and bureaucrats (Zhao, 2007). Therefore, Liang Shiqiu and Zhu Shenghao have opposing views on Shakespeare's drama translation.

Liang insisted on honesty as the foundation and strived for faithfulness, kindness, and beauty, presenting readers with an original Shakespeare style (Wang & Lan, 2010). Liang thought that translation should be loyal to the original text, aim for trust, and preserve the original text's variety. Simultaneously, he advised that the target language be smooth and achieve the organic unity of faithfulness and smoothness, in accordance with the habits of the target language readers. In his translation practice, he effectively employed his hybrid translation philosophy (Wu, 2010). In terms of translation strategies, Liang followed the following principles: combining faithfulness and smoothness, using literal translation, detailed annotations (Wang, 2008), and vernacular prose (Wang, 2013). Furthermore, the thick translation approach was employed to translate the images in Shakespeare's plays, with many prefaces and remarks at the end of the text, which made the translations more elegant and formed the academic style (Ji, 2016). From the standpoint of faithfulness, Liang employed the beautiful artistic means of the East to express the true feelings, goodwill, and aesthetic style of Shakespeare's works, and brought Western literature to the East (Xu, 1995). And from the reader's point of view, the entire works of Shakespeare translated by Liang consider the perception of readers. On the one hand, Liang Shiqiu's ideology, aesthetic concept, new humanism, and Confucianism, are involved in his understanding of the source language and translation; on the other hand, his concern for the target readers enabled the translation to be more adaptable to the readers (Huang, 2008). Based on these two considerations, it can be inferred that Liang's translation successfully combines faithfulness and fluidity.

2.4 Differences Between the Drama Translations of Zhu Shenghao and Liang Shiqiu

The drama translation styles of Liang Shiqiu and Zhu Shenghao differ significantly. Liang Shiqiu's translation emphasised the literary function of drama, whereas Zhu Shenghao's translation highlighted the acting function of drama (Li, 2011). The differences are most noticeable in the effects of sound beauty, writing style, and the tendency toward elegance and vulgarity. Liang Shiqiu's translation lacked rhythm but was rich in written language style, and he faithfully translated the original text's idioms. Zhu Shenghao's translation was poetic, melodious, and colloquial, and it abandoned the impure words in the original text (Yan, 2010).

Zhu practised his translation criteria during the translation process, attempting to be as close to the readers as possible while maintaining the original spirit to the greatest extent possible. However, the goal of being near to the reader and retaining the original drama's language style is to achieve performability in drama translation. The relationship between drama translation and drama performance is rarely highlighted, leaving a gap in studying drama translation from a performability perspective. On the contrary, Liang's drama translation emphasised the literary function, ignored the performance function, and attempted to retain the original text's content, structure, and style. The paper will examine the contrasting attitudes of the two versions toward performability and undertake a case study of the two versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from the perspective of performability.

3. Levý's Theory on Performability in Drama Translation

Levý also stated that "drama is action" (Levý, 2011, p. 148), and listed four factors to consider while translating drama: speakability and intelligibility, semantic contexts, verbal action, and character.

In point of speakability and intelligibility, according to Levý (2011, p. 129), "theatre dialogue is spoken text intended for oral delivery and aural receipt". Drama translation that achieves speakability allows actors to pronounce clearly in terms of pronunciation, while drama translation that achieves intelligibility requires the audience to avoid mishearing and misunderstanding. Moreover, according to Stanislavski, speech is a part of the action in drama (Zheng, 2012). Therefore, on the one hand, in terms of speech itself, as an action that should be clearly presented in drama, it is expected to achieve speakability and intelligibility. Dramatic language, on the other hand, should be accompanied by action. Stanislavski claimed that action-oriented drama language conveys one's "inner vision" to the antagonists, allowing the antagonists (and the audience through the antagonists) to see what you are saying (Zheng, 2012). Therefore, the first guarantee of the present action is clear communication of speech pronunciation and meaning. That is, drama translation should be speakable and understandable in order to achieve smooth communication.

