

Rhythm and Phonetics in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night

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Preface

Shakespeare has been very popular in Japan since the Meiji era, that is, since his dramas were introduced to Japan in the 1900s.

But both the language and the speech present very difficult problems when Japanese players make a speech whether in English or in Japanese. Especially, there is a big problem when Japanese players perform Shakespeare in Japanese. Because Japanese players don't know how Shakespeare's English differs from modern English. That is to say, in Shakespeare's English, the stress is after the sentence, but in modern English, the stress is ahead of the sentence. For example, they say, " Do that, do that....."

In the above phrase, the stress is ahead of the phrases, therefore, endlessly chatting without thinking about the conclusion, a modern speaker shows no idea when he makes a speech. That is a typical speech style in modern English. On the other hand, Shakespeare's English is philosophical, because, as the stress is after the sentence, a speaker thinks something, when making a speech, In Hamlet, there are some famous lines. Above all, the next sentence is from a very important monologue, because it has a feminine ending.¹ Hamlet expresses his fear, philosophy and thinking, making the speech.

To be or not to be, that is the question.

The above sentence is an iambic pentameter, the stress is after the sentence, but in fact, after the last syllable, as the syllable is lost, the speaker cannot put the stress on the lost syllable, therefore there remains an uneasiness in having no sound after the sentence. So, if we follow all the last words in one scene, we can find the most important meaning there. But at the end of last two lines in a scene Shakespeare often uses a couplet. So the last word contains the strongest stress and, in other words, it shows the word's explosion. Such a word's explosion, however, is lost in Modern English.

Of course, English players, who perform Shakespeare's dramas in famous ensembles such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, know how to make a speech, and also Japanese players can learn how to do it in English when instructed by the English directors in England.

Twelfth Night Rehearsal

>From 8 to 12 December, 1999, at Actenon (Engeki Renshyu Kan Hall) in Nagoya,

Japan, Prof. Leon Rubin taught Shakespeare's Drama Method.² Prof. Rubin is, now, Dean of the Department of Drama at Middlesex University in London. Prof. Rubin had directed Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* with Trevor Nunn in Barbican Theatre in London, in 1989.

Prof. Rubin told Japanese players that they could perform Shakespeare's dramas, if they mastered Prof. Rubin's method.

First, rhythm is very important when players perform Shakespeare's dramas.

Secondly, phonetics are also important when players use the "O" sound in English. Because the "O" sound is a very special sound in Elizabethan English.

On 4 December, 1999, Ms Kaoru Suzuki, a member of EPSJ, made a speech on body sonic of Aichi Women's Junior College in Japan. First, she played an audio tape of an English speech, and then she, scrambled the meaning, leaving only the sound of the tape, producing the vibration and, amplified by a machine under the seat. Therefore, anyone can practice the sound with vibration and approach any English rhythm.

This author thought players can also approach the sound of Shakespeare's rhythm, if they use body sonic.

Then, the author asked Prof. Rubin if Japanese players could make use of body sonic, when they exercised Shakespeare's rhythm as well as modern English one. And Prof. Rubin agreed that players could use body sonic when exercising Shakespeare's rhythm and sound.

Ms Suzuki's method is, however, very mechanical, because anyone exercising an English sound, must sit on the chair which produces the vibration. Therefore, after mastering body sonic, they have to exercise Shakespeare's rhythm and sound, standing up from the chair and moving around the rehearsal room, while making their declamations.

Anyway, players have to improve the Suzuki method. At least, players can learn to pronounce the "O" sound in Elizabethan by using body sonic.

Shakespeare often used blank verse in his dramas. It also included iambic pentameter, pause, and feminine ending. Especially, a feminine ending is a form where the stress falls near the end of the line. It also expresses fear, philosophy and thinking.

By the way, the "O" sound in Elizabethan, is like a heartbeat and near a baby's heart sound. Therefore, the "O" sound expresses a state of innocence, in other words, no thinking.

In *Twelfth Night*, we can find the "O" sound as well as blank verses, iambic pentameter and so on.

Duke Orsino can use the "O" sound because he is innocent and does not think.

Duke. O, then unfold the passion of my love 3

We can find the "O" sound, in the words of the "O", "unfold", "passion", and "of". That is, Orsino always says "O,O,O,...." suffering himself, in fact, he only thinks of himself, and never about anyone else.

Even in the name of Orsino is the "O" sound. That is to say, Orsino is innocent and no great thinker. And Romeo is innocent, too because in his name, Romeo, the "O" sound is included, too. And also Orsino often speaks in the imperative.

Duke. therefore, good youth, address thy gait unto her;

Be not denied access, stand at her doors, (19)

Also, Orsino is aggressive, therefore, the stress is ahead of the sentence. That is, his tone interrupts another person's speech. Viola loves Orsino, so she catches up with his speech.

