

The Features of Acting by Yang Mingkun

LIU Liu

Nanjing Tech University, Nanjing, China

Yang Mingkun 楊明坤 (1949-) is proud of his performance techniques in Yangzhou storytelling (Yangzhou *pinghua* 揚州評話). He said, “My master said I was better than him in imitating Pi Wu as I act like Pi in terms of voice narration, facial expression and gestures.”¹ In this paper, I will examine Yang’s features of acting and explore how Yang enlivens the descriptions in his stories through aural and vocal means of communication.

Keywords: Yangzhou storytelling, performance, acting skills

Yangzhou storytelling performance involves five basic acting skills, that is finding expressions through *kou* (mouth), *shou* (hand), *shēn* (body), *bu* (step), and *shén* (facial expression). *Kou* refers to elements of the performer’s speech, including speaking styles and mouth acrobatics known as *kouji* 口技 in Chinese. *Shou*, *shēn*, and *bu* refer to activities carried out by the performer using the hands, body, and steps respectively; *shén* refers to the performer’s facial expressions. These are the five fundamental aspects of Yangzhou *pinghua* performance. However, they are not of equal significance in individual performances. Among them, *kou* and *shén* are of particular importance in Yang’s style. This paper aims to explore the acting features of Yang Mingkun in terms of *kou*, *shou*, *shēn*, *bu*, and *shén*. Firstly, based on the data from the observation of his performance and his interviews, I will explore which type of speaking styles Yang uses in his performance of *Rogue Pi Wu*. Secondly, I will focus on Yang’s paralinguistic and non-verbal features in performance, such as his facial expressions and body gestures, particularly the aspects of mouth acrobatics, *shou*, *shēn*, *bu*, and *shén*. Thirdly, I will discuss how as a storyteller responsible for the transmission of the traditional repertoire, Yang has preserved the oral tradition of the Pu School by applying the Yangzhou dialect and mouth acrobatics in his performance; and how as a performer, Yang has made adjustments to his pronunciation and extends the application of mouth acrobatics.

Speaking Styles

Yangzhou *pinghua* storytellers apply different types of speaking style according to different plotlines and personal preferences. Among the various speaking styles, *yuankou* 圓口 (round mouth) and *fangkou* 方口 (square mouth) are the two most frequently applied styles (Børdahl, 1996, p. 40). The square mouth style refers to the storyteller speaking slowly in a literary form with forceful pronunciation and a rhythmic flow of sound. By contrast, the round mouth refers to the performer speaking rapidly and smoothly, as in daily conversation. In terms of phonetic realisation, storytellers do not share the same criteria of the two speaking styles (Børdahl, 1998, pp. 122-123).

LIU Liu, research fellow, lecturer, Overseas Education College, Nanjing Tech University, Nanjing, China.

¹ Interview with Yang Mingkun, 1 August 2016.

Yang Mingkun uses Yangzhou Mandarin (Yangzhou *guanhua* 揚州官話) in the square mouth and Yangzhou dialect in the round mouth when reciting the story of *Rouge Pi Wu*. Børdahl outlined the five criteria of speaking styles of the five eminent storytellers: Wang Xiaotang 王筱堂 (1918-2000), Li Xintang 李信堂 (1934-), Fei Li, Chen Yintang 陳蔭堂 (1951-), and Dai Buzhang 戴步章 (1925-2003) (Børdahl, 1998, p. 122):

1. Monophthong finals are realised as a diphthong.
2. Phonetic realisation [er] or [ar] of the final *-er* is retained.
3. Initials [l-], [n-], or [r-] are distinguished or not.
4. MC entering tone is absent.
5. Colloquial pronunciation exists.

When observing Yang's performance, I adjusted the third rule by considering the phonetic features of the Yangzhou dialect. In the Yangzhou dialect, consonant initials l-, n-, and r- are distinctive and have their own distribution according to the pronunciation features of the vowels. For example, [l-] must be followed by a *hongyin* vowel and [n-] by a *xiyin*. The distribution of the three initials in Yangzhou dialect does not overlap as it does in the Northern dialects or Standard Mandarin, resulting in the common misconception that the three initials are equivalent to each other in the Yangzhou dialect and identically realised as "blurred [l-]". Based on this, the third rule ignores the phonetic traditions of the Yangzhou dialect. It does not work well when applied to Yang's speaking. In Yang's speech, l-, n-, and r- are distinguished clearly by following the tradition of Yangzhou dialect. According to rule three, it would be wrong to argue that Yang should adapt his pronunciation to the Northern dialects in the square mouth. Based on the study of Yangzhou dialect and the close observation of Yang's performance, I attached a restricted condition "according to phonetic rules of the Beijing dialect" to the third rule. The new rule is as follows:

- *3. Initials [l-], [n-], or [r-] are distinguished or not according to phonetic rules of the Beijing dialect.