In terms of semantic contexts, it is pointed out that drama differs from epic. Epic meaning is limited to a single level of grammatical meaning, whereas drama semantic contexts are linked to various drama situations. On the one hand, Levý (2011) proposed that dramatic language involves the semantic relationship between actors and objects. Deictic drama translation, which requires the actor to supplement his words with exophoric references, could fulfil the relationship. Exophoric references are human actions that serve an artistic function. Therefore, drama translation can only complete the relationship between actors and objects and present human action by restoring the semantic contexts. On the other hand, Levý (2011) claimed that different semantic contexts could produce different meanings for different listeners (antagonists or audiences). The semantic meaning which causes different semantic contexts is called indeterminacy meaning. In dramatic language, the indeterminacy meaning includes the characters' volitional orientation, or thoughts. When the drama translation completely reveals the indeterminacy of meaning for constituting various semantic contexts, the characters' thoughts and then human actions can be presented. In addition, Levý (2011) pointed out that the presentation of indeterminacy meaning in the dramatic language also plays a crucial role in the coherence of the dramatic plot. The plot must be coherent in order to achieve complete action. By revealing the indeterminacy of meaning in drama translation, the plot and human action can be completed. Therefore, the achievement of the relationship between the actors, their antagonists, and the audience paves the way for the presentation of the action. It can be concluded that drama translation is intended to accurately and completely restore semantic contexts in order to reflect or assist the presentation of character action and then practice performability.

With regard to verbal action, Levý (2011) stated that verbal action involves semantic contexts as well as characters' volitional orientation. Stanislavski also claimed that speech is action, and verbal action is the highest form of action because it conveys one's own "inner version", and it is the most powerful factor of the actor's expressive force (Zheng, 2012). Verbal action contains the characters' volitional orientation, and characters' thoughts in drama can be presented in the form of emotions or intentions of the characters. To present human action, it is necessary to express characters' emotions or intentions through verbal action. And the style of

dramatic speech is involved in analysing verbal action. Take stichomythia in Shakespeare's drama as an example. Shakespeare's play has two lines from each pair of characters in a row, creating stichomythia, in which the characters' thoughts and feelings are expressed through changeable rhyme in an instant (Yu, 1986). The rhyme serves as "fencing", and Stichomythia can alternately shift the dominant status between the characters (Levý, 2011). Stichomythia is essentially a two-person performance, and the two people's actions interact with one another as they are being performed. Therefore, the interaction between the two characters must be maintained in order to accurately portray the action in Stichomythia. In other words, it's essential to maintain the dialogue's unique intensity and active attention on the antagonist in the translation in order to ensure performability (Levý, 2011). That is, to reflect the verbal action completely.

Concerning characters, Levý (2011) suggested that the personality of the characters determines verbal expression. The characters' personalities can be used to infer how the character expresses himself. In order to achieve performability, drama translation is intended to represent the character in a way that reflects the action.

The four aspects of performability answer the question of what performability is in drama translation. They serve as four requirements for drama translation: acquisition of speakability and intelligibility, restoration of semantic contexts, the reflection of verbal action, and achievement of characterisation. To acquire speakability and intelligibility is to ensure the communication of action, while restoration of semantic contexts, the reflection of verbal action and achievement of characterisation are to present the action of the character directly or indirectly.

4. Descriptive Analysis of Zhu Shenghao's and Liang Shiqiu's Versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

4.1 Acquisition of Speakability and Intelligibility

Speakability and intelligibility, which contribute to representing characters' actions, are related to oral delivery and aural reception. Therefore, from the perspective of speakability and intelligibility, drama translation should be easy for performers to articulate and avoid any audience misunderstanding. To achieve speakability and intelligibility, languages with colloquial style and short sentences are supposed to be the bulk of drama translation. In addition, the syntax should also be considered to facilitate the audience's comprehension (Levý, 2011).

Compared with written language, language with a colloquial style is preferable to acquire speakability and intelligibility in drama translation because the meaning of words in drama translation is expressed by performers orally and accepted by the audience phonetically. When people enjoy drama performances, they see the external actions of characters and listen to dialogues without any words to read or annotations contributing to comprehension. In addition, unlike reading a book where readers can slow down their reading speed and reread when they feel confused, the audience cannot replay the drama performance if there are any words raising misunderstanding. People are familiar with oral language phonetically and literally since it is used in daily conversation. Therefore, as oral as possible, language in drama translation is supposed to have a colloquial style to guarantee speakability and intelligibility. Zhu Shenghao regarded colloquial style language as one of the principles of reaching performability in his drama translation.

