

Position of Translated Drama and Translational Norms in Modern Korean Theater during the 1920s and 1930s*

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1. Introduction

In discussing translation as a norm-governed activity, Toury(53-69) stated that translation is the product of socio-cultural constraints rather than the reproduction of a source text or the product of the cognitive apparatus of the translator. These socio-cultural constraints, he went on to say, have been described along a scale anchored between two extremes: general, relatively absolute rules on the one hand, and pure idiosyncrasies on the other hand, and between these two poles lie intersubjective factors called norms. Here, norms are “the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations”

* All citations from Korean source texts are the author's translation.

(Toury 55). They are the key concept and focal point in any attempt to account for the social relevance of activities. Toury argued that, like any other socio-cultural activity, translation is also a norm-governed activity. He said that translation of all kinds and every stage in the translating event is governed by norms: norms govern the choices that translators make, determine the receptor text and hence the relation between the translation and its source. Hence, norms can be said to be related to the position of translated texts.

This paper is concerned with precisely this issue. It aims to explore the position of translated drama and its implications for translational norms using examples of translated drama in modern Korean theater during the 1920s and 1930s. During the 1920s and 1930s, the modern Korean theater movement arose as part of cultural nationalism under Japanese colonial rule. As Korean theater at that time was under the influence of Japanese *sinpa* theater, the purpose of the movement was to subvert the colonizer's *sinpa* theater and establish a modern national theater. As part of this movement, foreign drama was translated and staged. The leaders of the modern Korean theater movement, including Gim U-jin, Hong Hae-seong, Hyeon Cheol, Seo Hang-seok, Yu Chi-jin and Gim Gwang-seop, published essays concerning translated drama during this period. This paper examines the function and position of translated drama by examining their essays or articles that were published in magazines or newspapers, and explores their implications for translational norms.

2. Position of Translated Drama in Modern Korean Theater

2.1. A Model for a Modern National Drama and Theater

The position of translated drama during the 1920s and 1930s was related to the field of modern Korean theater. Although traditional Korean theater had a

long history going back hundreds of years, the modern Korean dramatic polysystem was still young. Therefore, there were few Korean playwrights or modern dramatic works that the leaders of the modern Korean theater movement could employ to serve their purpose, namely, to subvert the colonizer's *sinpa* theater and establish a modern national theater. Although the colonizer's theater that flourished in Korea during the second decade of the twentieth century may be said to be a modern theater, as opposed to traditional Korean theater, it was not modern in a strict sense. Furthermore, from the perspective of leaders of Korean society and the Korean people, who then came to have a national consciousness as a result of the March First Independence Movement, it was just the theater of the colonizers, who had conquered the Korean people. The leaders of the modern Korean theater movement thought they needed a totally new type of theater, one that had a totally new concept, a new role and a new function, as opposed to the aesthetic principles of the colonizer's *sinpa*. This was where translated drama was positioned. The important role of translated drama was asserted by many Korean intellectuals and drama practitioners in numerous articles published during the 1920s and 1930s.

The importance of translated drama as a model for modern Korean drama was first pointed out by Gim U-jin, who was one of the leaders of the Donguhoe Theatrical Troupe.¹⁾ Just before the Troupe's performance tour, in June 1921, he published a dramatic criticism entitled 'About the So-called Modern Drama'.²⁾ He said, in this essay, that the purpose of modern theater is firstly to save and liberate human souls, and secondly, to awaken the vulgar

1) This theatrical troupe launched the modern Korean theater movement by staging two modern Korean original plays and one modern Irish play in 1921. The theatrical troupe toured 25 cities in Korea for about forty days from 9th July until 18th August 1921 with great success (*Dong-A Ilbo* 19th Aug. 1921).

2) This essay was published in the *Hakjigwang*, a bulletin of the Korean students' society in Tokyo.

public. He also argued that the idea of a new theater should first be disseminated to achieve this purpose, and emphasized the advent of “the age of translation” in Korea. He went on to stress the importance of staging translated drama in order to produce great Korean playwrights, giving examples of Germany, the Independent theater of England and the *Théâtre-Libre* of France (1921 70).

Gim's view on translated drama was supported by Hyeon Cheol, a drama critic and playwright. After watching a performance by the Donguhoe Theatrical Troupe in 1921, Hyeon expressed his opinion that staging distinguished translated drama would be more effective than staging original Korean plays of low quality in terms of producing original Korean plays because the latter would delay the advancement of dramaturgy and other dramatic techniques (1921b 131).

