ABSTRACT

Dialogue is one of the important methods of characterization extensively employed by novelists in creating a fictional world. This academic exercise sets out to examine how dialogue presents characters in novels, by concentrating on examples taken from *Hong Lou Meng* (《红楼梦》). It also attempts to analyze different methods in translating these passages of dialogue by comparing two English versions of the novel, one by David Hawkes, and the other by Yang Hsienyi and Gladys Yang.

The study shows that from the perspective of literature, dialogue is a powerful means to reveal a character's mind, personality and social status with an individual touch. Thus, in dialogue translation, a translator has to take into account how the dialogue has been used in the original text and what effect(s) it has intended and achieved, in order to decide upon an appropriate method in translating. What can be of interest to a translator, as this study observes, includes the use of emphatic construction, rhetorical questions, verbal fillers, vocatives, technical words, phonological deviation, word stress, different language styles and different modes of speech. The study indicates that an adequate translation is one that reproduces the characters' conversational tone in the original text.