

Stan Lai's Translation Thoughts of Performability from the Perspective of Translators Voice: A Case Study of Subtext Translation of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*

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Abstract: Stan Lai is a well-known director and playwright in China and abroad, and his self-translation play *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* has been toured all over the world many times. However, few scholars have studied Lai's translation thoughts through this play. What's more, subtext is an eminent feature in drama and it is difficult to translate, especially in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, which includes abundant subtexts. As a result, the thesis takes the translator's voice as theoretical bases and studies Lai's translation thoughts of performability through the subtext translation of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*. The thesis adopts O'Sullivan's framework and analyzes Stan Lai's voice from the translation and the paratexts to see whether they are consistent. During the analysis, comparative studies, interviews, and literature research will be adopted. There are two main findings: In the target text, Stan Lai shows his voice by adopting the translation strategies of changing narration, amplifying narration, and reductive narration to achieve performability, especially the speakability, individuality, actability, and acceptability of the lines. In the paratexts, the author also finds that Lai's identity, translation motives, and translation strategies also reflect his voice on performability, which is consistent with the one in the target text.

Keywords: Performability, Translator's Voice, Stan Lai, *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, Subtext

1. Introduction

Dramatic literature possesses two features: on the one hand, as a literary work, it should be of literary merit; on the other hand, as a script for performing on stage, it should be performable. However, most of the existing translations of drama possess high literariness but ignore performability. As Ying [21] pointed out, there are long-standing problems in drama translation. For example, the translated scripts are not suitable for performance and the western audience cannot retrieve the aesthetic interest of the translated plays. Stan Lai [12] also once commented on Prof. Martha Cheung's translation of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, saying that although her translation was accurate, the dialogues of different characters are translated into the same tone, which diminished the performability of the play. By searching literature in CNKI, the author finds that there are only three

papers on *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, most of which focused on the linguistic characteristics and translation strategies, ignoring the value of Lai's translation thoughts. Several papers studied on Stan Lai's thought but they studied from the perspective of theatre study.

Stan Lai is one of the most celebrated theatre practitioners working in the Chinese-speaking world. Robert Brustein [1] acclaimed Lai as "the major contemporary Asian playwright of his time, perhaps of all time". In 2021, the University of Michigan Press published Lai's 12 self-translated plays, including *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, which is initially translated for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2015. The play was performed by American actors for over 80 performances around the world, which entered mainstream theatrical circles in the US [24]. Therefore, there is great value in studying Lai's ideas of drama translation through *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*.

Subtext is an eminent feature in drama and it is difficult to translate, especially in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, which has abundant subtexts. Based on this, the thesis attempts to find Stan Lai's voice in the target texts and paratexts through subtext translation in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, hoping to provide a useful supplement to the study of Lai's thoughts of performability in drama translation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Studies on Stan Lai's Version of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*

Most of the studies on Stan Lai's translation of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* focus on linguistic features, translation strategies, and acceptance of the Chinese elements overseas from the perspective of foregrounding theory. Liu [15] appreciated and analyzed the English translation of the play's characteristic language, such as ambiguity, puns, and interjections from the perspective of foregrounding theory, and found that the translation strategies include literal translation, omission, additional description, exclamations, and inclusion of concise words. Xia [20] combined the prototype theory in cognitive science and foregrounding theory to study the acceptance of Chinese elements, i.e., the new fable, the historical background, and the Peking opera. The study found that Peking opera may divert the audience's attention and engagement from the plot and characters, which makes it difficult for the western audience to grasp the implicature, metaphors, and symbols of the play.

2.2. The Studies on Subtext Translation of Drama

In recent years, the translation strategies of subtext in drama have been studied in depth from the theory of conversational implicatures and Skopos Theory. Jia [7] studied the translation strategies of conversational implicature in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* by using the framework of Grice's theory of conversational implicatures. She categorized the implicature into verbosity, accommodation to lies, metaphors, proverbs, and irony and summarized five implicature translation strategies. Zheng and Wang [23] analyzed the subtext translation of Eugene O'Neill's plays: *The Emperor Jones* and *Beyond the Horizon* from the perspective of skopos theory and found out the main translation strategies including the audience-friendly and culture-oriented methods. According to Long [16], translators should locate and understand the implicature in the context of the source text, then determine the extent to which the information needs to be explicit given the contextual requirements of the target language to determine the methods and strategies of implicature translation.