I observed Yang's live performance and interviewed him at the Yangzhou Pi Wu Story House in April, July, and August of 2016. Yang told me that he applied the square mouth and the round mouth styles when telling the story of Pi Wu. He speaks Yangzhou Mandarin in the square mouth and Yangzhou dialect in the round mouth style. According to Yang, the pronunciation difference between Yangzhou Mandarin and Yangzhou dialect, especially the *wendu* or "literary pronunciation", is that the former realises *wendu* only. In her study, Børdahl found that all five storytellers also realised *wendu* in the square mouth.

When replying to my question on which type of speaking styles he applies when performing *Rogue Pi Wu*, Yang said:²

I apply the square mouth and the round in performance but most of the time, I apply the round mouth. I use the square mouth only when highlighting something important to the plotline, such as my comment on a character's conduct or an event, introduction to a figure, and crisis (*guanzi* 關子) at the end of each round.

On a further note, I asked him about the pronunciation differences between the square mouth and the round mouth styles. Yang explained the exact difference between the two speaking styles in his performance as follows:³

When speaking in the square mouth, I deliberately speak slower and pronounce more clearly in Yangzhou Mandarin. For example, when reading a poem, I apply the square mouth. When introducing a new figure to the story, I apply it as well.

² Interview with Yang Mingkun, 1 August 2016.

³ Interview with Yang Mingkun, 1 August 2016.

Apart from the occasional square mouth application, I adopt the round mouth in Yangzhou dialect; my round mouth [Yangzhou dialect] sounds identical to the Yangzhou dialect. However, I have to project my voice without a microphone to ensure everyone in the story house hears me clearly. For the sake of convenience, my phonetic realisation in the round mouth, to some extent, differs from what you hear on the streets.

As shown above, Yang adopts Yangzhou Mandarin in the square mouth and Yangzhou dialect in the round. In Chinese dialect terminology, there is no such term as “Yangzhou Mandarin”. What exactly is Yangzhou Mandarin? Yang answered this question as follows:⁴

Yangzhou Mandarin, as I mentioned before, is the Yangzhou dialect with some phonetic adaptations of Standard Mandarin. For example, *jiaqu* 家去 (return home) is realised as [tɕiatɕ□y] in the square mouth; it is [kak'ɿ] in the round.

Yang explained the phonetic difference between the square mouth and the round in his performance using the phrase *jia qu*. He applies the realisation [tɕiatɕ□y] in the square mouth and [kak'ɿ] in the round. [tɕiatɕ□y] and [kak'ɿ] are the literary and colloquial readings of the word *jiaqu* respectively. In other words, Yang realises the literary reading in the square mouth and colloquial in the round.

Yang realises *er* as [a] without the retroflex ending [r] in his performance. *Er* is realised as [er] in the Beijing dialect as well as in Standard Mandarin, but as [a] in the Yangzhou dialect. Unlike Yang, the five storytellers realised *er* as [ar] or [er] with a retroflex ending in their performance speaking. To understand whether Yang realises the final or syllable *-er/er* with a retroflex ending [r] as [ar] or not, his response was: “*Er* is always realised as [a] in the Yangzhou dialect as well as in my performance. I have never realised *er* as [er] or [ar] in the Yangzhou dialect”.⁵

The MC entering tone in Yang’s speaking and in the Yangzhou dialect: When telling a story, Yang realises the MC entering tone in both the square mouth and the round. For example, he reads *he, pa, zhuo, xue*, and *le* as [Xa²], [p‘a²], [tsua²], [ɕia²], and [la²] respectively. By contrast, only Wang Xiaotang and Chen Yintang of the five storytellers realise the MC entering tone in the public talk (*guanbai* 官白)⁶ in the square mouth.

One of the phonetic features of Yang’s speaking style is the monophthongisation of a diphthong. However, in the square mouth, Yang and the five storytellers commonly diphthongise the monophthong in the Yangzhou dialect. For example, Yang extends the realisation of [e] and [□] as [ei] and [ai], both of which sound like the Beijing dialect.

