Book Reviews

Hu Kaibao, *A Corpus-Based Study of the Chinese Translations of Shakespeare's Plays* (Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaotong University Press, 2015).

Reviewed by *Limin Li*[*]

The rapid development of corpus-based translation studies has pushed translation studies towards empiricism, opening a fruitful dialogue within the discipline and beyond the boundary. It is a dialogue between theoretical and applied translation studies, and between translation studies and corpora studies, thus fostering interdisciplinary studies like corpus-based translation studies, translational stylistics and so on. Hu Kaibao's monograph *A Corpus-Based Study of the Chinese Translations of Shakespeare's Plays* tackles challenging issues in the field of corpus-based translation studies, like the much debated topic of universal features of translated texts, the corpus-based methodology employed in translation studies, and the list of universal hypotheses, etc. The book has not only approached those hot topics, but also provided solutions.

First, the corpus-based study of the Chinese translations of Shakespeare's plays provides a strong qualitative basis for describing the most distinctive English and Chinese expressions, which is quite systematic and objective.

1) Hu's DIY English-Chinese Parallel Corpus of Shakespeare's Plays is a big and balanced one. After a critical review of the studies on Chinese translations of Shakespeare's plays, Hu selects three most influential Chinese translated versions of Shakespeare's plays: Zhu Shenghao's (1912-1944) translation published in 1957, Liang Shiqiu's (1902-1987) translation in 1967 and Fang Ping's (1921-2007) translation in 2000. The book includes the three translators' works in his self-built English-Chinese Parallel Corpus of Shakespeare's Plays. The corpus also incorporates Shakespeare's original works and original Chinese plays. It achieves sentence level alignment between one original work and the three versions with more than three million words of text. The reason for having parallel corpora is to describe linguistic features, such as vocabulary, lexical combinations, or grammatical features of both Chinese and

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English, to exhibit the processes of representing and constructing an equivalent interpersonal meaning in the Chinese translated works of Shakespeare's plays, as well as to probe into translators' styles through their different ways of handling the salient vocabulary, lexical combinations, and grammatical structures in both English and Chinese.

2) With the aid of large corpora of both original and translated texts of Shakespeare's plays, the book selects the most representative English and Chinese lexico-grammatical expressions. The highly selective, instead of exhaustive way of handling translated materials equips researchers and readers with a better understanding of sensing the differences and unique features of Chinese and English languages. Moreover, those expressions provide abundant translation examples for cultural and literary researchers as well as translators. Through intralingual and interlingual translation comparisons, the research can render guidance to the translation of strong culture-loaded expressions.

3) The book applies the series of alleged translation universal hypotheses into the DIY corpus to test their validity, which is very inclusive and labour-intensive. And, for all those universal pairs, sets of related indicators, like explicitation and implicitation, normalisation, simplification, etc. are brought under scrutiny. After theoretical elaboration and empirical evidence, those hypotheses prove to be effective. They show the same commonality in Chinese as in Indo-European languages. Moreover, with statistical analysis of data, it is found that the Chinese translation of English degree adverbs has either been strengthened or weakened. A new pair of translation universal hypothesis is put forward based on the Chinese case study, namely strengthening and weakening. Thus, the employment of the large corpora method promotes the development of translation studies. Another example is the translation of English attributive clauses guided by "which". In Zhu's and Liang's translations, both of them try to avoid using long sentences so as to achieve the equivalent in form, and they convey the same meaning by using split translation. Actually, through translation, both Zhu's and Liang's translations absorb some authentic English ways of expression, and inject new vitality into the Chinese vernacular language.

4) Based on the DIY corpora, many researches can be conducted. Marco points out that the flaw of traditional translation studies is that "translation is a language-pair specific practical activity, but detailed comparative analysis of the languages involved often fails to be carried out" (57). Modified in methodology, Hu's book overcomes this defect, and the DIY corpus will play a more important role in future corpus-based translation studies.

Second, the book explicitly describes, explains, and analyzes how interpersonal meanings are represented and constructed both in Shakespeare's original plays and in Chinese translated versions. It stresses that translation is more than a linguistic operation, and restates that the very nature of translation is communicative. The communication must include the affection, attitude,

evaluation and so on. Taking them all into account, the holistic and in-depth study of the interpersonal meanings of translated texts furthers corpus-based translation studies, because previous studies are mainly focused on ideational and textual meanings of translation.