2.3. The Studies on Translator's Voice

In recent years, research on the translator's voice has attracted the academic circle's attention. Scholars have studied the emotional embodiment of characters, translation

strategies, the readership, cultural identity, and ideology from the perspective of the translator's voice. Zhang [22] studied the representation of Dulinang's melancholy complex in *The Peony Pavilion* translated by Wang Rongpei from the target text and paratexts. She argued that the perspective of the translator's voice can help to comprehensively study the production process of the translation and translation strategies. Li and Zhu [14] studied William A. Lyell's translation thoughts and readership of the translation of Lu Xun's novel through the deviation of narrative tense, the highlighting of implicit information within the target text, and the introduction and annotation in the paratexts. They concluded that Lyell conveyed rich cultural information of the source text, which brought the story closer to the reader while fully reproducing the meaning of the source text. Zhou [25] compared the English translations of Du Fu's poetry translated by Rewi Alley and Stephen Owen and investigated the association between the translator's voice and cultural identity through relevant paratexts.

2.4. Summary

It should be noted that the existing studies on the translation of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* have deepened the understanding of the characteristic language and translation strategies in the play. However, these studies mainly explored the translation strategies, but seldom studied Stan Lai's translation thoughts, let alone from the perspective of subtext. Progress has been made in the study of the translator's voice, but most of the research focused more on opera, fiction, and poetry than on contemporary Chinese drama. In fact, studying the translator's voice from subtext translation of contemporary drama can help to comprehensively understand the production process of drama translation and the translation strategies, which is of great practical significance for the overseas dissemination of Chinese drama and enhancement of China's cultural soft power.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Working Definitions

The study explores how subtext translation in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* reflects Stan Lai's translation thoughts of performability. Subtext and performability are the two prominent features of a script. Therefore, Chapter 3.1 will define subtext and performability separately.

3.1.1. Subtext

The definition of subtext is explained in the *Hanyu Da Cidian* [17] as "the essence of the lines. It shows speaker's purpose and has extra meanings behind the lines". The meaning of subtext is roughly the same as the conversational implicature in pragmatics, as Levinson holds that implicature provides explicit description of "how it is possible to mean more than what is literally expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions uttered" [13].

Grice proposes a classification to identify conversational implicature. He [4] believed that conversational implicature appears when the discourse violates four types of conversational maxims, namely, the Quality Maxim, the Quantity Maxim, the Relation Maxim, and the Manner Maxim. Under the category of Quality fall two maxims: do not say what you believe to be false or lacking sufficient evidence; the Quantity Maxim means to say more or less than the required amount of information. The Relation Maxim means that topics should be relevant; the Manner Maxim includes avoiding obscurity, ambiguity, and keeping the content concise and organized. The thesis will identify the subtext based on the violation of four types of conversational maxims proposed by Grice.

3.1.2. Performability

Performability, summarized from Ying Ruocheng and Stan Lai's opinions, includes four aspects: speakability, actability, individuality, and acceptability.

In terms of speakability, Ying [21] pointed out that a speakable line should be concise and colloquial. In terms of actability, Ying [21] believed that "the lines in a play are not just about expressing opinions or emotions. They often conceal a demand for action, and some lines even directly lead to actions". Therefore, actability refers to two aspects: the inner psychological reactions and outer physical actions. In terms of individuality, Ying [21] argued that lines need to be in accordance with the character's personality, historical background, and local condition. Stan Lai also mentioned in the interview: "All discourses are suitable for stage... what we need to ponder is how each individual would talk". In brief, translators should consider the register of each character and translate the dialogues accordingly.

In addition, Stan Lai reckoned that the audience's acceptability is also essential for performability. He [11] was aware that "something that resonates to a Chinese ear may not mean anything to a Western ear". Therefore, for some lines that cannot be comprehended culturally, he would try to localize them so that they can be understood.

Therefore, the author will analyze the performability of Lai's subtext translation in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* from four aspects: speakability, actability, individuality, and acceptability.

3.2. Research Questions

The study will answer the following two questions. (1) Take the subtext translation in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* as examples, what translator's voice is hidden within the text by Stan Lai to achieve performability? (2) In the paratexts, Stan Lai expresses what translator's voice on performability in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*? Does it match the one within the translation?

3.3. Research Methods

To answer the research question, the thesis will take an investigation into Stan Lai's voice from the target text and paratexts by adopting comparative analysis, interviews, and

literature research. First of all, the author will compare the subtext translation in the source text and the target text to find out how Stan Lai reveals his voice and achieve performability. Then, the author will collect his voice in the paratexts by interviewing him via e-mail and searching literature, including his self-written passages, Weibo posts, related website passages, etc. After that, the author will analyze the translator's voice Stan Lai expressed in the paratexts and see whether it is consistent with the one in the translation.