Based on the observations above and Børdahl’s findings, I list and compare the phonetic features of Yang Mingkun with those of the five storytellers in Table 1 (S: square mouth; R: round mouth; P: present; A: Absent; P/A: sometimes present; DYZ: daily Yangzhou dialect; BJ: Beijing dialect) (Børdahl, 1998, p. 122). As I have limited my current research to two speaking styles in Yangzhou *pinghua*, the “talk” or *bai* is not examined here.

As shown in the table above, in terms of phonetic realisation, the so-called Yangzhou Mandarin applied by Yang in the square mouth is the daily Yangzhou dialect with diphthongised monophthong finals but without the colloquial pronunciation. Indeed, Yangzhou Mandarin sounds identical to the Yangzhou dialect, as diphthongised monophthong finals and colloquial readings can be neglected with the mutual understanding of the natives. Comparing the six storytellers’ phonetic features with the phonetic rules of the Yangzhou dialect

⁴ Interview with Yang Mingkun, 1 August 2016.

⁵ Interview with Yang Mingkun, 1 August 2016.

⁶ Among the various terminologies for “talk” (*bai* 白) in Yangzhou storytelling, “public talk” refers to the dialogue or monologue of the protagonist in the story.

and the Beijing dialect (as shown in Table 1), I find that, in both the square mouth and the round, Yang's performance diction sounds closer to the daily Yangzhou dialect than that of the other five storytellers. The five storytellers, to some extent, adapt their realisations to the Beijing dialect.

Table 1

Phonetic Features in Square Mouth and Round

	Diphthongisation		[ar]/[er]		l-, n-, r- distinguishing		MC entering tone		Colloquial reading	
	S	R	S	R	S	R	S	R	S	R
Yang	P/A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	P
Wang	P/A	A	P	P	P	P	P/A	P	A	A
Li	P/A	A	P	P/A	P/A	A	P	P	A	P/A
Fei	P/A	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P
Chen	P/A	P/A	P	P/A	P/A	P/A	A	P	A	P/A
Dai	P/A	A	P	P/A	P/A	A	P	P	A	P
DYZ	A		A		A		P		P	
BJ	P		P		P		A		A	

Based on the examination above, I find that Yang's two speaking styles, that is the square mouth and the round, can be distinguished from each other by the colloquial reading and the diphthongised monophthong finals. His phonetic realisation in the two mouth styles is different from that of the five eminent storytellers. His performance language in both speaking styles can be read as the Yangzhou dialect.

Mouth Acrobatics, Look, Hand, Body, and Step

Storytellers must master an array of eye, hand, and body movements, gestures, expressions, and paralinguistic sounds to portray the characters effectively and enliven the descriptions in their stories (Bender, 2003, p. 60). Yang Mingkun's live performance of *Rogue Pi Wu* provides an example in point. Although the "mouth" and the other four acting skills—"look," "hand," "body", and "step" work together in Yangzhou *pinghua*, they do not have equal status in an individual performance. When performing *Rogue Pi Wu*, Yang Mingkun applies the look and hand and mouth terminologies more often than the other two.

In general, Yang does not move his body excessively. He simply sits on the chair behind the small square desk for almost the entire performance. Sometimes, he touches the teapot or the teacup, which is known among professional storytellers as favourable turn (*zhuanji* 轉機). Why should we call a teapot and a teacup *zhuanji*? Yang answered:⁷

The teapot or teacup is not part of the *pinghua* storytelling performance. The talking stopper, handkerchief and folding fan are necessary for performing but the teapot or teacup is not. Professionally, the teapot or teacup are called *zhuanji*. When performing, we touch them only when we stop talking for various reasons. For example, when I forget my words, I touch them. The audience would not know this as they think the performer is going to talk about a crisis or adjust his speaking tempo.

When performing, Yang does not frequently apply *shēn* and *bu* terminologies. As the story of Pi Wu centres on the daily lives of ordinary Yangzhou people, the individuals in the story do not engage in extreme behaviours. In contrast to Yang Mingkun's application, members of the Wang School of *Water Margin* usually

⁷ Interview with Yang Mingkun, 18 April 2016.

apply *shou*, *shén*, and *bu*. As nearly all the key figures in the story of *Water Margin* are masters of martial arts, it is a major challenge for the storyteller to imitate them.

