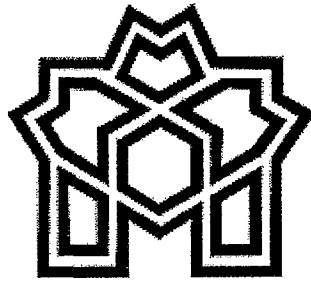


*In the Name of God,
the Compassionate,
the Merciful*

98765



Allameh Tabataba'i University
Faculty of Persian Literature & Foreign Languages
Department of English Translation Studies

**Performability in English-Persian
Drama Translation**

تأیید شده است
موسسه تخصصی زبان
مهرماه ۱۳۸۷

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Translation Studies.

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September 2007

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Allameh Tabataba'i University

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To My Dearest Ones,

Father and Mother

فرم گردآوری اطلاعات پایان نامه‌ها

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چکیده

الف. موضوع و طرح مسئله: یکی از مهمترین و شاید بتوان گفت مهمترین جنبه نمایش و بخصوص ترجمه متون نمایشی، قابلیت اجرای آن است. مسأله قابلیت اجرا در ترجمه متون نمایشی در سالهای اخیر توجه برخی از دانشمندان مطالعات ترجمه و هنر تئاتر را به خود جلب کرده است. علیرغم این مسأله، هنوز یک چارچوب نظری و عملی برای ارزیابی قابلیت اجرای متون نمایشی ترجمه شده بنیان نهاده نشده است.

ب. مبانی نظری، پرسش‌ها و فرضیه‌ها: این تحقیق، یک مطالعه مقابله‌ای به منظور ارزیابی قابلیت اجرای ترجمه فارسی متون نمایشی یا تئاترهای انگلیسی است که طی آن بعثت نبود یک طبقه بندی یا چارچوب مشخص از پیش تعیین شده، پس از مقابله دقیق اصل انگلیسی سه نمایشنامه انتخاب شده با ترجمه‌های فارسی و سپس با اجراهای آنها بر روی صحنه‌های ایرانی، یک طبقه بندی برای ارزیابی قابلیت اجرای آنها ارائه شده است. پرسشی که این تحقیق برای پاسخگویی به آن انجام شده است این است که آیا ترجمه‌های فارسی متون نمایشی انگلیسی، قابل اجرا هستند یا خیر و فرضیه این تحقیق بر آن بود که این ترجمه‌ها قابل اجرا هستند.

پ. روش تحقیق، جامعه مورد تحقیق: سه نمایشنامه انگلیسی در این تحقیق انتخاب شد که متن انگلیسی آنها به دقت با ترجمه فارسی و ترجمه فارسی با نمایش اجرا شده بر روی صحنه مقایسه شد. فیلم نمایش برای مقایسه، قسمت به قسمت که این قسمت‌ها اغلب جمله بوده اند مکث و پیاده شد است.

ت. یافته‌های تحقیق: با توجه به این که برای ارزیابی قابلیت اجرای نمایشنامه‌ها طبقه بندی مشخصی موجود نبود، با مطالعه تغییرات و تفاوت‌های ایجاد شده در ترجمه (نسبت به متن اصلی) و سپس اجرا، یک طبقه بندی برای ارزیابی میزان قابلیت اجرای نمایشنامه‌ها ارائه شد. طبق آمار به دست آمده در بخش‌های مختلف طبقه بندی ارائه شده برای هر سه نمایشنامه، دو نمایشنامه از قابلیت اجرای نسبتاً بالایی برخوردار بودند و دارای الگوهای تغییرات کمابیش مشابهی بودند.

ث. نتیجه‌گیری و پیشنهادها: بر اساس نتایج به دست آمده از این تحقیق، می‌توان گفت که مفهوم قابلیت اجرا، یک مفهوم مطلق نیست و باید آن را بر پایه درجه بندی عنوان کرد چرا که در هر صورت، ترجمه‌های با درجات پایین اجرایی نیز بر روی صحنه رفته‌اند. یافته اصلی این تحقیق آن است که ترجمه‌های فارسی متون نمایشی انگلیسی قابل اجرا هستند. پیشنهادات بسیاری برای تحقیقات بیشتر در زمینه ترجمه متون نمایشی در آخر ارائه شده است که مهمترین آنها این است که همین تحقیق با پیکره‌ای بزرگتر تکرار شود.