Example 1.

Original:

TITANIA. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away.

We shall **chide** downright if I longer stay.

Zhu's translation (Zhu, 2013):

提泰妮娅：把你的仙国跟我掉换都别想。神仙们，去吧！

要是我再多留一刻，我们就要**吵起来**了。

Liang's translation (Liang, 1995):

铁 把你的仙国给我，我都不换。

走吧小仙，再停留又要**起争端**。

In example 1, Oberon and Titania quarrel and Titania wants to leave to avoid further disputes. Liang expresses the meaning of "chide" by "起争端". "争端" is written language rather than colloquial style language, with a taste of academic solemnity, while Zhu uses "吵起来了" which is a typical colloquial style language in Chinese. Therefore, from the perspective of colloquialism, "吵起来了" is better than "争端" since "吵起来了" is closer to the conversation in general life, conforming to aural reception for audiences and oral delivery for performers.

Regarding syntax, Levý (2011, p. 129) pointed out that “audiences are not used to long, complex sentences”. Therefore, it is required that drama translators simple the original complex syntax into short sentences and, more importantly, ensure closeness between related clause segments because “comprehension is more difficult when closely related clause segments are widely separated, leaving the first of them semantically incomplete” (Levý, 2011, p. 129). Zhu pays attention to the order of sentence segments in his translation and adjusts the order of sentence segments in the original text.

Example 2.

Original:

LYSANDE. A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager

Of great revenue, and she hath no child—

From Athens is her house remote seven leagues—

And she respects me as her only son.

There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;

And to that place the sharp Athenian law

Cannot pursue us.

Zhu’s translation (Zhu, 2013):

拉山德：你说得对。听我吧，赫米娅。我有一个寡居的伯母，很有钱，却没有儿女，她看待我就像亲生的独子一样。她的家离开雅典二十里路；温柔的赫米娅，我可以在那边和你结婚，雅典法律的利爪不能追及我们。

Liang’s translation (Liang, 1995):

赖 很好的见解：所以，你听我说，荷米亚。我有一位孀居姑母，是一位很有钱的寡妇，她没有孩子；她住家离雅典有七里；她把我当做她的独子。亲爱的荷米亚，我在那个地方可以和你成婚，严峻的雅典法律不能追到我们那里。

In example 2, Lysande attempts to persuade Hermia to elope with him. In Lysande’s mind, he wants to introduce his aunt at first, emphasises that the place where his aunt lives in is out of Athens’s law and then invites Hermia to be with him there. Liang follows the original order of sentence segments where he points out the situation of Lysande’s aunt’s house at first and then talks about how Lysande’s aunt cherishes him, contrary to the order of expressed meaning. In Zhu’s translation, the order of sentence segments has been adjusted. Zhu shows that Lysande introduces his aunt as a wealthy widow without a child and sees him as her child, followed by his aunt’s living place and persuades Hermia to elope with him. By adjusting the order of sentence segments, Zhu’s translation presents Lysande’s intention more smoothly and therefore embraces a stronger logical relationship which paves the way for easier audience comprehension and expression of performers.

Apart from the order of sentence segments, the structure of sentences also influences comprehension. According to Levý (2011), paratactic structures are easier to articulate and understand than compound sentences with a complex hierarchy of subordinate clauses. Following is an example in Zhu’s version.

Example 3.

Original:

LYSANDER. Demetrius, I’ll avouch it to his head,

Made love to Nedar’s daughter, Helena,

And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,

Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry

Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

Zhu’s translation (Zhu, 2013):

拉山德：讲到狄米特律斯，我可以当他的面宣布，他曾经向奈达的女儿海丽娜调过情，把她弄得神魂颠倒；那位可爱的姑娘还痴心地恋着他，把这个缺德的负心汉当偶像一样崇拜。

Liang’s translation (Liang, 1995):

赖 地美特利阿斯，我可以当他面说，曾向奈达的女儿海伦娜求爱，并且得到了她的心；她，一位娇好的小姐，竟爱上了他，热烈的爱，像崇拜偶像般的爱，爱上这么一个邪恶薄幸的人。