This view was presented more explicitly in an article entitled ‘The First Step toward the Modern Korean Theater Movement’, which was co-authored by Gim U-jin and Hong Hae-seong. This article was the first to discuss how to develop the modern Korean theater movement. In this article, Gim and Hong argued for the need for a “new seed” to grow in Korea, where there was no tradition of a modern theater, assuming the age of criticism to precede the age of creation.

How could we start a new theater movement in Korea today, a desert where there has been no theater, no stage, no stage director and no play in a real sense, if we do not import a new seed from other countries? For the ceaseless creation of new life, imitation, copying or import will not end in just imitation, copying or import. (Gim and Hong 1926)

Therefore, they argued for the need to import modern plays from advanced theater companies in foreign countries as sources of “new life”, giving examples of modern theater movements in Europe, America and Japan. They

emphasized that the ultimate goal of this import did not lie in the import itself, but in the creation of “great new life”.

Their view of translation seems to be very similar to the ideas of Even-Zohar. According to Even-Zohar (1997 357-58), the cultural repertoire, although viewed by the members of the group as given, and taken by them for granted, is neither generated nor inherited by our genes, but needs to be made. 3) This making may be made “inadvertently (1) by anonymous contributors, whose names and fortune may never be known, but also deliberately, (2) by known members who are openly and dedicatedly engaged in this activity”. Even-Zohar went on to state that the major procedures for making repertoire were “invention” and “import” and these were not opposed procedures, because inventing might be carried out via import. In short, he said, import has always played a much more crucial role in the making of repertoire than is normally admitted.

This view of translated drama during the 1920s was also advocated by other leaders of the modern Korean theater movement during the 1930s. Gim Gwang-seop and Yu Chi-jin are representative of these views. Their thoughts on translated drama as a model for modern Korean drama also seem to have been the result of influence from the Haeoe Munhak Yeonguhoe (Foreign Literature Research Society: FLRS). This society was organized in 1926 by Korean students in Tokyo for the study, translation and introduction of foreign literature. In 1927, they started an organ known as *Haeoe Munhak* (Foreign Literature),⁴⁾ a literary magazine, with the preface saying:

3) The cultural repertoire is the aggregate of options utilized by a group of people, and by the individual members of the group, for the organization of life (Even-Zohar, 1997 355).

4) The achievements of this magazine lay in extensive translation and the introduction of foreign literature to Korea for the first time. This magazine discontinued with serial number 2: it was issued in January and July in 1927 (Jo 158).

The establishment of new literature, in general, originates with the import of foreign literature. The purpose of our engagement in studies and research of foreign literature never lies in itself only. It firstly lies in the establishment of our literature, and secondly in the exchange of world literature. (Jo 158)

This view on the role of translation must have had an influence on Gim Gwang-seop and Yu Chi-jin because they were both members of the FLRS. Gim, as a member of Geukyesul Yeonguhoe (hereafter GeukYeon) and the FLRS, published many critical essays during the 1930s.⁵⁾ He mentioned the need for translated drama for the first time in 1933. In an essay entitled ‘Some Suggestions to the Korean Theatrical World’, he stressed that translated drama was necessary in Korea because the nation had no theatrical heritage or worthwhile plays. In another essay related to the third production of the GeukYeon,⁶⁾ he pointed out that the repertoire of the GeukYeon consisted almost entirely of translated dramas, due to the lack of original Korean plays or their low quality. However, he argued, the GeukYeon ultimately aimed at the emergence of original Korean plays that could represent and criticize the lives, feelings and ideas of the Korean people. These fragmentary comments on the relationship between translated drama and Korean originals were brought together in an essay entitled ‘Korean Theater and the Influence of Foreign Drama’. He says:

I think we need to borrow dramatic texts from other countries in order to establish a theatrical culture. [...] This is the only way to promote and establish a theatrical culture in a society where the theatrical culture is non-existent or stagnant. (Gim G. 1933b)

5) Gim published as many as 26 critical essays related to the theater from 1932 to 1939 (Yang, 1996 451).

6) ‘About the Geukyesul Yeonguhoe’s 3rd Production’. *Joseon Ilbo Daily*. 2 February 1933.