صحت اطلاعات مندرج در این فرم بر اساس محتوای پایان‌نامه و ضوابط مندرج در فرم را گواهی می‌تمایم.

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Abstract

One of the most important aspects or perhaps the most important aspect of drama and definitely drama translation is that it should be performable. Performability in drama translation has attracted the attention of some translation scholars and theatre scholars worldwide in recent years. Nevertheless, no theoretical and practical frameworks have yet been established to assess the performability of translated drama.

This study is a corpus-based study aimed at the assessment of the performability of the Persian translations of English drama or theatre texts. The researcher herself developed taxonomy after detailed comparison of the original English texts of the three plays selected for the purpose of this study with their Persian translations and their performances on the Iranian stages.

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that performability is not an absolute concept and is a matter of degree since translated plays with low degrees of performability are performed on the stage anyway. The main finding of the research is that Persian translations of English drama texts are more or less performable.

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List of Abbreviations

- App.	Appropriate
- Cens.	Censored
- CL	Characters' Language
- Coll.	Colloquial
- Cor.	Correct
- Dif.	Different
- Inapp.	Inappropriate
- Inc.	Incorrect
- Incons.	Inconsistent
- K.Phs	Key Phrases
- K.Ws	Key Words
- Mod.	Modified
- Per.	Performance
- _Perd.	Not Performed or Not Represented
- SL	Source Language
- TL	Target Language
- Tr.	Translation

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Theatre (from French "*Théâtre*", from Greek "*Theatron*", meaning "place of seeing" or meeting place) is the branch of the performing arts concerned with acting out stories in front of an audience using combinations of speech, genre, mime, puppets, music, dance, sound and spectacle — indeed any one or more elements of the other performing arts. Theatre has been defined as what "occurs when one or more human beings, isolated in time and/or space, present themselves to another or others. In addition to the standard narrative dialogue style, theatre takes other forms such as opera, operetta, ballet, mime, kabuki, puppetry, classical Indian dance, Chinese opera, mummer's plays, improvisational theatre and pantomime.¹

"Drama" (literally translated as action, from a verbal root meaning "I do") is the branch of theatre in which speech, either from written text (plays) or improvised is paramount. The first theatre, the theatre of ancient Greek created the definition of a theatre: an audience in a half circle watching an elevated stage where actors use props staging plays. (ibid.)

Translation of dramatic literature has its own special difficulties because there are audiences who need to appreciate and enjoy a work of literature in

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/theatre>

performance as well as director and actors who need to appreciate and play the work of literature.

1.2 Background of the Problem

Regarding the assessment of the translation of a dramatic or theatre text, one of the main parameters is the quality of performability of the translated play. Bassnett (1980: 120) believes that "the dramatic text cannot be translated in the same way as the prose text. A theatre text is read differently. It is read as something incomplete rather than as a fully rounded unit, since it is only in performance that the full potential of the text is realized." Ubersfeld (cited in Bassnet, *ibid*), for instance, points out how it is impossible to separate text from performance, since theatre consists of the dialectical relationship between both. Bassnett (1980: 123) sees this in terms of structural features:

It would seem more logical to proceed on the assumption that a theatre text, written with a view to its performance, contains distinguishable structural features that make it performable, beyond the stage directions themselves. Consequently the task of the translator must be to determine what those structures are and to translate them into the TL, even though this may lead to major shifts on the linguistic and stylistic planes.

The factor of performance along with its constituent parts like lighting, costumes, music, etc. makes drama translation different from other forms of literary translation. Theatre translation usually needs more adjustments in order to evoke an appropriate audience response. Translation of dialects, slangs, allusions and verses in theatre, for instance, may present the major pitfalls for the translator.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

As we all know literature is one of the main channels through which people all over the world share their ideas with each other. Perhaps it can be said that literature is the most effective way for people to represent their cultures to the world. Drama is a form of literature which is popular and translation of theatre texts if done appropriately and adequately is an essential task for making one's cultural repertoire richer. Anderman (1998: 74) writes:

Literary scholars are increasingly beginning to turn their attention to problems specifically related to the translation of drama. In the past, comparatists in particular showed limited interest in translations as instruments of mediation and influence among national literatures, but this situation has recently started to change.