In example 3, the provided sentence conveys that Helena passionately loves Demetrius, who is an indecent man. Liang follows the original syntax structure, which contains two sentence segments as a parenthesis to depict how deep Helena's love is, shifting the subject from "she", which refers to Helena, to Helena's love and leaving the former sentence segment semantically unfinished. After these two sentence segments, the subject of the dialogue goes back to "she". When listening to this line, the audience's train of thought has been broken, turns into other content, and returns to the first uncompleted thought. Therefore, the comprehension of the audience will be hard to satisfy. On the contrary, Zhu translates the sentence and its modifier into a paratactic structure which shares the same subject, "the sweet lady", paving an easier way for the audience's understanding.

4.2 Restoration of Semantic Contexts

Semantic contexts in drama are not merely related to linguistic meaning but involve various relationships among performers, audience and objects on stage. To represent the essence of drama dialogues, semantic contexts in drama must be fully restored. Restoration of semantic contexts in drama translation involves two main aspects: coherence of the drama plot and drama situation (Levý, 2011).

The coherence of a drama plot should be fulfilled in drama dialogues because drama dialogues store the thinking of characters by which the audience can have an idea of the development of the drama plot. However, not all drama dialogues will express the thought of the character directly since drama language is no descriptive language. Therefore, drama translation should reveal the inner meaning of dialogues for better coherence of the drama plot. Zhu grasps the significance of the coherence of the drama plot.

Example 4.

Original:

BOTTOM. —dours savours sweet;

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear.

But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile,

And by and by I will to thee appear.

[Exit].

PUCK. A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

[Exit].

Zhu's translation (Zhu, 2013):

波顿：—开得十分香；你的气息，好人儿，也是一个样。听，那边有一个声音，你且等一等，一会儿咱再来和你诉衷情。(下)。

迫克：请看皮拉摩斯变成了怪妖精。(下)。

Liang's translation (Liang, 1995):

线 “—气味香：

你的吐气也是一样，我最亲爱的提斯壁。

听，有声音！你等一下，

我立刻就回来再会你。”(下)。

扑 这里从没有演过比这更怪的皮拉摩斯。(下)。

In example 4, Puck, a naughty fairy, wants to play tricks on Bottom and turns him into a monster. Puck's irony line, "A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here", constitutes an indeterminacy of meaning, sharing different semantic contexts with the speaker and the audience. In terms of the speaker, the line reveals the Puck's mocking attitude to Bottom, that Bottom is going to be a monster. For the audience, after this line, Puck has to exit the stage, and Bottom appears on the scene with a monster face, which creates dramatic tension and raises a prediction of the following plot. Liang translates this line literally as "Pyramus has never been performed in such a strange way", maintaining the mood of irony. However, the audience cannot know its implicit meaning—Puck is going to turn Bottom into a monster, which may bring confusion of the mocking attitude and the following plots—Bottom becomes a monster with an astonishing face. Therefore, in Liang's translation, the coherence of

the plot is broken. On the contrary, Zhu adapts this line as “Please, look! Pyramus has become a monster.” By uncovering the indeterminacy of meaning, Zhu’s translation not only presents the character’s mocking attitude to the audience directly, but also brings a clear outline of the following plot for the audience so that they can predict the following plot logically. And thus, the coherence of the plot is finished.

A drama situation comprises the relationship between the performers and objects or antagonists. When the relationship is connected by one character but not the interplay of two players, the drama translation must pave the way for the performer’s external action to represent the relationship. According to Levý (2011), to fulfil the relationships in drama translation, one of the external actions can be the exophoric reference. A good deictic translation requires the performer to complement his words with gestures. Gestures are concealed in Zhu’s version.

Example 5.

Original:

LYSANDER. You have her father’s love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia’s; do you marry **him**.