Viola. I thank you. Here comes the count.

Duke. Who saw Cesario, ho?

Viola. On your attendance, my lord, here.(19)

Orsino loves Olivia, but, at the same time, he likes Viola, who wears men's clothes.

Orsino has a strong affection for Viola, because they met each other a few days before.

Duke. Stand you awhile all of.[To Viola] Cesario.

Thou know'st no less but all; I have unclasp'd

To thee the book even of my secret soul. (19)

Orsino's tone shows the strong energy, so in the above second line, the last word "unclasp'd" produces a sound effect like a spring, but "the secret soul" in the last word of the third line, shows the change of whispering. This shows that Orsino approaches Cesario(Viola). Also the period mark after "soul" shows the next line is different in tone from the former lines.

Therefore, good youth, address thy gait unto her; (19)

The above line has 11 beats and falls after "her". This shows Orsino's hesitation, because he approaches Cesario(Viola) so closely that he wants to leave her. Also Orsino worries about the eternal triangle among Olivia, Viola and himself, because he cannot say "Olivia", but "her" in the last word of the line.

Be not denied access, stand at her doors,(19)

This above line is a trochee, and Orsino's tone turned from iambic pentameter to a trochee. That is, Orsino tries to change from an emotional tone to an imperative one, because his tone usually is imperative. This line is Shakespeare's direction, but not the director's.

Duke. And tell them there thy fixed foot shall grow

Till thou have audience.

Viola. Sure, my noble lord,(19)

This above line is a joint line between Orsino and Viola. Orsino says his opinion as he likes it and expect a good answer from her. But Cesario(Viola) stops Orsino's speech, saying "sure..." At the same time, this shows they have a strong relationship, and it proves Cesario(Viola) listens to Orsino's speech.

Viola. If she be so abandon'd to her sorrow

As it is spoke, she never will admit me.(19)

These above two lines are in iambic pentameter, and each last words of each lines, "her sorrow" and "me" show Viola's easiness, because Viola's last words and Orsino's last word "her" show the complicated eternal triangle among

Olivia, Viola and Orsino.

Duke. Be clamorous, and leap all civil bounds,

Rather than make unprofited return. (19)

Orsino, however, speaks in the imperative tone. Then, Viola asks Orsino, considering their relationship.

Viola. Say I do speak with her, my lord, what then? (19)

But Orsino only loves himself.

Duke. O, then unfold the passion of my love, (20)

Orsino uses the "O" sound. And he continues his speech.

Surprise her with discourse of my dear faith;

It shall become thee well to act my woos: (20)

The semicolon after the last word in the first line above shows the completeness of one verse, and the change of the rhythm. The second line changes to iambic pentameter from the imperative tone. Orsino softly says it, because Orsino wakes from self-complacency. And Orsino looks at Viola and speaks of her.

Viola. I think not so, my lord.

Duke. Dear lad, believe it; (20)

In the second line, Orsino speaks with strong tension. These two lines are ajoint line between Orsino and Viola. It shows they are intimate friends. Then, Orsino makes an interesting speech.

Duke....

For they shall yet belie thy happy years,

That say thou art a man; Diana's lip (20)

Orsino says this second line "That say thou art a man; Diana's lip" without stopping to breathe. That is, this line shows no stopping between "man" and "Diana's" and advancing forward and forward. Because something starts and rises. Also, the word "Diana" includes a sexual meaning.

Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe (20)

This above line advances without a pause between "rubious" and "thy". And in the same line that Orsino speaks about "lip", he begins to speak about "pipe"(throat). That is, Shakespeare exactly shows players the direction of advancing forward and forward.

Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,

And all is semblative a woman's part (20)

Then, Orsino begins to speak about the sexual part, saying "a woman's part". After all, he looks all over Viola's body from the top to the bottom. In short, that is because he does not stop his speech rhythm. The period after the last word of the second line shows the change of Orsino's idea. Orsino suddenly comes to himself and orders Viola to go to Olivia's house.

I know thy constellation is right apt

For this affair:-Some four or five attend him; (20)

The second line is iambic pentameter, and after the last word "him", the rhythm doesn't become strong, but falls after "him". The change of this rhythm shows the uneasiness that Orsino cannot know if Viola in the disguise of a man is a male or a female.

All, if you will; for I myself am best (20)

Ahead of this line, Orsino strongly speaks "All, if you will," but in the middle of the same line, he shows a different idea, saying "I myself am best".

But the next line shows that Orsino takes part in Viola's duty, in spite of pretending to be an outsider when he is in fact her master.

Orsino....

When least in company:- Prosper well in this

And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord,

To call his fortunes thine.