3.4. Theoretical Framework

Translator's voice was formally introduced by Hermans in 1996. He believed that translated narrative discourse contains "a second voice", that is, the translator's voice. He pointed out that the translator's voice is heard when the translator is forced "to come out of the shadows and directly intervene in a text which the reader had been led to believe spoke only with one voice" [5].

On this basis, O'Sullivan [18] points out that the translator's voice can be identified at two levels: first, it can be manifested through paratexts outside the target text, such as prefaces, postscripts, footnotes, etc. Second, it can also be perceived within the target text, by comparing the target text with the source text. O'Sullivan [19] suggested that the translator's voice in the source text can be revealed through the following three narrative approaches: amplifying narration, reductive narration, and drowning out the narrator of the source text.

Amplifying narration adds components not present in the source text to serve as an alternative to paratextual explanation, while reductive narration includes "omitting features, cutting sections of text, or reducing several readers' roles inscribed in the source text to only a few in the target text" [19]. Drowning out the narrator of the source text is obvious when the voice of the narrator of the translation differs significantly from that of the narrator of the source text, drowning out the latter.

O'Sullivan's theory was first applied to the study of translator's voice in children's literature, because massive manipulation is often conducted in this genre of literature. However, Stan Lai also made significant changes in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*. Therefore, Lai's voice in this translation is as loud as in children's literature. As a result, O'Sullivan's theory can also apply to analyze Stan Lai's voice in this drama translation.

This thesis adopts O'Sullivan's classification of the translator's voice as theoretical framework and discusses Stan Lai's voice from two aspects: the translator's voice outside the target text, i.e. in paratexts, and his intervention within the target text. The three narration methods will be adopted to analyze Stan Lai's translation strategies in subtext translation in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*. The purpose is not to focus on the translation strategies, but to reveal Stan Lai's voice of achieving performability in the script.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Translator's Voice Within the Target Text

Stan Lai's voice of achieving performability is overt in the subtext translation in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*.

The translator's voice is overt when the translation is narrated differently from the source text. It can be heard through three ways of manipulation: changing narration (i.e. drowning out the narrator of the source text), amplifying narration, and reductive narration.

Stan Lai's voice is distinct as manipulation was massively conducted in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*. According to statistics, changing narration is most used, accounting for 49.5% of 97 subtexts translation. Reductive narration makes up 13.4% and amplifying narration comprises 12.4%. The rest adopts literal translation, which cannot reflect translator's voice, so it will not be analyzed in this chapter.

Therefore, Chapter 4.1 will analyze how the three strategies reflect Lai's voice of achieving performability in the subtext translation of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*.

4.1.1. Changing Narration

Example 1

Source text:

《暗恋》导演：黄浦江？

饰“云之凡”的演员：对啊！

《暗恋》导演：我看你们看到的是肇嘉浜！（[9], p. 12）

Target text:

DIRECTOR: (cynically) The Whampoa River? *I thought you two were gazing at some polluted ditch!* ([10], p. 28)

This plot is about the director satirizing the crew member's acting. The director says something that is not true, thus violating the quality maxim. As Lai [10] stated in the play's setting: "In performance, adjustments should be made when they refer to geographical places or traffic in their immediate environment, according to the production's location". Take "肇家浜" as an example. "肇嘉浜" is a contaminated river course in Shanghai in 1948. Lai translated it into "polluted river". Since the American audience may not be familiar with Shanghai's river courses, translating it literally into "Zhao Jia Bang" may cause the audience confusing when they hear it. Therefore, Lai replaced the river course's name to improve American audience's acceptability.

Example 2

Source text:

春花：大夫说我没问题，当然是你有问题！

老陶：（大怒）我有问题？笑话！我怎么会有什么问题？我像是有问题的人吗？我哪里会有什么问题？（[9], p. 23）

Target text:

BLOSSOM: The doctor said I have no problem, so of course it's your problem.