Zhu’s translation (Zhu, 2013):

拉山德：你已经得到她父亲的爱，狄米特律斯，让我保有着赫米娅的爱吧；你去跟**她的父亲**结婚好了。

Liang’s translation (Liang, 1995):

赖地美特利阿斯，你得到了她父亲的爱，让我取得荷米亚的爱：你娶**他**好了。

In example 5, Lysander, Demetrius and Hermia’s father are all on stage. Hermia’s father and Demetrius are convinced that Hermia should not get married to Lysander. Lysander satirises angrily that Demetrius should marry Hermia’s father. In Zhu’s descriptive translation, where “她的父亲” was used to refer to Hermia’s father, Lysander speaks rather than acts. The relationship between Lysander and Demetrius is fulfilled, but the presence of Hermia’s father is eliminated, and therefore, the drama situation is incomplete. While Liang’s translation, where “他” refers to Hermia’s father, requires the actor to finish his words with a gesture pointing to Hermia’s father. Lysander’s emotion and action, which include verbal action and external action, become dynamics, connecting the relationship among the three characters, Demetrius, Lysander and Hermia’s father, and then representing a correct response to a vivid dramatic situation that Lysander feels furious about the interruption to the relationship between him and Hermia.

4.3 Reflection of Verbal Action

In drama performances, dialogues are actions. However, unlike external activities, verbal actions, represented by performers, contain the power of actions inside the dialogues. To reflect the verbal action, the inside power of dialogues should be recovered. The inside power of dialogues can be represented on two sides, the language characteristics of drama dialogues and the thought of characters concealed in the drama dialogues.

In Shakespeare’s drama, one characteristic of language is stichomythia, where two-line speeches are given to alternating characters, forming a rhyme pattern. According to Levý (2011), stichomythia can go onward a verbal due which ensues between the two characters, shifting the dominant status back and forth between the two characters in the dialogue, where the paired rhyme can serve as a “fencing” function. Therefore, preserving the interrelationship between the idea and the verse form is significant. A stichomythia is presented as follows.

Example 6.

Original:

HERMIA. I frown upon him, yet he loves me **still**.
HELENA. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such **skills**!
HERMIA. I give him curses, yet he gives me **love**.
HELENA. O that my prayers could such affection **move**!
HERMIA. The more I hate, the more he follows **me**.
HELENA. The more I love, the more he hateth **me**.

HERMIA. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA. None, but your beauty; would that fault were mine!

Zhu's translation (Zhu, 2013):

赫米娅： 我向他皱着眉头，但是他仍旧爱我。

海丽娜： 唉，要是你的颦蹙能把那种本领传授给我的微笑就好了！

赫米娅： 我给他咒骂，但他给我爱情。

海丽娜： 唉，要是我的祈祷也能这样引动他的爱情就好了！

赫米娅： 我越是恨他，他越是跟着我。

海丽娜： 我越是爱他，他越是讨厌我。

赫米娅： 海丽娜，他的傻并不是我的错。

海丽娜： 但那是你的美貌的错处；要是那错处是我的就好了！

Liang's translation (Liang, 1995):

荷 我对他皱眉，但是他爱我如故。

海 愿我的微笑能学得到你的皱眉的技术。

荷 我给他的是咒骂，但他报我以爱情。

海 愿我的祈祷也能这样打动他的心。

荷 我越厌恶他，他越追随我得紧。

海 我越爱恋他，他越厌恶我得狠。

荷 是他发痴，海伦娜，错误不在我。

海 你没错，是你的美貌错；但愿那错属于我！

As shown in example 6, a verbal duel, which ensues between Hermia and Helen, is reflected in the stichomythia. Hermia and Helen are quarrelling about Demetrius. Helen is crazy about Demetrius, but Demetrius wants to get married to Hermia. Hermia feels vexed about Demetrius's love and keeps explaining to Helen. However, Helen continues her awfulness and feels jealous of Hermia. The actions of Hermia and Helen interrelate compactly. Liang's translation reserves the paired rhyme. In his translation, the active focus of verbal action goes back and forth between Hermia and Helen. Therefore, the whole action in the scene comprised of the respective actions of the two characters is presented. Both Hermia's deep resignation and Helen's grief are presented actively. On the contrary, in Zhu's translation, only one paired rhyme is reserved and "就好了" is repeated three times at the end of Helen's lines. However, the only reserved pair of rhymes which share the same word, "我", as rhyme, bring a weaker focus quantitatively. In addition, although his repeated words "就好了" have a decorative effect, they are pointless for verbal action since the repeated words are distant from one another than in the original text and expressed by the same character, failing to practice the "fencing" function. Therefore, the power of verbal action is eliminated in Zhu's translation so that the power of action becomes frail.