The above statement emphasized the “primary” or “innovatory” role of translations in creating a new cultural repertoire of the theater in Korea where a modern dramatic polysystem was in the process of being established. As Even-Zohar said, translations can be “primary” (that is, innovatory) and contribute to the elaboration of new repertoires when a polysystem has not yet been crystallized, that is, when a literature is “young” and still in the process of being established (Even-Zohar, 2004 200-201). Here “primary” activity refers to activity that takes “the initiative in creating new items and models for the repertoire” (Even-Zohar, 1978 7).

Yu Chi-jin, a playwright and stage director, published the most critical essays on the theater among contemporary critics.⁷⁾ His essays during the 1930s mostly focused on the theater movement and he discussed the relationship between original Korean plays and translated drama in these essays. Unlike earlier critics, his discussion of translated drama was wider and more concrete. He warned against too much dependence on translated drama, specified the objectives of translated drama and discussed translation methods. In an essay entitled ‘A View of the Korean Theater World: Translated Drama and Original Drama’, published in 1933, he emphasized the importance of translated drama, while warning against placing too much dependence on it as a way to produce Korean originals. He stated that translated drama should take the role of midwife to produce Korean originals, focusing on the need to stage Korean originals, even if they were poor, in order to train Korean playwrights and ultimately establish a national theater. He argued that foreign drama was more useful to new dramatists (1934) and detailed the technical advantages of foreign drama to Korean dramatists and practitioners (1935). He mentioned three points that Korean dramatists and producers should learn from foreign drama: first, staging techniques; second, stage language and its rhythmic play; and last, philosophical ideas.

7) He published 84 critical essays on the theater from 1931 to 1941 (Yang, 1996 451).

As seen above, the leaders of the modern Korean theater movement regarded translated drama as models for the establishment of a modern Korean theater. They sought to borrow high status texts from advanced countries such as Europe and America. Translated drama was not a means of entertainment, but a text for study. It was a text of stage language, dramaturgy, and staging techniques for Korean theater practitioners and dramatists. As the modern Korean dramatic polysystem was “young”, the leaders of the Korean theater movement sought to benefit from the experience of other literatures, and translated drama became in this way one of its most important systems. As a result, translated drama had a privileged position in modern Korean theater and many plays were staged during the 1920s and 1930s. The GeukYeon, for example, staged 24 translated works out of a total of 36 works, twice the number of Korean originals (Yi Sang-u 268).

2.2. National Awakening and Resistance

Another function of translated drama was related to the purpose of the modern Korean theater movement. The purpose of this movement was neither literary nor aesthetic; its leaders sought to educate and enlighten the masses through the theater and establish a modern national theater that could serve the purpose of the national awakening. The theater that best suited this purpose was the one that dealt with contemporary social issues. Therefore, the leaders of the Korean theater movement argued that theater should portray or depict the realities of the Korean people.

Gim U-jin and Hong Hae-seong, leading contemporary playwrights and drama critics, stated that theater in Korea should put daily themes before staging arts, life or beauty.

There's a saying that “the theater is a school.” If we could not approach the theater movement with such an urgent, straightforward and serious

attitude, a fly sheet, a debate or a charitable work would be more useful. A stock, a company, or shops or factories in our daily lives rather than staging arts, beauty or life, should be the themes of the theater. (Gim and Hong 1926)

Gim Jeong-jin, who saw the theater as a means to an ideological movement, presented the same argument.

Let us stage our miserable tragedy - no freedom, no money and no life. Only then will we bitterly awaken to the realities of our disgrace. And under a stimulus like electrostimulation, we will finally reflect on our lives and find a way to be reborn from the reflection. (19)

In this context, Korean intellectuals and theater practitioners were interested in modern theater, especially realist theater. In fact, modern theater and realist theater were inseparably related to each other: both dated from Ibsen's prose dramas of the 1870s. During the nineteenth century, urbanization following the Industrial Revolution created a host of social problems, most easily seen in the slums spawned by the industrial towns. Unfortunately, governments were little disposed to deal with those problems, "for the memories of the French Revolution haunted Europe throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and governments sought to ensure that such an event would not recur" (Brockett and Findlay 2). Thus, a host of pressing problems were crying out for solutions. "It was this recognition that led dramatists in the late nineteenth century for the first time to treat the problems of the lower classes with the seriousness formerly reserved for the middle and upper classes" (Brockett and Findlay 3). Dramatists tried to "provide a truthful representation of the real world, [...] based upon direct observation of contemporary life and manners" (Brockett and Findlay 7). Antoine's *Théâtre-Libre* in Paris (1887), Brahm's *Freie Bhne* in Berlin (1889), Grein's Independent theater in London (1891) and the Moscow Art theater (1897) were the theaters that spread realist drama.