TAO: (furiously) *Me? A problem? DO I LOOK LIKE SOMEONE WITH A PROBLEM? How could I... when could I... where could I... have a problem?* ([10], p. 38)

This dialogue happened when Tao tried to conceal his sexual dysfunction in a panic. Tao repeated the question in

different sentence structures, which violates the quantity maxim. As Lai [12] stated: "Even if the word-to-word translation is accurate, the meaning may not come out right, and it is even more of a question whether it will make proper stage lines in a performance". Therefore, Lai did not use complete sentences like the original text, but rather short sentences such as "Me? A problem?" and ellipsis like "How could I... when could I... where could I..." In this way, the lines are more concise and colloquial, which is easier for the American actors to speak, and thus improves the speakability of lines.

Example 3

Source text:

饰“袁老板”的演员：是！（小顿）那我一个人冲到沪闵高架上去拦那个9米6乘2米4的20轮大卡车好不好？！

顺子：那老板你叫我来干什么？

饰“袁老板”的演员：是啊！我叫你来干什么？（快哭了）搞什么飞机！（从后门冲下）（[9], p. 45）

Target text:

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: Okay, so I'll go intercept the truck, okay? Are you saying that I should charge onto the freeway and physically stop a 40-foot, 24-wheel container truck?

FLOW: But Boss, then what do you need me for?

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: RIGHT! *LIKE HELL I NEED YOU!*

The Actor Playing Master Yuan charges off. ([10], p. 55)

This plot manifested the rage of the actor playing master Yuan towards Flow as the latter could not catch his implied instruction. "飞机" (plane) is irrelevant to the topic, so the line violates the relation maxim. As Lai [11] pointed out that "... many lines that are culturally almost impossible to translate that I choose to either just let go without explanation, delete, or rewrite with different content". "搞什么飞机" (What the plane) is a slang in Taiwan, which cannot be translated culturally, so Lai changed it into an English slang in capitals "LIKE HELL I NEED YOU!", making the American audience instantly grab the meaning. For one thing, the use of slang complies with the language habits of the American audience, making it more acceptable. For another thing, the word "hell" is colloquial and thus it's more speakable for American actors. What's more, the phrase in capitals accurately conveys Master Yuan's exasperation towards Flow, so the actors can grasp the psychological activities of master Yuan and thus make it more actable for performers. To sum up, the change of slang not only improves the acceptability of audience, and the speakability of the lines but also the actability of actors.

Example 4

Source text:

老陶：（崩溃）袁老板！春花！你们不要装糊涂！一个人长得像就算了！两个人都长得像！啊？你们是约好了来的？

白袍男、女：（齐声，老实地）我们是约好了来捕迷路的蝴蝶.....

老陶：捕蝴蝶，你们好残忍啊。

二人齐声：帮它找回家的路。

老陶：你……（指白袍男子）你无耻！

白袍男子：（没听懂）对不起，（指白袍女子）她五尺，我七尺。（[9], p. 82）

Target text:

TAO: (calmer, to the ladle) Thank you, wat—... (realizing his absurdity) Master Yuan... Blossom... ONE OF YOU A DEAD RINGER, I CAN TAKE, BUT BOTH?! Did you plan this rendezvous here?!

MAN and WOMAN IN WHITE: (puzzled at the question, in unison, innocently) Yes. We came here to catch butterflies together.

TAO: *How low can you get?!*

MAN IN WHITE: *Actually, pretty low, if the butterflies are on the ground.* ([10], p. 82)

This plot happened when Tao met the man in white, who looked just the same as his wife's secret lover, and Tao scolded him for he mistook them for the same person. In Chinese, “无耻” (shameless) and “五尺” (five feet) are homonyms, which creates ambiguity and violates the manner maxim. Lai [11] stated: “Instead of my keeping obscure allusions that need distracting footnotes to explain, the plays are meant to be understood culturally... What I have tried to capture is not the actual words that resonate, but the ‘resonation’ itself, whatever that may be.” The homonym cannot be understood culturally and adding footnotes is not suitable for this play on stage. Therefore, Lai changed the content and used the double meaning of “low” to create a new pun, which achieved an equivalent humor effect. In this way, the American audience can respond to it in substantially the same manner as the Chinese audience, increasing the acceptability of the translation.

4.1.2. Amplifying Narration

Example 5

Source text:

饰“袁老板”的演员：（对顺子）现在是不是该有人赶快去把装幕的卡车拦下来？

顺子：是！

饰“袁老板”的演员：是！

顺子：是！

饰“袁老板”的演员：是！（小顿）那我一个人冲到沪闵高架上去拦那个9米6乘2米4的20轮大卡车好不好？！（[9], p. 45）

Target text:

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: (patiently, to Flow) May I ask then, in your opinion, do you think someone should go to intercept the truck?

Flow burps.

