

**"In the Name of God"**



**SHEIKHBAHAE UNIVERSITY**

SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

**Persian Translation of Directive and Expressive Speech  
Acts in *Death of a Salesman*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*,  
and *Mourning Becomes Electra*.**

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
TRANSLATION STUDIES

By

MOHAMMAD ZAMANI

Supervisor

DR. M. H. TAHRIRIAN

JANUARY 2013



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School of Foreign Languages

Department of English



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE CONTENT, FORMAT AND QUALITY OF  
PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS SUBMITTED BY

**MOHAMMAD ZAMANI**

ENTITLED:

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in *Death of a Salesman*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and  
*Mourning Becomes Electra*.**

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF M.A. IN TRANSLATION STUDIES IS ACCEPTED AND APPROVED BY  
THE THESIS COMMITTEE.

SUPERVISOR: DR. M. H. TAHRIRIAN .....

INTERNAL EXAMINER: DR. K. AFZALI .....

EXTERNAL EXAMINER: DR. M. R. TALEBINEJAD .....

DEAN OF GRADUATE SCHOOL: DR. S. M. H. FEIZ .....

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

To my mother, for her compassionate encouragement,  
To my father, for his unflinching support, and  
To Milad, for his invaluable help.

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## ABSTRACT

The notion of speech act, as proved by previous studies, plays a pivotal role in organizing characterization and theme(s) of each literary work, especially in the context of drama. Likewise, this phenomenon plays a significant role in drama translation. The scarcity of research in this area of translation was the major rationale behind conducting the present study which was primarily carried out with the aim of expanding the translators' pragmatic knowledge and translation competency through illuminating the importance of this phenomenon in translation quality. To this end, five research questions were raised with respect to the translation strategies and shifts on the one hand, and translation difficulty and quality, on the other. Three *American tragic* dramas written in relatively the same *time span* and *level of formality* were selected for the study. Then, thirty percent of each drama was randomly selected and the categories of *directives* and *expressives* were analyzed based on Searle's (1975) *Speech Act Theory*. After juxtaposing the respective speech act utterances with their Persian translations, they were analyzed according to Newmark's (1988), Catford's (1965), and a combination of Rahimi's (2004) and Searle's (1975a) theories with respect to translation strategies, shifts, and translation quality, respectively. The results of the study revealed that there were a large number of translation strategies and shifts involved in translation of directives and expressives, suggesting a degree of translation difficulty for these two categories. The findings also indicated that the quality of the translations was acceptable. Furthermore, the observations of the study resulted in proposing some novel translation strategies and shifts applicable to speech act utterances as well as a method for drama translation.

## ABBREVIATIONS

SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text
TQA	Translation Quality Assessment
SAT	Speech Act Theory
SA(s)	Speech Act(s)
DOS	Death of a Salesman
SND	A Streetcar Named Desire
MBE	Mourning Becomes Electra
IF	Illocutionary Force
IO	Indirect Object
DO	Direct Object
NP	Noun Phrase
Adv	Adverb
Adj	Adjective
V	Verb
N	Noun

## PERSIAN TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

Table A. Transliteration symbols of consonants

Persian consonants	Transliteration symbols	Persian consonants	Transliteration symbols
ب	b	ز	z
پ	p	ط	t
ت	t	ظ	z
س	s	ع	'
ج	j		
چ	ch	ق	q
ه	h	ف	f
خ	x	ک	k
د	d	گ	g
ذ	z	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
ژ	zh	و	v
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	ی	y
س	s		

Table B. Transliteration symbols of vowels

Short vowels	Transliteration symbols	Long vowels	Transliteration symbols
æ	a	ɑ:	ā
e	e	u:	u
ɔ	o	i:	i
ɑ	ā		
u	u		
i	i		

**Note:** The Farsi feature *tashdid* is represented in this study by the repetition of the sound that receives the feature.

Example: [verrāji]

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Overview

The present chapter is primarily aimed at presenting a brief account of the fundamentals of the study. To this end, it will first provide a brief background on the issues under investigation. As a complement to the background, the issues of speech act theory and speech acts in drama translation will be discussed in brief, respectively. Then the preliminary information of the present study will be presented. These preliminaries are including: (1) statement of the problem, (2) aims of the study, (3) significance of the study, (4) research questions, (5) the scope of the study, (6) rationales of the study, and (7) definition of key terms. Finally, it will conclude with a list of the outline of the study.