1) Through the comprehensive qualitative and quantitative descriptions, comparisons and explanations of Zhu's, Liang's and Fang's translation are made. Through investigating their translating motivations, the book reveals the methods to represent and construct the interpersonal meanings in Chinese translated texts. To generalize the methods of realizing interpersonal function in translated texts, it searches the most typical words that express interpersonal meanings, like the modal auxiliary "can", the evaluative words "good" and "love", and the appellation noun "Lord".

2) Using "Lord" to fully illustrate the representation of the interpersonal meaning is a poly-systemic work, which makes the studies of translation more socio-communicative. It first searches from Shakespeare's plays the word "Lord" which counts 1306 in number, then classifies them into four types: those referring to the nobility, those whose social position are higher than speakers but who are not nobles, those whose social positions are the same as speakers, and those referring to speakers' relatives. In Zhu's and Liang's translations, many "Lords" are not translated, for there are no Chinese equivalents. During the analysis of the motivations of reproducing the same effect of interpersonal meaning, the author states that the English word "Lord" is so rich in meaning that there is no corresponding word in Chinese. The reason is that "China's hierarchical system is stricter than that of the West" (205). The Chinese word "Your Majesty" corresponding to "Lord" refers exclusively to the emperor. It is not used to address high-ranking officials, let alone father and brother. Therefore, both Zhu's and Liang's translations strive to reproduce the interpersonal meaning of the source language text by adopting a more varied Chinese vocabulary. After the analysis, the book points out that the representation and construction of those interpersonal meanings in the translated works take into account not only the lexical equivalence, the mood and the affective meanings, but also the interpersonal intention of the author, the aim of the translator and the reading stance of readers.

Third, the book goes further to explore the cognitive aspects of translation studies by probing into the reason why the translation product exhibits the form as it does. It is a worthwhile and meaningful attempt to look into the mind of human beings through language in translation studies.

1) It helps people to gain a deeper understanding of one's own language. Based on different Chinese translations of Shakespeare's plays, the most representative Chinese words, phrases, and sentence structures are presented. For instance, the reduplicated word "AABB" is beautiful in tone and vivid in image and shows one of the unique features of Chinese language. The analysis

of the reduplicated words "AABB" in Chinese translation indicates its strong descriptive power, and explains the visualization/imagery mode of thinking of the Chinese people.

2) The book analyzes translators' motivations of translation from the perspective of language and cognition. According to Cognitive Grammar's premise, any syntactical structure is not randomly arranged; rather, "the choice of different grammatical structures determines inference of different conceptual content" (Harrison 2). This book takes some typical Chinese translated sentences like SHI/BA/BEI constructions from *Hamlet* to reveal the cognitive processes of translators. Take the BA construction as an example, translation is first affected by the translator's cognition. The target language structure chosen by the translator is the mapping of the event schema carried by the source text. Conflicts and contradictions in drama are realized by characters' dialogues, and actions and behaviors determine the event's condition. In *Hamlet,* a wide range of sentence structures contains displacement schemata in characters' language. The BA construction is the main sentence pattern that expresses the displacement schema in the Chinese language. The using frequency of BA constructions varies with the plot. The gradual increase of BA constructions is not only a manifestation of the increasingly fierce conflict in the drama, but also a schematic mapping of Liang Shiqiu's and Zhu Shenghao's understanding of the play. All those highly salient sentence structures will activate readers' and translators' schematic network, which constructs a typical meaning of the translated texts.

3) Chinese readers' cognition will be reconstructed to some extent by reading those translated works, and they will also understand their own culture and language better. "Metaphor is the embodiment of human understanding of concepts" (240), which is related to cognitive activities such as mind and thought. In the area of Chinese translation of the metaphorical expressions of color words in Shakespeare's plays, the three translators mostly use literal translation or retain the metaphor, supplemented by explanation. The translation of metaphors requires the conversion of the two cultures' thinking modes, in order "to convey the meaning of metaphors and ensure the accurate expression of metaphors in the cultural context of the target language" (251). Literal translation can not only reproduce or even construct metaphorical images in the source language, but also promote cultural exchanges between two cultures. The translator's intentional literal translation allows readers to perform cognitive transformation in the reorganization of meaning. This is a brand-new reconstruction of personal knowledge schema, and it also promotes readers' cognition and understanding of the world. As cognition is highly influenced by culture, the investigation of readers' cognition realizes the translation function of cultural exchange in a very effective way.