Korean intellectuals and theater practitioners were interested in modern theater because of its relationship to social realities. In this context, the term 'modern theater' meant realist theater to most Korean intellectuals and theater practitioners.

In an essay entitled 'About the So-called Modern Drama', Gim U-jin stated that Korean theater had to depend on the import of foreign drama in order to achieve the purpose of enlightenment of the masses and liberation of human souls, as Western modern theater movements did. The materials for import, he continued, were the German *Freie Bhne*, the French *Théâtre-Libre* and the English Independent theater. Seo Hang-seok, who saw the purpose of *singeuk* (new drama) as being to stimulate the contemplation and self-examination of the audience by representing a slice of life and society on the stage, also mentioned a number of modern theaters as examples, including the *Théâtre-Libre*, the *Freie Bhne*, the Independent theater and the Moscow Art theater (17).

Furthermore, the realist drama and theater that emerged from the recognition of social problems addressed the problems of the lower classes (Brockett and Findlay 2-8). This point attracted the attention of the leaders of the Korean theater movement, who wanted to use theater as a means of education and enlightenment of the masses. Thus, Hyeon Choel, who emphasized the need for a national theater to cultivate the national spirit and will and advocated a people's theater as a means of swift education of the masses in Korea, suggested three categories of theater, one of which was theater that dealt with people's lives, citing examples such as Hauptmann, Gorky and Ibsen, who dealt with the lives of labourers, humble men and farmers (1921a 112). On top of this, Gim Jeong-jin emphasized the social changes brought about by realist drama and theater. He mentioned the realist playwrights Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Gorky and Ibsen as playwrights who brought about social changes (19-20). He stated that Dostoyevsky's and Gorky's realist dramas revealed the ugly realities, contradictions and conflicts of modern

society, thereby causing the labourers, the most ill-treated class, to rise up, and claimed that Ibsen's character of Nora awakened women all over the world. He argued that the theater was the most effective way to bring about these social changes because it was a place where large masses and people of all classes could gather together and share anger, enthusiasm and agony.

The following remark by Yu Chi-jin, who also emphasized the educational function of the theater, reveals his (and probably his colleagues') obsession with realist drama and theater:

We received a baptism of realist drama and theater as our destiny. I hoped to escape from this fate even for a while, but there is no way to do so. (1938)

Korean intellectuals' interest in expressionist theater also revealed the same motivation: reflection on reality. Gim U-jin's⁸⁾ interest in expressionist theater also revealed this point. In an article entitled 'I Recommend Creative Writing', he explained that original Korean drama should be directly related to the realities of life, giving the example of German expressionist theater. He argued that the reason German expressionism was able to flourish just after World War I was because the German people speculated about their realities with deep insights after their bitter experience of imperialism, capitalism, murder, maces, starvation, and conflicts between individuals and society and the people and oppressors. Just as the German people had done, he continued, the Korean people should establish a literary art drawn from their lives and this art should

8) Gim U-jin was one of the leaders of the Korean theater movement who were interested in German expressionist theater. He also wrote expressionist plays himself, such as *Nanpa (A Shipwreck)* and *Sandoeji (A Wild Hog)* in 1926. Hyeon Cheol, Sin Seok-yeon, Gim Jin-seop and Seo Hang-seok also published critical essays related to German expressionism. During the colonial period, only two German expressionist dramas were staged: Goering's *Seeschlacht* (GeukYeon 1932) and G. Kaiser's *Gilles und Juanne* (GeukYeon 1933).

be directly related to their lives.

After all, to the leaders of the modern Korean theater movement, modern Western drama and theater were a means of representing colonial situations on the stage, for the education and enlightenment of Korean people, thereby stimulating a national awakening and ultimately effecting changes to the reality of the Korean people's lives. Because of this function of modern Western drama and theater, especially realist drama and theater, many realist playwrights and dramatic plays, including Ibsen, Tolstoy, Gogol, Chekhov, Shaw, Strindberg and Wilde, were introduced through critical essays, translated texts or the stage.