Where'd you get that?

Flow points at the Actor Playing Master Yuan.

Okay, so I'LL go intercept the truck, okay? Are you saying that I should charge onto the freeway and physically stop a 40-foot, 24-wheel container truck? ([10], p. 55)

In this plot, the actor playing master Yuan uses a rhetorical question to imply his assistant flow to stop the truck, but flow doesn't get the implicature, which makes the actor furious. In this line, the actor didn't mean what he said, so the line

violates the quality maxim. As Lai pointed out in the interview: “All discourses are suitable for stage... what we need to ponder is how each individual would talk”. Therefore, Stan Lai added a rhetorical question “so I'LL go intercept the truck, okay?” to strengthen Master Yuan's sarcasm and exasperation in that situation, making the line more individual. What's more, he capitalized “I'LL” to remind performers of the sarcasm of master Yuan and to stress this word while acting, which makes the line more actable.

Example 6

Source text:

春花：（对袁）他当年受了太大的刺激！都是你！都是你！

袁老板：都是我？都是你！（[9], p. 106）

Target text:

BLOSSOM: *Look what you did to him.*

MASTER YUAN: (snapping back) *What do you mean what I did to him? What YOU did to him!*

BLOSSOM: You were so mean to him.

MASTER YUAN: It was you who totally played him! ([10], p. 100)

This plot happened when Blossom and Master Yuan both think that Tao has gone mad because they are having an affair, so they start to reproach each other, which creates a humor effect. The conversation did not give enough information as it should have, thus violating the quantity maxim. Lai added another dialogue in the translation to elucidate why they approached each other. He made this change because he was aware of the differences in Chinese and American perceptions of humor. “American humor opens the package immediately and finds the punch line. Chinese humor takes its time unwrapping the package to get to the same point,” he told Mail Tribune in an interview in 2015 [8]. By making the implied meaning explicit, Lai successfully helped the American audience better understand the humor and thus improved the acceptability of the line.

Example 7

Source text:

饰“袁老板”的演员：我不是说这个妞，这个是什么东西？

顺子：（努力想）哦……这个是一盏街灯。巴洛克风格？

饰“袁老板”的演员：我不是问你这是什么东西！

顺子：可是，老板，如果我没听错，你刚才明明问我这是什么东西。（[9], p. 19）

Target text:

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: I'm not talking about the pretty hot chick! I'm asking you, (pointing at the streetlamp) what the hell is this?

The Mysterious Woman is startled, and walks away. She sits at the Wuling table. Flow looks hard at the streetlamp.

FLOW: *I believe that's a two-dimensional streetlamp trying to pass itself off as three-dimensional... Art Deco... made in forced perspective... with simulated cast-iron molding... “trompe l'oeil”...*

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: I'm not asking you what the hell this is!

FLOW: But boss, I heard you ask me what the hell this is. ([10], p. 34)

This plot happened when the actor playing master Yuan wanted Flow to remove the streetlamp from the stage, but Flow cannot get his implicature, and just answers the superficial meaning of the question. Flow's reply was irrelevant to the question, thus violating the relation maxim. His answer shows that he is a blockhead in understanding implicature. Instead of translating “巴洛克风格” literally into “Baroque style”, the translator expanded the dialogue, explaining Baroque style in fragmented, incoherent, and obscure words and phrases, which matches Flow's personality—a blockhead in understanding implicature. As Lai stated in the interview: “each character must have its unique personality and voice, and even its way of using words”. This means that Lai will pay attention to the individuality of the lines in the translation.

Example 8

Source text:

白袍女子：您是来做什么的？

老陶：（脾气暴躁）我是打渔的！（大男子气魄）我是来打大鱼的！！（[9], p. 78）

Target text:

WOMAN IN WHITE: What have you come here for, Sir?

TAO: I've come to fish. (irrational anger) *I'VE COME TO CATCH BIG FISH! BIG FISH!!* ([10], p. 79)

This plot happened when Tao was pushed out by his wife and her secret lover by the excuse of his inability to catch big fish. Tao repeated twice that he came to catch fish, which violates the quantity maxim. Stan Lai additionally repeated “BIG FISH!!” in capitals with two exclamation marks following behind to enhance Tao's masculinity, which helps the actors to grasp the hysteria of Tao so that the line is more actable. What's more, the added expression is short and resounding, making the line more colloquial and speakable. As Lai [12] stated: “I relay the meaning of a section to the reader in a language that is pleasant to the ear and can be presented on stage”.