Fourth, the translational style of translators, translation ideas of translators and translation norms are summarized and abstracted in the book, which overcomes the previous linear approach in translation studies.

1) The way of digging into the motivations behind those translation products opens a new window for corpus-based translational stylistics. The traditional translational stylistics always centers on describing and explaining language foregrounding or deviation, leaving translators' motivation untouched. However, those language phenomena, such as under- and over-representation in the target language must embody the translator's choice of language and his/her translation motivation. Based on the big DIY corpus, the book's studies of the translator's styles are comprehensive and reliable in mathematical statistics and in logical argumentation.

2) "The translator's translation style is the translator's outer 'self' outside the original work's style" (155). It reflects the translator's synthesized demonstration of his/her idiosyncratic cognition, his/her inter-subjectivity and his/her translation views. Having a unique translation style of one's own is the basic quality of a mature translator. The book analyzes and generalizes the translation styles of the three translators from the perspectives of the translator's translation thoughts, translation norms, and target readers. Zhu's purpose of translating Shakespeare's plays into Chinese is to make the ordinary readers know the great writer. Thus, his Chinese translations highly pursue the acceptability and interestingness of the translated texts on the premise that they convey the meaning of the original texts faithfully. During the process, Zhu's degree of adhering to the linguistic and socio-cultural norms of the target language culture is the highest. And his main translation strategy is domestication. Contrary to Zhu, Liang's translation of Shakespeare's plays "aims to arouse readers' interest in the original text" (qtd. in Hu 106), focusing on "preserving the original authenticity" (qtd. in Hu 42) because Liang's target readers are those who are experts in English and scholars who study Shakespeare. In Liang's translation, the degree of using Europeanized language is the highest and foreignization is the main translation strategy for him. Fang Ping also has his unique translation style. In order to realize the real unity in form and in content, Fang strives for the "phonological effects" and "original flavor" of Shakespeare's play (qtd. in Hu 144). Obviously, Fang is committed to "being accepted and appreciated by more readers" (*Ibid.*). Fang's final aim is to achieve the effect of "poetic drama on stage" from a modern aesthetic point of view (qtd. in Hu 144).

3) The book uses a dialectic stance to look at whether a translator conforms to translation norms in his day or not. According to Toury, "norms are socio-cultural in nature, they are assimilated by individuals in the process of their socialisation" (55). Inevitably, translators will be influenced more or less by their socio-cultural pressures, and their ways of resistance vary. For instance,

in the translation of English sexual taboos, Zhu's translation shows the highest level of purification. He uses various translation methods, and, by adopting different Chinese expressions, his translation complies with the Chinese society and culture at the time. When Liang translates sexual taboos, he does not deliberately cater to the ethical norms of Chinese society at that time. Instead, he believes that these vulgar and colloquial expressions show the crudeness of the characters. Liang pays special attention to retaining the meaning of the original work, and consequently his translation appears rigid and lacks literary varieties, while Zhu's translation is clear and vivid. Fang's translation is easy to read and remember, and suitable for performance.

Last, translation is a multi-faceted phenomenon, and Hu's book is very competent in giving us evidence, summarizing language features and explaining motivations of the translated texts within the field of corpus-based translation studies. The multi-dimensional analyses in the book empower readers to gain a deep and critical understanding of the translation process, product and function. I would like to suggest doing further studies focusing on the translation processes of different Chinese translators based on their manuscripts. All in all, the book certainly clears the ground and points out the future ways for the study of translation theories, corpus-based translation study, and the study of Chinese translations of Shakespearean plays.

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Yang, Lingui, and others, eds. *Series of Shakespeare Studies* **(Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2020)**.

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As a tribute to Shakespeare, the publication of the series showcases Chinese participation in the global celebration of his legacy and encourages scholarly exchanges about the works in his name in China and elsewhere. For its Chinese perspectives and typical mode of critical discourse as well as its wide array of coverage, the five-volume *Shakespeare Studies Series* makes a new landmark in the history of Chinese Shakespeare studies. As Lingui Yang, the general editor of the series, suggests in the "General Introduction," the growth of Chinese efforts in Shakespeare scholarship necessitates continuous involvement and conversation with international colleagues (15).