The live performance of *Rogue Pi Wu* by Yang Mingkun meets the aesthetic effect *wei* as Yang realizes the tradition of the Pu School in a unique style—the Yang School of Pi Wu. Yang sits on a chair when reciting even when he impersonates a character in the story. Occasionally, he stands up to mimic a character who is featured using a unique standing pose, or to show gestures clearly to the audience. He sits facing his audience when reciting and moves his body to the right or left by 45 degrees at the most when impersonating a female character. His gestures are slightly more exaggerated than in daily life. The most common of these is when he raises one arm with the palm of his hand lying horizontal, which looks like the gesture applied when introducing someone or something. However, when mimicking a running man, a fighting man, or a mass scene, he dramatically swings his arms or raises them up high. The folding fan and the handkerchief are props used effectively by Yang to impersonate characters. He opens up the fan and uses it as an umbrella or holds it in his hand and uses it as a baton; he wipes tears with the handkerchief when mimicking a crying woman or covers his hair with the handkerchief when mimicking an old woman.

Yang Mingkun is a master of using “mouth acrobatics” in performing. His voice plays a vital role in his impersonations. Traditionally, the Chinese term “mouth acrobatics” in oral performing arts refers to the ability to perform mimicry. Pu Lin, the founder of the Pu School, is a master of mouth acrobatics. Unfortunately, we are no longer able to enjoy his fabulous performance. Today, Yang Mingkun is also regarded as a master of mimicry and humour. Yang is skilled at imitating various types of voices, the sounds of musical instruments, rain, women talking, a baby crying, and so forth. When impersonating the characters in the story, his role changes and his voice also changes; he adjusts his voice to vividly portray the imagery associated with the portrayal of his characters. For example, when talking as a Shanxi boss, Yang speaks in the Shanxi dialect; as an illiterate, Yang uses a colloquial pronunciation that is indistinct; as a trader, Yang speaks smartly and quickly using clear pronunciation; when portraying a female, Yang uses a graceful feminine voice; and when portraying a male, he speaks in a loud and rough voice.

In the square mouth, Yang applies mouth acrobatics to create humour. He creates a biography for Pi Wu, which reads:

上無片瓦，下無寸鐵，
日無飢餐之米，夜無鼠耗之糧，
喝酒賭錢，脾氣極壞，
開口就罵，舉手就打，
六親不靠，窮及無賴。 (Yin et al., 2015, p. 11)

There is not even a tile above his head, there is not even a *cun* 寸⁸ of metal below.
There is no rice for meals in the day, there is no grain for mice to steal at night.
With a very bad temper, he drinks wine and gambling,
Opening the mouth to scold and raising the arms to fight.
No relatives to rely on, he lives like a knave in poverty.

When reciting the passage above using the square mouth, Yang speaks slowly with forceful pronunciation. Although, strictly speaking, this passage is not structured in fixed rhyme and form, it still reads with a certain

⁸ *Cun*, is a Chinese unit of length. One *cun*, equal to one-tenth of *chi*, is approximately one third decimetre.

tempo. If Yang reads the biography only when Pi Wu is introduced to the story for the first time, this will not create much of an effect. However, Yang reads it every time Pi Wu comes into the story. In one round, Yang repeats it several times. Through this constant repetition, the performance becomes comical and we are reminded of the protagonist Pi Wu.

When impersonating Pi Wu, Yang makes facial expressions to create a visual image about this character in the story. He closes one eye, lifts one corner of his mouth, nods his head slightly, and speaks in a knavish tone. Usually when impersonating Pi Wu, he sits on the chair and does not move his body or his hands. However, when introducing Pi Wu to the story at the beginning of his recitation, Yang impersonates Pi Wu more vividly. The description of Pi Wu's appearance by Yang is as follows:

One of his eyes is closed and the other open. [...] He does not wash his face every day in the morning as he is a beggar now. His eyelids are stuck together as there is too much eye discharge. [...] One day, he put a little saliva on his eyelids, and managed to open one eye. What about the other eye? Let it go! Thus, as a habit, he opens one eye with the other closed, even after washing his face thoroughly. (Yin et al., 2015, p. 23)

When reciting the passage above, Yang Mingkun impersonates Pi Wu by mimicking his actions and pose. He closes his eyes, lifts one corner of his mouth, and tilts his head. He puts a little saliva onto two fingers, places them on one of his eyelids, and acts as if he is opening his eye painfully using the two fingers. After opening his eye, he stands up with one shoulder bent forward and nods his head slightly. When they see Yang's facial expression and standing pose, most audiences burst into laughter and exclaim, "He is Pi Wu!" Yang is very proud of his facial expressions, as he remarked in an interview: "My master said I was better than him when performing Pi Wu". This is the highest compliment for Yang.