While Irish intellectuals sought to create new images of Irish culture that would counter English stereotypes and serve Irish nationalist purposes by means of translation of their own cultural heritage throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Tymoczko 1999), Korean intellectuals sought to create their own images under colonialism on the stage by means of the translation of foreign dramas. Unlike the Irish case, the reason why Korean intellectuals showed such interest in foreign cultural heritage rather than their own was because of their reality: under colonial rule, they had to seek both modernity and nationalism in order to establish a modern nation-state.

As in the Irish context, translation in the Korean context was also a site of resistance and nation-building. Therefore, translation activity in some cases was regarded by colonizers as a subversive activity, so the works of some playwrights, such as Sean O'Casey, could not be staged in colonial Korea.

2.3. Survival and Reforms of the Korean Language

The function of translated drama was also related to the Korean language. During the colonial period, the status of the Korean language suffered a shift through the Japanese colonial government's language policy to 'Japanize' the Korean people. The Korean language had enjoyed the status of sole official

language⁹⁾ since 1894, when the Korean government promulgated Korean as the official national language. However, this status was downgraded to joint official language in 1904, when both Korean and Japanese began to be used in official documents. During the 1910s, the status was further downgraded to that of a tolerated language, a language “neither promoted nor proscribed by the authorities. Its existence was recognised but ignored just as the languages of migrants in the U.K. were” (Bell 182). Between 1910 and 1941, the Korean language was a ‘second language’ while Japanese was the ‘national language’. Korean was no longer a ‘national language’ it was just called ‘Joseon language’. The hours allocated for Korean language education in schools were also reduced. The curriculum for the Korean people shows how the Korean language had been effaced while Japanese language education was reinforced. In state schools, for example, the hours allocated for Korean and Chinese writing together were 6, 6, 5, and 5 hours for the first, second, third and fourth grade respectively, while the Japanese language was allocated ten hours in each grade during the 1910s (Bak 149). The hours for the Korean language were further reduced to 5, 5, 3, and 3 during the 1920s, while those for the Japanese language increased to 10, 10, 12, and 12 (Bak 213).

Although, officially, the Korean language enjoyed the status of a tolerated second language until 1941, when the ‘Joseon’ language course was discontinued and the status of Korean was degraded to that of ‘discouraged language’, in fact, the colonial government increasingly began to suppress it in the mid-1920s. For example, the use of Korean was rejected in court (*Dong-A Ilbo* 6 April 1921), and fines were imposed or corporal punishment was inflicted for the use of Korean in conversation in schools (*Dong-A Ilbo* 20 March and 10 May 1925). The Korean people were compelled to use Japanese

9) Kloss classifies the language status into six grades according to the governmental attitude to a language: sole official language, joint official language, regional official language, promoted language, tolerated language and discouraged language (Bell 182).

in their everyday life. As a result, the number of Korean people who understood Japanese increased from 4.08% of the total Korean population in 1923 to 12.38% in 1938 and 22.15% in 1943.¹⁰⁾

Thus, some intellectuals argued that there was no need to translate Western or Japanese texts into Korean, since many Koreans could read and understand the Japanese language and there were already Japanese versions of Western texts. Actually, the volume of texts translated into Korean began to decline from 1924 due to the high quality but cheap Japanese versions of Western texts (Gim B. 681-91). Given this situation, Korean intellectuals made every effort to save the Korean language and nationalist newspapers such as the *Joseon Ilbo Daily* and the *Donga Ilbo Daily* sponsored the ‘Korean language use movement’, although their efforts were harshly suppressed by the Japanese colonial government.

Under these circumstances, it was no wonder that the leaders of the modern Korean theater movement were also interested in the survival of the Korean language. They sought to save and reform the language through translation activities. An essay entitled ‘A Word to the Korean Literary World Where There is No Genuine Korean Language’ was the first to deal with the matter of the Korean language. In this essay, Gim U-jin¹¹⁾ expressed his concerns about the lack of a genuine Korean language in Korea. Complaining that magazines and newspapers in Korea were full of borrowings or translations of foreign words, he said:

Is there truly our own language in our literary world? I would conclude that there is none at the moment. [...] There are no perfect grammar books or dictionaries, no context, no rhythm. Without these, it will be

10) Number of Koreans who understand Japanese increased from 4.08% in 1923 to 22.15% in 1943 (Bak 386).