The thought of the character, with which a character appeals to an antagonist, making him act in a certain, is supposed to be preserved since dialogue is verbal action (Levý, 2011). The characters' thoughts can be presented in the form of emotions or intents. In respect of reflecting the emotions of characters, an impressive drama translation would lead the actor to indulge in the character's emotion and show listeners, including antagonists and the audience, the character's emotions profoundly. Since drama languages are not descriptive, it is inappropriate to reveal the emotions literally or translate them in a descriptive style without dialogue's dramatic vividness. Zhu shows the character's emotion dexterously with distinct characteristics of the Chinese language.

Example 7.

Original:

OBERON. Do you amend it, then; it lies in you.

Why should Titania cross her Oberon

I do but beg a little changeling boy

To be my henchman.

Zhu's translation (Zhu, 2013):

奥布朗：那么你该设法补救；这全然在你的手中。为什么提泰妮娅要违拗她的奥布朗呢？我所要求的，不过是一个小小的换儿做我的侍童罢了。

Liang's translation (Liang, 1995):

奥 那么你就悔祸吧；这全在于你。铁达尼亚为什么要顶撞她的奥伯龙？我只是要你的那个偷来的孩子，来做我的随从。

In example 7, Oberon shows his confusion and despair that Titania disagrees with him. He sincerely hopes that Titania can understand him and meet his demand that let the little boy be his servant. Here Zhu uses “罢了”, which is a modal particle indicating “that's all”, “only”, or “nothing much”. Chinese modal particle, as a distinctive character of Chinese, has no equivalent part of speech in English. It is pointed out that “罢了” provides the emotion and attitude of speakers (Zhu, 1982). When “罢了” appears at the end of the sentence, it shows the speaker's attitude that he or she sees something as a trivial matter (Zhu, 1982). Therefore, the emotion of Oberon that he feels his demand is reasonable and Titania is overreacting is presented vividly and profoundly in Zhu's translation. Liang uses “只是” to express the meaning “only” descriptively, without a modal particle at the end of the sentence. Therefore, the presented emotion in Liang's translation is not as powerful and vivid as in Zhu's.

The intention of character, as a kind of thought of characters, constitutes a character's action since it indicates the category of action. In drama translation, to complete the character's action, the intention of the character is supposed to be revealed actively. Zhu's version uncovers the characters' intentions vividly.

Example 8.

Original:

BOTTOM. —dours savours sweet;

So hath thy breath, my dearest This be dear.

But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile,

And by and by I will to thee appear.

[Exit].

PUCK. A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

[Exit].

Zhu's translation (Zhu, 2013):

波顿：—开得十分香；你的气息，好人儿，也是一个样。听，那边有一个声音，你且等一等，一会儿咱再来和你诉衷情。(下)。

迫克：请看皮拉摩斯变成了怪妖精。(下)。

Liang's translation (Liang, 1995):

线 “—气味香：

你的吐气也是一样，我最亲爱的提斯壁。

听，有声音！你等一下，

我立刻就回来再会你。”(下)。

扑 这里从没有演过比这更怪的皮拉摩斯。(下)。

In example 8, Bottom, together with his friends, is rehearsing a performance and Bottom plays Pyramus. The cunning fairy, Puck is going to turn Bottom into a monster. In Zhu's version, Puck's intention is wholly unfolded as “Please, look! Pyramus has become a monster”, which constitutes vivid action. While Liang translates the line literally as “Pyramus has never been performed in such a strange way”, meaning that the performance of Bottom is strange, which insulates the intention of Puck. Although Liang's version presents the mocking attitude of Puck, it conceals the volitional intensity of the speaker without any words to explicit his intention.

4.4 Achievement of Characterisation

Characterisation is inevitable in drama. According to Levý (2011), characterisation in drama dialogues should be achieved by semantic cues. So does in drama translation. In drama translation, dialogues are supposed to achieve characterisation through semantic cues. Zhu successfully achieves comprehensive characterisation in his version.

Example 9.