4.1.3. Reductive Narration

Example 9

Source text:

饰“袁老板”的演员：什么话？一个快要死掉的病人从床上爬下来嘴里哼着歌跑去荡秋千！什么玩意儿？还有，我问你：“山茶花”怎么演？你演那朵山茶花给我看看好不好？你怎么不演呢？

《暗恋》导演：哎！他看过戏没有？低俗，你低俗！

饰“袁老板”的演员：（对《暗恋》导演）高雅，高雅！艺术的殿堂！……

饰“云之凡”的演员：（打断）不要吵了，（对饰“袁”的演员）商量一下该怎么办嘛！

饰“袁老板”的演员：我也不知道！都没时间了。（[9], p. 89）

Target text:

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: A patient about to die gets up from bed, hums a tune in his pajamas, and goes to play on a swing! If that's not enough, tell me how to portray a white camelia. Play a camelia for me! Come on! You can

do it!

DIRECTOR: Has he even seen the play?

ACTRESS PLAYING YUN: You're not helping us find a solution.

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: Solution? I'm out of time. ([10], p. 86)

This plot happened when the two crews disparaged each other's play. Actor playing master Yuan satirized the play with anti-phrases, which violates the quality maxim. If translating this phrase literally into “elegance, elegance!”, it will sound unidiomatic and strange to the American audience. Lai [11] once said: “A ‘faithful’ translation can either be an accurate rendition of the original words, which may make them inaccessible to a foreign reader”. Therefore, Lai deleted the underlined dialogue to avoid any strangeness to the American audience. This shows that Lai will pay attention to the acceptability during translation.

Example 10

Source text:

老陶：（抓到把柄）袁老板怎么知道这个药有效啊？

春花：（心虚）人家是路过，一番好心！

老陶：路过……？人家路过就能知道我们家生不出孩子？

春花：人家是好心好意的嘛！

老陶：好心好意？我们生不出孩子，他怎么会知道？

春花：你吃不吃？（把药塞给老陶）（[9], p. 24）

Target text:

TAO: Master Yuan?! How does he know about this? (finger pointing) Huh? Huh?

BLOSSOM: *He was... um, passing by, and offered his kind advice.*

TAO: Who are you fooling? How does Master Yuan know we can't bear children? Huh? Huh?

BLOSSOM: Do you want it or not? ([10], p. 38)

This plot happened when Master Yuan suggested Blossom buy medicine to cure Tao's sexual dysfunction and Tao immediately senses they might have an affair between them. Blossom repeated twice that Yuan has good intentions to cover up the fact that they are having an affair, which violates the quantity maxim. Stan Lai reduced Blossom's dialogues, which makes the lines more conversational and the plot flows more smoothly and tightly. Meanwhile, the translator added ellipsis and the modal particle “um” to remind American actresses of Blossom's panic and make it sound more colloquial. In this way, the lines are more actable and speakable.

Example 11

Source text:

绘景师：前几天画布景的时候，顺子说老板您就爱这个味儿！

饰“袁老板”的演员：顺子说我“就爱这个‘味儿’”？

绘景师：对呀，顺子说您会喜欢这样的一块“留白”。

饰“袁老板”的演员：（快疯了）“留白”？我还告白呢！（[9], p. 70）

Target text:

SCENIC PAINTER: The other day, when I was painting this drop, Flow said that you yearned for this kind of “taste.”

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: I yearned for what kind of "taste"?

SCENIC PAINTER: The taste of emptiness.

Pause.

He said that "empty space" was a big part of your directorial style.

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: "Empty space...?"

Pause. The Actor Playing Master Yuan restrains himself. ([10], p. 72)

This plot is about master Yuan being angry with the empty space on the backdrop where it should be painted a peach tree. He uses the homophone "留白" (emptiness) and "告白" (confession) to express his irritation. "告白" (confession) is irrelevant to the topic, which violates the relation maxim. Lai pointed out in the interview that "when a line is 'untranslatable', which means it is meaningless and unintelligible, it cannot be translated directly, and a culturally equivalent term must be found." As there's no the same homophone in English, and that literally translating it into "Emptiness? Why not make a confession?!" doesn't make any sense, Lai chose to omit the homophone and translated it into an elliptical sentence, making it short and conveying the helpless psychological activities of the character. In this way, speakability, actability, and acceptability have been achieved.