Viola. I'll do my best (20)

In fact, although Orsino orders her to do the work, he unconsciously makes a promise of marriage to Viola. Because Orsino says he lives with her and he gives her his fortune. This shows Orsino unconsciously proposes to Viola and creates a subliminal effect. The last two

lines are a joint line between Orsino and Viola. This shows that Viola says to Orsino, giving chase to him when going out.

To woo your lady: yet, [Aside] a barful strife!
 Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife. (20)

Viola is alone, and talks to the audience. The last words in the two lines;

"strife" and "wife" form a couplet. That is, saying "wife", she shows her decision that she would like to get married with Orsino. In short, Viola's feelings are exposed so that her speech changed from prose to poem. Shakespeare shows his players that Viola's speech changed from prose to poetic rhythm.

Shakespeare gave players directions by rhythm and phonetics, not by stage directions. That is to say, Shakespeare is different from naturalists. Because naturalists give players directions by stage directions, not by rhythm and phonetics. Our modern playwrights show players the directions by the use of explanations, because we lost the Elizabethan rhythm and phonetics. Therefore modern people have to learn to master the rhythm and the phonetics of Elizabethan times, when they produce Shakespeare's dramas.

Unfortunately, in Japan, some directors don't know Elizabethan English, and produce Shakespeare in the naturalist style.

Ms Akiko Murakami took Ninagawa Company's audition after she mastered Prof. Rubin's Method. Then, she declaimed a scene from Romeo and Juliet, but failed. She told the author that the director couldn't understand Elizabethan English. She, however, admitted that she hadn't perfectly mastered Elizabethan English. But this author thinks the most important problem is that Japanese directors don't know how to speak Elizabethan English.

This author asked Ms Murakami to try to take an audition again or even to attempt an audition with the RSC in England.

Of course, it is natural that specialists should know Shakespeare's rhythm and sound.

At least, many people can study Shakespeare's rhythm and sound, when we exercised the Drama Method which Prof. Rubin showed, making use of body sonic as shown by Ms Suzuki.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, Japanese people or any other people can perform Shakespeare's dramas, by using their rhythm and sound in Japanese, or in any other language.

Unfortunately, some Japanese directors, however, don't know how to speak Shakespearean English.⁴ On the other hand, fortunately, people like Prof. Tetsuo Anzai, the

director of the "EN Theatre" in Japan, do know how to declaim Shakespeare in Japanese.⁵ Therefore, we can expect that, by using the Drama Method which Prof. Rubin taught us, all players can perform Shakespeare's dramas, in Japan, in the near future.

Appendix

This author got many e-mails from Prof. Rubin. The following correspondences between Prof. Rubin and the author are some of them.

On Fri, 16 June 2000 18:24:30

Yoshikazu Shimizu wrote:

18 June 2000

Dear Prof. Rubin

How have you been? I hope you are very well now.

By the way, I am planning to have my presentation in International Phonetics Society at Seoul National University in Korea on 29 July 2000. Also my paper is going to publish in the journal of International Phonetics Society. So please allow me to publish it.

Sincerely yours,

Yoshikazu Shimizu

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19 June 2000

Dear Prof. Yoshikazu Shimizu,

Good luck with the presentation and of course I am happy that you will publish your paper!

Please let me have a copy of the publication some time in the future.

Best wishes

Leon

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Date: Tue, 28 Mar 2000 12:26:28

Dear Prof. Yoshikazu Shimizu,

Good to hear from you. Kunihiro tells me that your paper is very good! He has a few points to mention to you that we talked about and I asked him to e-mail to you about them. Please go ahead and publish it.

The other video I used was Produced by John Dexter and directed by John Sichel. It starred Alec Guinness (Malvolio), Ralph Richardson (Sir Toby), Joan Plowright (Viola) and

Tommy Steele (Feste).

The Renaissance production stars Richard Briers and Caroline Langrishe and was directed by Kenneth Branagh.

I explained that the "O" sound is an important use of strong emotion in Elizabethan times. The sound itself comes from the stomache and sounds like a powerful pure sound of feeling. It suggests pain and suffering and passion. There are many "O"s in Romantic characters names..ORSINO, ROMEO, for example.

Please say hello to all the people I worked with there and I hope you are well and happy!

Best wishes

Leon

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17 March 2000

Dear Prof. Rubin

Thank you for your kind mail.

By the way, I would like to ask two questions. Please tell me them.

First, You told us that O sound is Elizabethan sound. After that, I couldn't find a good reference book about O sound.

So please tell me that.

I found one book. According to it, O means zero. But I would like to know not meaning of O, but a sound of O.

Second, You used many video tapes on Twelfth Night. After that, I guessed that you might use BBC Television version 1981, Trevor Nunn 1996 and maybe, Renascence Theatre Company, Thames Television, Director Kenneth Branagh(?) and ????