11) Gim started writing his journals in Korean in 1919. He had kept his journals in Japanese for four or five years before 1919 (Yang, 1998 106).

like a vagabond who seeks only to dress well and fare richly. (cited in Seo and Hong 235-36)

Gim U-jin stated that language is specific to each nation and writing poems, novels or dramas while disregarding language is like walking blindfold. He paid particular attention to the language of the theater, which provides direct communication with the masses:¹²⁾

The language on the stage, which is restricted by time and place, should be closely and directly communicable to the contemporary audience. Dramatists should use everyday common language for this communication. (cited in Seo and Hong 233)

In this context, he revealed his interest in Irish playwrights. He gave J.M. Synge as an example, emphasizing how he made efforts to create a colloquial language, full of local colour, when he wrote *In the Shadow of the Glen*. He said that Synge, whom he considered to be a dramatic genius, listened to maids' conversations in the kitchen of the cottage where he stayed while writing the play. Furthermore, he said, Synge always listened carefully to beggars' conversations or folk songs near Dublin or ranchers' or fishermen's language on the west coast for his dramatic writings. Therefore, Gim, emphasizing the importance of Korean as a literary language, suggested four schemes to save the Korean language and establish its modern usage: 1) the establishment of a Korean grammar and the production of Korean dictionaries; 2) the collection of legends, folksongs, and ballads; 3) the translation of foreign literary works, and 4) the popularization of magazines and newspapers.

Regarding the translation of foreign literary works, Gim U-jin mentioned the cultural benefits of not only the dissemination of the modern spirit and

12) Gim's interest in the colloquial language with local colour is reflected in his three-act play *Yi Yeong-nyeo* (1925). In this play, he used colloquial and local language.

ideas, but also the extension of the usage of modern and colloquial Korean.

Translations together with original works stir up the modern spirit in the literary world, extend the usage of a language and reveal new aspects, nuances and contexts of that language. Translations of foreign poetry, novels and dramas will have the same effects on our literary world. (cited in Seo and Hong 242)

Yu Chi-jin was also interested in translation as a means of establishing the usage of the Korean language. He emphasized the role of the theater in the development of a national language:

Modern theater has become a training school, test tube and playground for language. Stage language is developed at first through writers on the desk and then actors on the stage. Therefore, stage language is more cultivated and refined than the language of novels or poems and, hence, plays more important roles. Let us consider the position of Shakespeare in the English language. Everybody agrees that the extensive vocabulary and delicate usage of the English language are all due to Shakespeare's drama. We also have the example of the Irish Celtic language revival movement and the significant value Douglas Hyde, the leader and forerunner of the movement, placed on the role and function of the dramatic movement for the revival of the Irish national language. (1938)

In this context, he thought that modern usage of the Korean language could be extended through the translation of foreign drama. In an essay entitled 'An Opinion about the Performance of Translated Drama' in 1935, he emphasized the necessity of the translation of foreign dramas to raise the standard of Korean drama. Through translation, he argued, Korean dramatists should learn colloquialism and the rhythm of a language. Given that the Korean language as a representative of the Korean national identity was about to disappear, the translation of foreign drama in Korea was a process of

identity formation. Therefore, the function of translated drama in the field of Korean theater was threefold: innovation, subversion and the formation of a national identity.

3. Translational Norms in Modern Korean Theater

What consequences may these roles of translation have on translational norms, behaviors, or policies? The innovatory and national awakening role, in particular, may have an effect on translation strategies in terms of “adequacy” and “acceptability”, that is to say, whether to adhere to “the norms realized in the source text (which reflect the norms of the source language and culture)” or to adhere to “the norms prevalent in the target culture and language”, or to use political terminology, foreignization or domestication (Toury 56-61).

When translated literature assumes an innovatory function, translators do not feel constrained to follow target literature models and so are able to produce a target text that is faithful to the source text in terms of adequacy, as Even-Zohar stated:

Since translational activity participates [...] in the process of creating new, primary models, the translator's main concern here is not just to look for ready-made models in his home repertoire into which the source texts would be transferable. Instead, he is prepared in such cases to violate the home conventions. Under such conditions, the chances that the translation will be close to the original in terms of adequacy (in other words, a reproduction of the dominant textual relations of the original) are greater than otherwise. (2004 203)

In fact, when translated literature assumes the role of providing models for creation, it can be said that translations are done for writers rather than for readers or for an audience. Therefore, the source text is considered “sacred”

and translators try to reproduce the source text faithfully.