The series anthologizes important achievements of Shakespeare research in China of the last hundred years and introduces to its Chinese readers contemporary schools of Western Shakespeare criticism. Among other things, such coverage seems to encourage a comparative approach to Shakespeare in the juxtaposition of Chinese and Western studies, but the books in the series extend their thematic as well as theoretical concerns beyond any methodology, with each focusing on one Shakespearean topic yet from diverse perspectives. Actually, the selections of Shakespeare scholarship demonstrate a unique Chinese mode of discourse about the English Bard, with abundant evidence that Chinese scholars engage themselves in establishing certain communication with Shakespeareans elsewhere by referencing world Shakespeare studies. For another thing, there might be a political approach to Shakespeare that is eminent in both Chinese and Western studies in a certain era. As noted by Peter Holbrook in the "Foreword" to the series, the Western selections of the last three or four decades are "deeply historicist—or, to put it otherwise, political" (3). We might detect a historical or political turn in the 1960s in Chinese and Western academia. However, political Shakespeare in the Chinese context tells another story as the other anthologies in the series demonstrate a different cultural politics. To be sure, political criticism of Shakespeare in the two worlds can be defined differently and has gone through different trajectories in the swing of political agendas towards left or right.

To begin with, the Western Shakespeare volume, edited by Lingui Yang and Xueying Qiao, features Chinese translations of mainstream studies in recent decades, when such trends as new historicism, cultural materialism, feminism, gender study, post-colonialism and other prominent studies have prevailed

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literary criticism. Curiously, the anthology limits its inclusion to studies published in Anglophone academia since the 1970s for a reason that the editors attempt to explain in the front matter. The book carries on the convention of an influential Chinese anthology published earlier, *Selected Works of Shakespeare Criticism* (1979), edited by Zhouhan Yang, that collects translation of representative criticism ever since Shakespeare's contemporaries till the 1960s. It's known that after the 1960s, Western literary criticism has been highly prosperous with various schools of critique, and Shakespearean texts are among those most written on. The new anthology as in this series focuses on studies in the decades after the 1960s. The book's interest in Shakespeare studies after the political turn is joined with a few Chinese monographs that review contemporary Western schools of Shakespeare criticism, such as Qinchao Xu's *Textual Politics: A Review of Cultural Materialist Shakespeare* (2014) and Wei Zhang's *Marxist Shakespeare in Contemporary Britain and U.S.* (2018). The anthology is not a book of review and is not dedicated to one single critical trend, but covers the mainstream Western schools of criticism on Shakespeare since the 1970s. The selection "is a reliable guide to dominant trends in literary criticism and scholarship over the last few decades, and shows how profoundly ideological criticism in the Anglo-American academy has been since at least the 1970s and 1980s" (Holbrook, "Foreword," 3). While the "most influential and prestigious critics of the last three or four decades have been overwhelmingly preoccupied with issues of race, power, sexual identity or sexual difference, colonialism and imperialism […], they have not been concerned so much with the issue of class" (3). Interestingly, the issue of class is a special concern in Chinese Marxist criticism of the 1950s and its revival in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. The next few decades have also seen Chinese Shakespeare studies of the non-political criticism, for example, humanism in its Chinese elaborations—Marxist, Western or even Confucian as we may find in the Chinese selections in the series.

Two volumes are dedicated to Shakespeare's dramatic genres. The tragedy volume, edited by Weimin Li and Lingui Yang, selects Chinese studies of the tragedies and reflect the editors' efforts in tracing classic literary theories and combining them with the latest research in Shakespeare. In its two major parts, the book covers both general studies of Shakespeare's celebrated genre and focused explorations of individual tragedies, both striving to reflect the new insights in the field. Readers can see that in this book, there are not only analyses of the artistic features of the Shakespearean tragedy but also general discussions on subjects like death, the essentials of tragedy, plot structure and peculiar tragic aesthetics. Studies apply theoretical concepts to analyses of specific tragedies, such as interpreting *King Lear* with ethics and psychoanalysis, reading *Macbeth* in modernist terms, *Othello* from a post-colonialist vision, and *Romeo and Juliet*

from a new historicist perspective. They are mainly about Shakespeare's four major tragedies *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*.

In a similar vein, the comedy volume, edited by Weimin Li, covers general studies on Shakespeare's comedy, such as his comic spirit and techniques. The major articles in the book analyze individual Shakespeare comedies, including *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Twelfth Night*. Selected studies share some interest in the mixing of the tragic and the comic as in scholarly monographs published in recent years. These studies have not only broken the common division between tragedy and comedy, but have also shown an attempt to interpret Shakespeare plays in an interdisciplinary way. For example, Feng's "Shylock's Confusion: Shakespeare and Early Modern English Legal Thoughts" analyzes *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Measure for Measure* from the perspective of legal practice. Obviously, these two anthologies provide us with a rich reference, which not only reviews Shakespeare studies since the 1980s but also displays the latest research perspectives.