### 1.2. Background

Discourse analysis and *pragmatics* continue to be useful in answering questions that are posed in many fields that traditionally focus on human life and *communication*. Therefore, anyone who wants to understand human beings has to understand discourse as well as the pragmatic intention and the communicative function of the linguistic forms. *Translation*, as one dimension of human language, is regarded as a means of communication, and discourse analysis, along with pragmatics, is used in several different fields that traditionally focus on human life and communication. Consequently, since translation is considered as a means of communication, as well as the fact that it is one dimension of language in use, discourse analysis and pragmatics can be utilized in the science and art of translation as well.

Translation is one of the most difficult and slippery areas within the realm of human communication. One of the main difficulties of this phenomenon lies in the fact that understanding the linguistic units is not enough to translate successfully. That



is to say, the mere knowledge of the grammatical rules along with the understanding of the superficial meanings of the utterances, on the part of the translators or interpreters, would be of no help and may be useless if the rules of use and the context-bound meanings beyond the so-called superficial interpretations of the utterances are not taken into consideration. Some second or foreign language learners, and for that matter novice translators, overlook the fact that translation is an act of communication which calls upon both language appropriate use and correct usage in order to reach an acceptable translation. The translator, on the other hand, is not, by any means, to disregard the culture of either the source or the target text when translating since there is no clear cut delimitation between language and culture. This is in fact one of the current tendencies that translation theory has adopted. This, in turn, entails that pragmatics heavily influences the translation validity and, therefore, both professional and novice translators are required to take into consideration the pragmatic aspects in order to promote their performance.

Meaning, in addition, as one of the key concepts in pragmatics, forms one of the most controversial points that causes many problems in translation. This is due to the fact that translating the sense of a particular linguistic item sometimes does not only call upon linguistic knowledge but on pragmatic knowledge as well. Technically speaking, a person who wants to translate, in the position of a translator, a certain text from source language (SL) to target language (TL) must have mastery of different areas, levels, and aspects of both languages— such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, *pragmatics*, creativity, redundancy, etc. as well as cultural, religious, historical, and political issues and the like— in order to be regarded as a professional translator. *Pragmatics* is an area of every human language that every translator must have in his command of language proficiency. Likewise, *speech acts* as one of the areas of pragmatics are regarded as some barriers to the process of translation because of the fact that their interpretation is social-, context-, culture- and language-dependent.

With reference to what was discussed above, the meaning of a linguistic element, such as a certain type of speech act, sometimes goes beyond the linguistic level where many factors enter into play, namely the extra- linguistic features. These features also need to be translated because of the effect they may have on the meaning of a particular language item and their importance as language aspects which should

not be neglected. Pragmatics of translation, therefore, goes beyond the superficial and surface structure of the linguistic items and can be of much assistance in solving some particular translation problems.

As pointed out by Huang (2009), “many speech acts are culture-specific” (p. 1006). This culture-specificity refers to different situations in which either there is a gap with regard to a specific type of speech act in the target language, or the way of expressing that specific speech act is different from that of the source language. Translators, consequentially, must be aware of different types of speech acts and the way they precisely can be rendered into target language. This requires a good command of the pragmatic features of speech acts as well as a delicate decision-making process on the part of the translators. This is, in fact, what that can constitute a problem for translators, especially the novice translators with a poor knowledge of speech acts and a low degree of experience in decision-making procedures. In order to eliminate this problem, the present study will mainly focus on translation of speech acts from English into Persian through providing some translation strategies as some solutions applicable to translation of speech acts in the context of *drama translation*.

### **1.3. Speech Acts Theory**

The pragmatic analysis of language can be broadly understood to be the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered. One important concept which relates utterance meaning to context is that of the *speech act*, as developed by the Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin (1962) and then refined, systematized, and advanced by different other scholars, especially by his Oxford pupil, the American philosopher J. R. Searle (1969). According to *Speech Act Theory*, when people utter sentences they also perform acts of various kinds such as declaring, promising, requesting, ordering, apologizing, asking, thanking, and so on.