Example 12

Source text:

饰“袁老板”的演员：不要再“可是”了！我明天就要演出了，你现在给我一块这“玩意儿”，你到底什么玩意儿，我要不要演呢？你现在给我补满好不好？（[9], p. 70）

Target text:

ACTOR PLAYING MASTER YUAN: NO MORE "BUTS"!! I'VE GOT A PERFORMANCE TOMORROW, AND YOU PRODUCE THIS GIANT PIECE OF...([10], p. 73)

This plot is about the actor playing master Yuan being exasperated about the unfinished backdrop. "玩意儿" (meaning what the hell is this or who the hell are you) is an obscure and ambiguous expression with double meaning in Chinese, which violates the manner maxim. He used "玩意儿" to imply that the backdrop is a piece of shit and the painter is useless. If translating it literally into "gadget" or "thing", it will weaken the emotion of the character, and does not make sense to the audience. According to Lai [11]: "I am free to make certain choices that change words that may be doomed to obscurity in their original form, into something equivalent but understandable". So he omitted "玩意儿" and translated it into "this giant piece of...". For one thing, the sentence is more concise and colloquial, which is speakable for the performers. For another thing, "this giant piece of..." is a slang that is familiar to American audience, and thus improves the acceptability of the lines.

4.2. Translator's Voice in Paratexts

Paratexts are devices appended to the text. They can be classified into two categories: peritexts and epitexts. Peritexts appear in the same place as the text and are given by the author or publisher. They include forewords, prefaces,

epilogues, etc. An epitext "is any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space" [3]. Therefore, the author will collect Stan Lai's voice from peritexts and epitexts and then analyze his translation thought of performability from three aspects: translator's identities, translation motive, and translation strategies.

4.2.1. Translator's Identities

As a bilingual dramatist and self-translator, Stan Lai emphasized on performability during translation.

Born in Washington, D.C., Lai had been receiving education in the United States until he returned to Taiwan at the age of 12. During his university years, he studied English literature at Fu Jen Catholic University and participated in drama performances several times. With bilingual background, Lai was proficient in Chinese and English and was aware of the differences between the two languages, which enabled him to create a more performable play with idiomatic expressions.

Most importantly, as an internationally known director and playwright—Broadway World praised him as "the most celebrated Chinese language playwright and director [2]."—Lai has extensive knowledge of dramatic theories and abundant experience in directing stage plays, and therefore he would pay more attention to the performability of the play. He received Ph.D. in Dramatic Art from University of California, Berkeley, and served as Dean of School of Theatre Arts at Taipei National University of the Arts; therefore he has a wealth of knowledge of dramatic theories and had his own opinion of performability. In addition, having directed *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* for over 30 years, he knew the performance details like the palm of his hand and was acutely aware of what kinds of lines are suitable for American stage performances. Therefore, he would focus more on performability.

Lai's identity as a self-translator also gives advantages to the performability of the stage script. Since he was translating his own work, he had the right to conveniently and massively rewrite, add, and delete lines to improve the performability of a play. Moreover, self-translated texts are usually written in simpler sentence structures and are easier to understand [6]. Therefore, the language in Stan Lai's version of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* is also concise and colloquial, which makes the stage script more performable.

4.2.2. Translation Motive

The powerful motive for Stan Lai translating *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* was to make his translated version become a play script.

For one thing, Lai considered the previous version by Martha Cheung unsuitable for stage performance. He [12] thought that Cheung's version was "...very accurate... but she made a mistake of translating different characters' dialogues into the same tone, that is, her tone". As a result, he would pay attention to the register of each character to

punctuate their personalities, emotions, and actions and thus make the script more performable.

For another thing, Lai was invited to Oregon Shakespeare Festival held in the United States. As *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* was one of the plays to perform, Lai needed a more performable English version to participate in the festival. Therefore, he decided to retranslate the play script to make it better suited to stage performance in the United States.

What's more, Lai's desire for his play to go global also requires the script to be performable. In the interview, Lai mentioned his motive for translating *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*: "I always want to have my work translated into other languages. This is my normal, simple motive". In order to have the script internationally accepted and even rehearsed by foreign performing groups, performability is crucial. Therefore, Lai would give priority to performability while translating.

4.2.3. Translation Strategies

Since Lai translated the play script for performability, he would adopt functional equivalence as a translation strategy. To achieve this goal, Stan Lai rewrote, added, and deleted certain culture specific items. As he [11] stated in *How I Translate My Own Play*: "...lines that are culturally almost impossible to translate that I choose to either just let go without explanation, delete, or rewrite with different content".