Readings of Shakespeare's texts have influenced their theatrical presentations in the Chinese theater, which albeit contains its particular features in the form of *huaju* (spoken drama) or *xiqu* (traditional opera) within a certain reading or adaptation of the Shakespearean text. The performance/adaptation volume, edited by Chong Zhang, covers studies of Shakespeare on the Chinese stage in the last four decades when theatrical presentations of Shakespeare are most active. With the studies on stage performance, this book is thus far beyond textual analysis. Its authors also include professional actors and directors, far more than mere academic scholars. This book is divided into four parts: theoretical studies on Shakespeare performance and adaptation, Shakespeare on Chinese drama stage, adapting Shakespeare to traditional Chinese opera, and Shakespeare film adaptation. As scholars have pointed out, there are two distinct approaches to the adaptation of Shakespeare plays—localization and Westernization, or domestication and foreignization. Localization to some simply means adapting Shakespeare plays to traditional Chinese opera, such as Peking Opera, Kunqu Opera, Sichuan Opera, Yueju Opera and other local opera forms. Westernization also seems to refer to the stage performance following Western realistic approach. In fact, both local and Westernized methods can be used in adapting practices. All elements, traditional or modern, outdated or fashionable, elegant or vulgar, can be used in Shakespeare adaptations. This volume provides not only theories and thoughts in cross-cultural adaptation research, but also examples of adaptation to traditional Chinese opera and film. These are perspectives and achievements from Chinese scholars and artists for Shakespeare adaptation and performance research in the time of globalization.

        We see in the anthologies that the Western Bard's texts are explored in multiple literary and artistic traditions, either Chinese or Western, in the Chinese classroom or theater. For most Chinese readers, Shakespeare is a prominent figure in the category of "foreign literature," and scholars approach his works as part of world literature. In the World Literature volume, edited by Zhenzhao Nie and Juan Du, we find out what important position Shakespeare has in Chinese foreign literary research. The position lies in the fact that *Foreign Literary Studies,* one of China's most prominent academic journals in foreign literary criticism, has dedicated a special column to Shakespeare ever since its start in 1978. The journal has thus played a highly important role in promoting Shakespeare studies in China. The selected articles from *Foreign Literary Studies*, as the series' special volume, include articles in various categories: general studies of Shakespeare; focused studies of Shakespearean tragedy; and studies of the histories, comedies and romances. They are arranged in chronological order of publication in the journal. Two English articles are also included and translated into Chinese in the volume. Of the writers in this volume, there are outstanding literary scholars, such as Zhouhan Yang, Weizhi Zhu, Shen Ruan, Ping Fang, and Shouchang Gu. The selected essays in the volume may represent the highest accomplishments Chinese scholars have ever made in each historical period in Shakespeare studies. The journal also publishes translations of essays by international Shakespeareans so that it has become a valuable platform for international exchange in Shakespeare studies. Likewise, the world literature volume has presented not only substantial references for Chinese scholars but also a history of Shakespeare research in China since 1978.

        Amid the wealth of the series of anthologies, which the general editor and collaborating editors have painstakingly put together, it is to be regretted to end by noting a few of issues. As the editors have admitted, this series of books would unavoidably have its own pities and flaws. For one thing, the selection is limited for some reason. Most Shakespeare studies in China have conventionally been concentrated on the several so-called major plays of Shakespeare. Therefore, most articles in the tragedy and comedy anthologies are on those most studied tragedies and comedies with which Chinese readers are the most familiar. If more articles in the two anthologies are on Shakespeare plays other than those key ones, the two anthologies could better display the latest research achievements. For another thing, the series has not included some important topics of study. According to different genres, studies could be on Shakespeare poetry, translation, history plays and romance plays and on different themes, such as death, love, law, and education. Finally, though there are one or two articles in the series by Taiwan scholars, not much has been learned in Shakespeare studies in Hong Kong, Macao and other Chinese-speaking communities. After all, Shakespeare studies outside mainland China are also part of Chinese Shakespeare studies. In the future, studies in these areas should be

added to the series either in each volume or as an independent volume. Perhaps all these are what editors and readers commonly wish for the improvement of the series.

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