Original:

BOTTOM. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Zhu's translation (Zhu, 2013):

波顿：那一定是篇出色的东西，咱可以担保，而且是挺有趣的。现在，好彼得·昆斯，照着名单把你的角儿们的名字念出来吧。列位，大家站开。

Liang's translation (Liang, 1995):

线 很好的一部作品，我敢说，满有趣的。好，彼得木楔，按照名单点演员的名吧。诸位，站开。

In example 9, Bottom is a weaver from the lower class, and his words may be vulgar. "In general, those who enjoy higher status and education would be less likely to use '咱' (zan)" (He, 2004, p. 2). Zhu uses "咱" (zan), a typical dialect word of north China, clearly showing Bottom's low social status, which leads Bottom's actions to carelessness and vulgar class. By contrast, Liang's translation only presents the basic meaning with "我" (wo), reducing the features of the character, and therefore the relationship between the character and the action is ruined.

The analysis of the two versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been done above. Although the analysis is conducted from four aspects: acquisition of speakability and intelligibility, restoration of semantic contexts, the reflection of verbal action and achievement of characterisation, it should be pointed out that these four aspects derive from performability, sharing interaction with each other. The semantic contexts, which include the interrelations between the performers, specify the characters. The verbal action, affected by the manner of characters, is restricted to semantic contexts. As drama translation is dialogues, speech runs through all stages. Therefore, the acquisition of speakability and intelligibility is beneficial to the other three aspects, which are presented based on dialogues.

5. Conclusion

The paper is to investigate how performability in drama translation is satisfied. The presentation of human action is the essence of performability in drama translation, as indicated by the origin and etymology of drama. According to four aspects mentioned by Levý (2011) to attain performability: speakability and intelligibility, semantic contexts, verbal action and characters, the requirements of reaching performability in drama translation are summarised as follows: acquisition of speakability and intelligibility, restoration of semantic contexts, the reflection of verbal action and achievement of characterisation.

Following Levý's (2011) drama translation theory, the paper describes and analyses Zhu Shenghao's and Liang Shiqiu's versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from the perspective of acquirement of speakability and intelligibility, restoration of semantic contexts, reflection of verbal action, and achievement of characterisation. It is suggested that when translating the drama, Zhu Shenghao insisted on his drama translation principles and emphasised performability. Zhu's version prioritises oral delivery and aural reception over faithfulness to the original version regarding speakability and intelligibility. Furthermore, Zhu used colloquial language to bring his version closer to everyday conversations, and uncovered the indeterminacy of meaning in terms of semantic context restoration, improving the coherence of the drama plot. Nonetheless, Zhu replaced the personal pronoun in the original text with a notional word, depriving the performer of action and ruining the performer's relationship with his antagonist. The semantic context was not restored in this location. On the other hand, Liang kept the personal pronoun in the original text, so the semantic context was fulfilled. In terms of verbal action, Liang persisted in the paired rhyme in stichomythia, and so does verbal action, which embraces the inside power of dialogues. While Zhu abandoned the paired rhyme in stichomythia to achieve a colloquial style, sacrificing the verbal action. On the other hand, Zhu used modal particles and revealed the characters' intentions, presenting the character's thoughts in depth, which contributes to reflecting verbal action, whereas Liang's version leaned toward descriptive language, concealing the power of verbal action. In terms of characterisation, Zhu vividly revealed the character using dialects of the target language. In contrast, Liang's translation only presented the basic meaning, minimising the character's features.

As stated above, the following drama translation strategies can be used to satisfy performability in drama translation: using colloquial style language, adjusting the order of sentence segments, reconstructing syntax, uncovering the indeterminacy of meaning, using the personal pronoun, preserving the rhyme of original text, using modal particle, revealing characters' intention, and using dialects of the target language.

In addition to analysing the practice of performability in drama translation, the paper reveals the essentials of performability in drama translation that distinguish it from ordinary literary translation. However, the study is by no means complete and sufficient. It must be made clear that this paper's weakness is its inability to analyse the traits of comedy—Shakespeare's classic comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Comedy differs from regular drama in that it has unique characteristics like humour and exaggerated technique, which affect drama translation procedures from the standpoint of performability. It is hoped that additional research will be done on it.

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