In contrast, the subversive position, namely, national awakening role, of translated literature may involve a translation strategy of ideological manipulation: translators may impose modifications that are not textual constraints to serve their purposes and so are able to produce a target text that is not faithful to the source text in terms of “adequacy”. An example of this can be seen in the Irish case, where translation was done for the purposes of nationalism, that is to say, as a means of “inventing tradition, inventing the nation, and inventing the self” during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Tymoczko 18).

Therefore, as a matter of course, these roles of translated drama that required conflicting translation strategies led to controversies over literal versus free translation in modern Korean theater. These controversies evolved around Sim Hun, Gim Gwang-seop, Yi Seok-hun and Yu Chi-jin.

It was Sim Hun, a novelist and drama critic, who first highlighted the problems of translations in modern Korean theater. In an article entitled 'A Suggestion to the Towolhoe Theater Company' (1929), he criticized that company's repertoire. The Towolhoe was a leading theater company during the 1920s, which staged many translated dramas. Pointing out that *sinpa* theater enjoyed popularity among the Korean audience because it dealt with a slice of Korean people's daily life, Sim Hun argued that translations of western drama were difficult for the Korean audience to understand because they were unfamiliar with the subject matters of western drama. Accordingly, he suggested that the Towolhoe stage original Korean plays rather than western drama (1929). Although it is not possible to know what the translations staged by the Towolhoe were like, it seems, from Sim Hun's remarks, that they were not “cultural transplantations”, that is to say, “the wholesale transplanting of the entire setting of the ST, resulting in the text being completely rewritten in an indigenous target culture setting” (Hervey and Higgins 30).

Sim also attacked the repertoire of the Silheom Mudae theater company, a

leading theater company during the 1930s. The following statement made by Yu Chi-jin, a director of the theater company between 1935 and 1938, suggests that the Silheom Mudae also staged literal translations of western drama.

Looking back on our past translation activities, the most important principle was to be faithful to original playwrights. The original playwrights were great writers; they were famous throughout the world and were our seniors. Therefore, we respected them and valued their works. In other words, they were our masters and we were their disciples. To be faithful to them meant to adopt every nutriment from their works. That was our attitude towards western drama and we staged western dramas translated in such a way. (1935)

Yu went on to say that this translation attitude resulted in complaints from the audience. Sim Hun attacked the repertoire of the Silheom Mudae in this context. After the second production of the Silheom Mudae, he showed dissension with the repertoire because the plays dealt with nothing like the reality of Korea, the educational level of the Korean audience was not considered, the plays were selected on the basis of the repertoires of the *Tsukiji* Little theater in Japan without consideration of the reality of Korea, the director and members of the theater company were infatuated with foreign literature while neglecting the reality of Korea and the tastes of the Korean audience, and the essence of the theater movement was not staging famous plays (1932 12).

In fact, it seemed to be very difficult for translators to decide whether to be faithful to the source text or to the Korean audience because of the roles translated drama should take in modern Korean theater. The following statement by Gim Gwang-seop, a poet and drama critic, shows these difficulties.

The usual focus of the issue is how much is foreign drama appreciated

and understood. Given that foreign dramas were created for foreign audiences, it is natural that, having different sentiments and life styles, the Korean audience found them unfamiliar and difficult to understand. Directors also had that difficulty. [...] Some translators are trying to adapt foreign drama to improve the understanding. However, this is very problematic from the artistic point of view. Translators should consider this respect, too. (1933b)

The difficulties of theater practitioners caught between the need to serve the audience and the need to establish a model were revealed most prominently in Yu Chi jin's dual attitude toward translation strategies. He stated at first that translated drama staged by the GeukYoen theater company was for dramatists rather than for the audience.

Firstly, GeukYeon staged foreign drama to study the advanced dramaturgy of European and American drama. There are controversies among the intellectuals about how to establish modern Korean theater: should we start with Korean originals, which are easy for the Korean audience to understand, or with foreign drama, which is difficult to understand? Of course, the best way would be to start with Korean originals if we had excellent ones. Otherwise, the second best option would be to stage translated drama, albeit difficult to understand, in order to study dramaturgy and dramatic themes, and thereby hasten the emergence of Korean dramatists. In other words, the performance of foreign drama is more useful for training dramatists than for educating the audience. (1934)

It is possible that by “more useful for training dramatists” meant that translation activity should lean towards “adequacy”. In a later essay, Yu made statements to the effect that translation should be done for dramatists, theater practitioners, and the audience simultaneously. Although he did not mention the need for the “adequacy” translation strategy for dramatists and theater practitioners, his following remarks revealed this need, Korean dramatists and producers should learn from foreign drama: first, staging techniques, second,

stage language and its rhythmic play, and last, philosophical ideas (1935). At the same time, he highlighted the need for free translations or adaptations for the Korean audience. Pointing out that translated drama led to complaints and criticism not only from the Korean audience, but also from literary circles because of its literal translation, he suggested audience-oriented translation strategies.