Stan Lai would choose to rewrite the culture-loaded expressions. For example, in Scene 6, As Jiang Binliu, who was seriously ill, heard some relatives intend to pay a visit, he shouted to Ms. Jiang: "...大眼瞪小眼的, 眼看着就没救了, 还来干什么?" (the Chinese idiom "大眼瞪小眼" refers to not knowing what to do about the situation). Lai rewrote the discourse with an English idiom: "Enjoy what? He comes, we just sit here and engage in superficial conversation, avoiding the elephant in the room". Instead of literal translation, Lai rewrote the sentence with idiomatic English while conveying the same register, achieving an equivalent dramatic effect.

For dialogues that cannot be translated literally, Lai would also delete them. For example, the director of the play *Secret Love* swore to the director of the play *Peach Blossom Land*: "低俗, 你低俗!" (vulgar, you are vulgar!) and the latter satirized back: "高雅, 高雅! 艺术的殿堂!" (elegant, elegant! What a temple or art!) If translated literally, it would sound strange to the American audience, so Lai chose to delete this dialogue.

For Chinese historical backgrounds and stories unfamiliar to the American audience, such as the events of 1949 and the story *A Chronicle of the Peach Blossom Land*, Lai chose to add the information straight into the dialogue to "help the reader/ audience in a seamless way" [11]. In this way, the audience could better understand the play and made the script more performable.

In conclusion, in order to achieve performability, Lai rewrote, deleted, and added information to achieve an equivalent dramatic effect.

5. Conclusion

The thesis takes the subtext translation in *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* as the study subject and analyses Stan Lai's voice from two aspects: the translation and paratexts. Here are the main findings:

For one thing, while translating the subtexts in the play script, Lai adopted changing narration, amplifying narration, and reductive narration to enhance the performability of the play. Changing narration was mostly used in translating geographical names, culture specific items (including slang and homophones), and culture general expressions. Replacing the geographical names according to the production's location can give the audience a sense of familiarity and improve their acceptability. Using equivalent English slang and puns to translate culture specific items not only improves the colloquialism of the lines, which is more speakable for the actors, but also makes them more understandable for the American audience. As for certain culture general expressions, Lai changed them into short sentences, elliptical sentences, or capitalized ones. The former two make the line more colloquial, while the latter can remind the actors of the emotion, tone, and actions of the characters, and enhance the actability of the lines. Amplifying narration is mainly achieved in two ways: adding lines that highlight the character's emotions and personalities and explaining the implied meaning. The former can enrich the characters' images and make the lines more individual and actable. The latter, meanwhile, can make the lines more correspond to English thinking patterns, thus enhancing the acceptability of the audience. Reductive narration includes the deletion of culture specific items and repetitive discourse. The deletion of culture specific items prevents the audience from being confused and thus improves the acceptability of the script. The deletion of repetitive discourse makes the plot more concise and suitable for stage performance. In conclusion, Lai's manipulation of the translation reflects his voice of focusing on performability.

For another thing, in the paratexts, Lai also expressed his voice on performability, which is consistent with the one in the translation. Lai's voice in the paratexts can be reflected in three aspects: the translator's identities, translation motives, and translation strategies. Firstly, Lai has studied abroad and has triple identities: a director, playwright, and self-translator. Therefore, he is proficient in English, drama, and performance, which is crucial to the performability of the translation. Secondly, his motive for translating *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* is to make it become a play script to participate in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and be seen by more people. Finally, in the paratexts, he directly stated that he would adopt translation strategies such as rewrite, amplification, and omission to achieve the performability of the script. To sum up, the paratexts reflect Lai's voice of focusing on performability, which is consistent with the one in the translation.

The implications of this study can be discussed at both the theoretical and practical levels. In terms of theoretical value, this thesis provides a useful supplement to Stan Lai's

thoughts on drama translation. Most scholars studied Stan Lai's thought from the perspectives of theatre studies but rarely studied his thoughts on drama translation. In terms of practical value, this study helps translators to transfer Chinese plays into English in a more performable way and better promote Chinese drama to go global.

However, there are limitations in this thesis. For one thing, not much voice of Stan Lai on performability were collected through email interviews. For another thing, this thesis only focuses on one play and didn't collect data of Lai's other drama translations due to the lack of time. Therefore, Future research can focus on two aspects: the first one is to interview Stan Lai face to face to obtain more of his translation thoughts on Chinese drama. The second one is to study more of his drama translations, so as to achieve a comparatively comprehensive understanding of his thoughts on drama translation.

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