Please tell me three more video tapes on Twelfth Night.

One more request, that is the most important thing, that I ask you that you permit me to publish my paper about your workshop in 1999 in the Journal of Our Aichi-gakuin University.

So I would like to send my paper in E-mail as the attached papers,

but I wrote it in Japanese, therefore I will send the same paper to Kunihiko san.

So please ask him about my mistakes and misunderstanding in my paper about your workshop.

To tell the truth, I showed a copy of the same paper to members of the participants of your workshop. They read it. Do you remember Miss Kyoko Ino? She also showed it to Betty-san, and Toyohashi city Theatre School's Director and so on. I saw Kyoko Ino's Performance

the other day. She was very nice. And Miss Akiko Murakami, a student of Aichi-kenritu University, read a copy of my paper and told many comments. Now she is challenging an audition of Ninagawa Yukio Company. She is going to read a part of Juliet in Japanese. I hope she will use your method.

I lent 19 video tapes from Mr. Koichiro Sakuma, and I transcribed them before I wrote my paper.

I am looking forward to meeting you in Nagoya some day.

Sincerely yours,

Yoshikazu Shimizu

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Date: Fri, 28 Jan 2000 At 8:10 PM 0.3.14, Leon Rubin wrote:

Dear Prof. Yoshikazu Shimizu,

I am still waiting to know if you received all the answers you needed. I have not heard back from you so I assume you now have all you need! I asked my student, Kunihiko, to check the information with you and I sent you an e-mail in early February.

Anyway, I hope you are well and happy. I did enjoy seeing you again in the Shakespeare workshop.

best wishes

Leon

.....
21 January 2000

Dear Prof. Rubin

Thank you for your workshop that you had allowed me to take part in last year.

By the way, I would like to ask you a few questions. Now, I prepare to sum up Prof. Rubin's workshop in 1999. I found two kinds of video tape of Twelfth Night, that is, Trevor Nunn's and old BBC's. But I found out I can never find other video tapes, so, please tell me names of productions, its year, and casts in video tape on other 3 kinds of Twelfth Night production's name year of produce Orsino, Duke Viola Olivia Malvolio I would like to ask another question. To tell the truth, I cannot count rhythm about poems, so please show me the places of both strong stress and weak stress in scene 4 of Act 1 in Twelfth Night.

I asked Kaori-san video tapes of productions, casts and so no, a few days ago. But she had not told me anything. By the way, Mr Sakuma lent me video tapes about Prof. Rubin's Workshop in 1999.

I am looking forward to meeting you in Nagoya some day.

Sincerely yours,

Yoshikazu Shimizu

<Notes>

1. Cf. Takanobu Otsuka, *A Guide to Shakespeare* (Kenkyusya, 1974), pp.42-6.
2. Cf. *International Programme in Theatre Directing* (Middlesex University).
Drama Training in Britain (1999 Kaori Nakayama of Theatre Planning Network).
3. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (Routledge, 1989), p.20. All the quotations from *Twelfth Night* are from this edition. The page numbers are in parentheses.
4. Cf. Paul Taylor, *King Lear* (Independent, 1999.10.30), " working with a British cast exposes Ninagawa's weaknesses - an evident preference, say, for theatrical effects over character and textual profundity."
Susannah Clapp *King Lear* (Observer, 1999.10.31), " visually overblown and verbally underpowered."
- Kenneth Rea, *Peer Gynt*; Director, Yukio Ninagawa (*Plays & Players*, 1991.3), p.35.
5. Cf. Tetsuo Anzai, *Directing King Lear in Japanese translation, Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* (Cambridge U.P., 1998), pp.124-37.
Cf. Tetsuo Kishi, *Japanese Shakespeare and English reviewers, Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* (Cambridge U.P., 1998), pp.110-23.

<Reference>

1. *Twelfth Night* ed. William J. Rolfe (Harper & Brothers, 1899)
2. *Twelfth Night* ed. K.Deighton (Macmillan, 1950)
3. *Twelfth Night* ed. G.B. Harrison (Penguin Books, 1954)
4. *Twelfth Night* ed. J.M.Lothian & T.W.Craik (Methuen, 1975)
5. *Twelfth Night* ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge U.P., 1985)
6. *Twelfth Night* ed. J.M.Lothian & T.W.Crik (Routhledge, 1988)
7. E.A.Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar* (Senjo, 1962)
8. Dale F. Coye, *Pronouncing Shakespeare's Words* (Greenwood, 1998)
9. Jane Donawerth, *Shakespeare and Sixteenth-Century Study of Language* (Illinois U.P., 1984)
10. H.R.Coursen, *Shakespeare: The Two Traditions* (Fairleigh Dickinson U.P., 1999)