How can we make translated drama appeal to the audience from now on? The only answer is [...] to adapt translated drama to the Korean situation on the basis of the audience's understanding. [...] We can say that the drama was successfully adapted if the audience understood, were moved by, and learned from the translated drama. Here, I suggest audience-oriented translation strategies. I do not insist on literal translation that is faithful to the source text. If possible, adaptations or even rewritings of the original drama will be no problem. (1935)

This dual attitude of Yu Chi-jin towards translation strategies, “adequacy” and “acceptability”, can be considered to show his position as a dramatist and stage director. As a dramatist, he needed translated drama as a model to create original Korean plays and as a stage director, he needed translated drama that the Korean audience could understand and appreciate.

4. Conclusion

As discussed above, we can see that, during the 1920s and 1930s, controversies over what translated drama was supposed to be like in modern Korean theater were closely related to the roles it was thought translated drama should take at that time. The artistic and ideological purposes of the modern Korean theater movement characterized the role of translated drama as such and led to consideration being given to totally different translation strategies in

modern Korean theater. For artistic purposes, it was necessary to reproduce original texts so that a new genre, a new style and a new concept could be transplanted into modern Korean theater and a modern national theater could be nurtured. However, for ideological purposes, translated drama had to be acceptable to the Korean audience, so it needed to be translated in such a way that the Korean audience could understand it easily and completely. This meant “cultural transplantation” was necessary for the Korean audience, which, at that time, had a cultural background that was totally different from that of western countries and which had had little contact with the western world. Korean intellectuals and theater practitioners tried to meet these two objectives, and their arguments over literal versus free translation, or “adequacy” versus “acceptability” should be considered as the result of their efforts to fulfill the artistic and ideological purposes of translated drama in modern Korean theater. Of course, as Toury pointed out, “There is no necessary identity between the norms themselves and any formulation of them in language. As he stated:

Verbal formulations of course reflect awareness of the existence of norms as well as of their respective significance. However, they also imply other interests, particularly a desire to control behaviour, i.e., to dictate norms rather than merely account for them. Normative formulations tend to be slanted, then, and should always be taken with a grain of salt. (55)

The arguments over translation strategies in modern Korean theater may be interpreted as stemming from this desire. Korean intellectuals and theater practitioners might have aimed to offer guidelines for translation activities in relation to the position of translated drama in modern Korean theater.

Therefore, their formulations of translational norms might not be reflected in the practice of translation. This should be further investigated by examining the translation strategies employed in translated dramas in modern Korean theater.

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[Abstract]

**Position of Translated Drama and Translational Norms in Modern
Korean Theater during the 1920s and 1930s**

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Discussions on the position of translated drama of the 1920s and 1930s in Korea have been fragmentary, and references to individual drama translations have seldom been incorporated into socio-cultural accounts in a coherent way. Given that the position of translated literature is related to translational norms, which govern the choices which translators make, determine the receptor text and hence the relation between the translation and its source, it is very important to draw a whole picture of translated literature before starting translation criticism. This paper aims to explore the position of translated drama in modern Korean theater during the 1920s and 1930s and its implications for translational norms. During this period, the modern Korean theater movement arose as part of cultural nationalism. Being under Japanese colonial rule, the purpose of the movement was to subvert the colonizer's *sinpa* theater and establish a modern national theater, and as part of this movement, foreign drama was translated and imported. The leaders of the theater movement set up the translated drama with a threefold purpose: they sought to establish a model to create original Korean drama, to awaken national consciousness and to reform the Korean vernacular through translated drama. This paper argues that these roles of translated drama led to controversies over translational norms of “adequacy” versus “acceptability”.

▶ Key Words: modern Korean theater, translated drama, translational norms, adequacy, acceptability

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논문투고일: 2009년 4월 30일

심사완료일: 2009년 5월 23일

게재확정일: 2009년 6월 12일