In the round mouth, he is a master of sound and scene imitation using homophones, synonyms, and onomatopoeia. How does he apply imitation in performance? In the story *Rogue Pi Wu*, Pi Wu is very poor and has no proper place to stay for the night and cannot afford to wear decent clothes. His waist belt is a rope knotted by several short pieces of cloth and string. Yang Mingkun introduces this distinct accessory as follows:

不曉得打了多少個結，周周正正，結連結，結挨結，結靠結，結巴結，端午節靠到中秋節，他身上全是結。(Yin et al., 2015, p. 24)

Bu xiaode da le duoshaogejie, zhouzhouzhengzheng, jielianjie, jieaijie, jiekaojie, jiebajie, DuanwujiekaodaoZhongqiujie, ta shenshangquanshijie.

We cannot count how many knots are on his belt. It is true that a knot connects to another, one knot leans against the other, and one knot is wrapped on the other. The Mid-Autumn Festival follows the Dragon Boat Festival. His clothes are covered with knots.

When reciting this passage, Yang Mingkun stands up and ties the knots at his waist with empty hands. When listening to this passage, the audience was impressed by Yang's speaking speed and his innovative use of the homophonous words *jie* 結 (knot) and *jie* 節 (festival) as well as five verbal near-synonyms. In the passage, *jie* 結 is repeated 10 times and *jie* 節 twice. There are also five verbal near-synonyms, including *lian* 連, *ai* 挨, *kao* 靠, *ba* 巴, and *kaodao* 靠到, meaning "close to" or "closely next to". In other words, 31% of the syllables in the passage sound like *jie*; 71% of the verbs in the passage mean "next to". Yang recites this passage in the round mouth. He speaks so rapidly that the 12 repeated syllables *jie* follow one after the other; five verbal synonyms are strung together like the knots tied together. In this way, the artistic synaesthesia plays an important role in the audience's reception as what they hear is transformed into what they see. When I hear

the syllables and the near-synonyms repeated in this rapid style, the image of a knotted belt almost appears before my eyes. Although the second-to-last sentence, “The Dragon Boat Festival is next to the Mid-Autumn Festival”, has no semantic relation to the whole passage; the last sentence, “His clothes are covered with knots”, reveals that the festivals add two more homophonous *jie* and one synonym *kaodao* to the passage. Although this may make little sense, Yang’s intention is to portray that the life lived by Pi Wu is hollow and nugatory. The audience bursts into laughter when listening to this passage.

Yang Mingkun also creates various sounds when mimicking a scene. For example, he dramatizes a chaotic fire scene as follows:

當當當當當……著火了，當當當當當當，這裡著火了，當當當當當當，快！當當當當當當當當……四面八方，
喀喇喀喇喀喇喀喇喀喇……喀喇喀喇喀喇，個個都到了。（Yin et al., 2015, p. 343）

Dang, dang, dang dangdang... there is fire, dang dangdangdangdangdang, this place has caught fire, dang dangdangdangdangdang, hurry up! Dang dangdangdangdangdangdang ... in all directions, kala kalakalakakala... kala kalakalakakala, everyone has arrived.

The chaotic scene consists of the two onomatopoeia, *dang* 當 (sound of a gong) and *kala* 喀喇 (sound of hurrying steps), and five short verbal phrases as shown above. In ancient China, a gong ringing is associated with a fire alarm. In the fire scene, the sound of gongs fills the air. In this circumstance, people can do nothing but hurry to a safe place and the panicked footsteps make the sound of “*kala kala*”. Yang Mingkun’s dramatization of the fire scene centres on two key factors: the sound of the gong and the sound of hurrying footsteps. When reciting the passage above, he first stands up and mimics a person beating a gong. Although his hands are empty, his left hand looks as though he is carrying a large gong and his right hand is holding a gong stick. When performing these actions, he mimics the sound of the gong by loudly saying *dang dangdang*... Then, he sits down on the chair and mimics a chaotic scene filled with the sound of panicked steps. He stretches and slowly swings his arms horizontally, saying loudly *kala kalakala*... indicating a hurrying crowd. With the repetition of the two onomatopoeia in the round mouth, Yang Mingkun constructs a fire scene involving men and women moving in a precipitated manner.