The central tenet of speech act theory, simply stated, is that the uttering of a sentence is, or is part of, an action within the framework of social institutions and conventions. Put in slogan form, saying is (part of) doing, or words are (part of) deeds. According to Austin (1962), there is often something which lies beyond the

superficial meaning of words, which will give us a more complete picture of meaning in language. This beyond-the-superficial meaning, as Bell (1993) asserts, hinders the process of translating speech acts, which requires more scientific investigations.

#### **1.4. Speech Acts in Drama Translation**

As a unique form of artistic expression and a kind of literary genres, the contribution of drama to world literature and human civilization can never be underestimated. The theatrical exchange worldwide has to be closely related to theatrical translation which has been channeled into a very controversial situation in different languages. It is generally acknowledged that the complexity of drama translation is connected with the fact that every play has two manifestations, that is, it is a 'literary work' as well as a 'theatrical art' in the form of performance.

It should be mentioned that, in spite of the complexity of this genre of translation as well as the fact that— compared with other genres— this relatively new subsection of the discipline of translation studies “is one of the most neglected areas in the bulk of genre-focused translation study” (Bassnett, 2002, p. 94), drama translation has passed different stages in its development and has gradually attracted scholars who are experts in literature and linguistics undertaking studies on its theoretical aspects. And this is due to the fact that this genre of the literary area of language is mainly characterized by a profusion of dialogues. As mentioned above, drama translation includes two dimensions, namely, performability and readability. In order to preserve these two aspects, “the communicative functions of linguistic forms should be recognized and conveyed by the translator” (Ghourchian, 2012, p. 71). It has been proved by some scholars— Snell-Hornby (1988) and Hatim (1998), for instance— that speech acts play a vital role in this process. In addition, Sartor (2001) asserts that the linguistic event is in itself very important because it is the main form of interaction in drama.

In defiance of the existing bulk of studies on drama translation, this subsection of translation studies, as Bassnett (1991) asserts, is a comparatively less explored area characterized by a serious lack of guiding theory, especially a scarcity in exploring constructive translation strategies applicable to this area of literary translation and in practical models for translation quality assessment. Aaltonen (2000), additionally,

who regards drama translation as a labyrinth, believes that “theatre translation may use strategies which would not be acceptable in contemporary literary translation...” (p. 7). Therefore, there is a need for providing the translators with some practical translation strategies applicable to this area of translation.

It is worth mentioning that drama has always been a popular art form among the public. Thanks to its popularity, there have appeared countless translations of world-famous plays in various languages and cultures. This has also been the case with Persian language and literature. To date, a large number of dramas have been translated into Persian from different languages, especially from English. However, there is a scantiness of study on drama translation From English into Persian (i.e., the focus of the present study) or vice versa.

As mentioned above, since drama has the dual natures of a ‘literary art’ and a ‘theatrical art,’ drama translation is more complex and faces more challenges than the translation of other literary genres. However, whether drama translation should be *reading-oriented* or *performance-oriented* is still a controversial issue and there is no consensus among different translation theorists and scholars on this subject. Furthermore, with the development of dramatic stylistics, drama is now being approached from many perspectives including pragmatics. This is also due to the fact that drama is characterized by an ocean of dialogues with different semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic features. To date, there has been a relatively great deal of researches that have analyzed both drama and drama translation from the perspective of several different pragmatic theories including speech act theory, politeness theory, Gricean conversational maxims, relevance theory, and the like.

Owing to profusion of dialogues in drama, there is a plenitude of different types of speech acts in this genre of literary writings; ranging differently depending on the purpose of the playwright, the theme of the drama, the personality (characterization) of the characters, the type of the relations among the characters, and the like. Consequently, the aforementioned trait has made drama a plausible and potent source for pragmatic, linguistic and stylistic research. With regard to the realm of Literature and Literary Criticism, for instance, Ghayeb (2007) conducted a study on delineating the writer’s rationales behind the intentional utilization of specific types of speech acts in the novel “*Don Quixote de la Mancha*.” Having analyzed