As a usual phenomenon, we as spectators of a foreign play in Persian theatres often see that some changes are made to the text of a translated

play when it is being performed or in other words some deviations from the translated play is observable in performance, which may be an indication of the low degree of performability of the translation of foreign plays into Persian. The translator's view of a theatre text as a prose text without any regard for its final aim, to be performed on stage, is primarily the source of this problem which can be eliminated by the translator's awareness of the situation.

1.4 Significance of the Study

A theatre text like any other text has a purpose. One of the unique characteristics of a theatre text is that its purpose is visible and audible which means its purpose is embodied in performance. The director, the cast and the spectators should have least difficulty in directing, playing and appreciating a translated play, respectively. This is only possible by the translator's attempts to preserve the original performability of the play. Of course, the original performability is conditioned by the source text's cultural, societal and linguistic conventions; therefore, the translator must try to preserve the performability of the play in the framework of target language and culture. This fact reaches its utmost importance in theatre translation in which the translator should have the liveliness of the work in his/her mind that does not allow any return to the text for correction. With all this in mind, it can be concluded that an investigation of the

performability of translated theatre texts is useful for the future of this form of literary translation and the future of the art of theatre, too, and informs the translators of this literary genre about the nature of their work.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Translation of theatre texts is not just a matter of linear representation of words of a play. Audiovisual effects, costume, makeup and stage decoration or the architectonics of the text as 'play' are among matters that a theatre translator is involved in while other types of literary translators are not. Accurate translation of a sound effect, for example, is not that much important in translation of a novel but in theatre translation where all sounds are to be heard by the audience to attain the effect intended by the playwright, the translator must be much more accurate and careful. Of other difficulties that a theatre translator may face are dialects used in the speech of the characters of the original play and poetical language of some plays or poems within a play which are not to be read several times to be appreciated, but are to be heard just for once. All these problems and others which are shared by all types of literary and nonliterary translation make theatre translation a different and difficult activity. If a theatre translator is clever enough to think of a practical solution to all problems, s/he can produce a translation which would be performable on stage and need least modification on the part of the director. Of course, this quality of

performability, like many other facts in humanities, is not absolute and is a matter of degree, for an unperformable translated play will not be performed at all!

In this study the degree of performability of Persian translations of English theatre texts is examined.

1.6 Research Question

This study is an attempt to answer the following question:

- Do Persian translations of English theatre texts enjoy theatrical performability?

1.7 Research Hypothesis

To answer the research question above, a descriptive positive hypothesis is formulated as follows:

- Persian translations of English theatre texts are theatrically performable.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

According to skopos theory first formulated by Vermeer in 1978, translation is a particular variety of translational action which is based on a source text; and any action has an aim, a purpose. The decisive factor here is the purpose, the skopos, of the action of translation. Trans-coding, as a procedure which is retrospectively oriented towards the source text, not

prospectively towards the target culture, is diametrically opposed to the theory of translational action. (This view does not, however, rule out the possibility that trans-coding can be a legitimate translational skopos itself, oriented prospectively towards the target culture: the decisive criterion is always the skopos.)

In this theory, the translator is the expert in translational action. S/he is responsible for the performance of the task, for the final *translatum* (the resulting translated text). (Vermeer: 2000)

A theatre text is written to be performed on the stage; therefore, its performance is regarded as its purpose in society – the same is true of theatre translation. So if a translation of a theatre text attains an acceptable degree of performability, it has served its purpose or skopos.

1.9 Methodology

To achieve the purpose of this study, three English plays in three different theatrical genres have been chosen whose Persian translations are compared to their performances on stage as well as to their original English texts. To compare the performances on stage (the recorded film) with the translations and the original texts, the video tapes are paused at intervals which are usually a sentence uttered by a character. If this sentence is a long one, it is divided into two or more chunks. The differences between