Yang Mingkun impersonates all the 400 figures in the story by imitating their speeches and facial expressions when reciting the story of Pi Wu. As Bender said, “[...] where performers go more deeply into character than they traditionally did—is a phenomenon that seems to have been influenced by television and Western drama” (Bender, 2003, p. 50). Take Yang’s performance as an example. Unit 38, “Asking for money by faking death” features five characters: Pi Wu, a hopeless woman, a dying man, the treacherous owner of a traditional bank, and the acrimonious accountant working in the bank. Most of the time, they are involved in one dialogue. When reciting the dialogue between the five characters, Yang impersonates all of them vividly. When impersonating the woman, Yang uses his handkerchief to wipe his canthus, sits on the chair as a woman by turning his body towards the right at an angle of forty-five degrees, compresses his lips, and talks in a sobbing tone. He raises and moves his right arm with his fingers held in the orchid pose. He also mimics the voice of a sobbing woman. When impersonating the dying man, Yang half closes his eyes, drops his mouth sadly, and talks intermittently. When impersonating the owner, Yang lifts the right corner of his mouth, opens his eyes wide, and talks loudly with a stammer. When impersonating the accountant, Yang does not change his facial expression but opens and stretches all 10 fingers and talks in a high-pitched tone. Immediately after talking as the woman by picking up his handkerchief, Yang lifts the right corner of his mouth and talks as the

owner. When he has finishing talking as Pi Wu by lifting the left corner of his mouth and closing his left eye, Yang talks as the accountant by stretching all 10 fingers. Yang shifts between the five characters frequently and naturally.

Based on the observation and examination above, I find that Yang Mingkun tends to impersonate all the figures and mimic noisy scenes appearing in the story of *Rogue Pi Wu* through performing mouth acrobatics. He uses the Yangzhou dialect in both the square mouth and the round mouth. He rarely moves his body and steps in reciting the story of Pi Wu.

Conclusion

Yangzhou dialect and other communication means work together allowing Yang's live performance to be presented in a distinctive way. As a professional storyteller responsible for transmitting this traditional repertoire, Yang has preserved the tradition of the Pu School created by Pu Lin. Firstly, Yang applies the Yangzhou dialect when telling the story of *Rogue Pi Wu* in both the round mouth and the square mouth. Yang speaks the Yangzhou dialect in a traditional style. Pu Lin created the story of Pi Wu based on his own life experiences in Yangzhou. Protagonist Pi Wu and nearly all the characters in the story are ordinary Yangzhou locals. As all the characters lived in Qing Yangzhou and spoke the Yangzhou dialect, the Yangzhou dialect is suitable for narrating the story of Pi Wu.

Secondly, Yang performs mouth acrobatics frequently in his performance. Pu Lin was renowned for his imitation and mouth acrobatics. Yang is also well known as the founder of the "Yang School of Pi Wu", enjoying an excellent reputation as a master of mouth acrobatics. Mouth acrobatics and facial expression play an important role in his performance.

As a performer, Yang extends the quantity and range of the imitations in his performance to cater to the needs of his audience. Firstly, Yang prefers to impersonate all the characters in the story, which is a big challenge considering that the number of characters in his story is nearly twice that in the story told by his master. Audiences are attracted by his vivid impersonations. In addition, Yang Mingkun broadens the range of imitations. The rhetorical device of synaesthesia is essential in his imitations. He is also skilled at imitating inanimate items or mimicking chaotic scenes by applying onomatopoeia and homophones in the Yangzhou dialect. Audiences are impressed by Yang's refreshing creations.

References

- Børdahl, V. (1996). *The oral tradition of Yangzhou storytelling*. London: Curzon Press.
- Børdahl, V. (1998). Yangzhou pinghuazhong de koutouxushuyu "shuokou" 揚州評話中的口頭敘述與“說口” (The oral narrative and speaking styles in the Yangzhou storytelling). *Chinese Studies Hanxueyanjiu*, 31, 122-123.
- Bender, M. (2003). *Plum and bamboo: China's Suzhou chantefable tradition*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Yin, B. D., Jiang, Y. L., Yang, W. H., Zhu, Y. T., Hu, Z., Yuan, Y. M., ... Guan, Y. (Eds.). (2015). *Pi Wu lazi*. (Transcribed from Yang Mingkun's repertoire). Nanjing: Jiangsu Fenghuang Wenyi Chubanshe.