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摘要

电影自其诞生之日起，就肩负起了传递信息，传播文化的使命。全球化的发展，不仅促进了电影工业的繁荣，也逐渐促使电影走上了世界的舞台。因此，影视翻译在中外跨文化交流中扮演着越来越重要的角色。但是，影视翻译现状令人不满，这与电影市场的繁荣形成了鲜明的对照。一方面，影视翻译仍是一个相对新的领域。由于缺少足够的重视，现有研究不够系统化。尽管大多数学者对字幕翻译策略进行了探索，但是没有合适的指导原则，很难对其翻译质量进行评估。另一方面，现实目睹了当下字幕翻译的质量良莠不齐，甚至拙劣者亦不鲜见。字幕翻译者的能力遭受质疑。鉴于此，字幕翻译急需相关的理论和原则给予指导。

本文在奈达功能对等理论的指导下进行电影字幕翻译研究。与以往的传统翻译理论不同，功能对等理论把接受者的反应作为最高检测标准。而在电影翻译中，观众的反应对电影字幕翻译亦是起着重要作用，这与功能对等理论是一致的。另外，文章也对影响字幕翻译的其他因素进行了探讨。在微观方面，作者详细地分析了字幕翻译的特征，限制条件及功能。这些特性向字幕翻译者提出了更多的挑战。

在以上宏观和微观研究的基础上，本文提出了指导电影字幕翻译的五项原则。当这些原则不能同时兼顾时，作者也提出了一些建议，以确保字幕翻译的成功。同时，这些原则也可以用作翻译质量的评估

标准。其中，观众的反应一致原则是决定字幕翻译行为的最高准则。另外，本文也对英汉字幕翻译者提出了几项特殊的要求，以此来规范字幕翻译行为。

关键词：字幕翻译，功能对等，原则，要求

Abstract

Film, since its creation, has shouldered the mission of delivering information and spreading culture. Globalization triggers the booming of the film industry, and makes films gradually flourish on the world stage. As a result of that, audiovisual translation becomes more and more significant in the course of intercultural communication between China and foreign countries. However, the current situation of the film translation is quite unsatisfactory, which is in sharp contrast with the prosperity of film market. On the one hand, audiovisual translation is relatively a new area. Relevant researches are far from being systematic for the short of adequate attention. Even though most scholars have turned their eyes on the subtitle translation strategies, it is hard to evaluate the quality of subtitle translation without proper principles as guidance. On the other hand, reality witnesses many inaccurate, unprofessional and even awkward translated texts of film subtitles. And some translators' competence is questioned. Therefore, theories and principles are urgently needed to guide the subtitle translation.

This thesis conducts a study on film subtitle translation guided by Nida's functional equivalence theory. Different from the traditional translation theories, functional equivalence theory regards the receptor's

reaction as the highest evaluation criteria. And in film translation, the target audience's reaction to the target text is very important for the judgment of a film translation, which has the same value with that of the functional equivalence theory. Besides, many other factors influencing the subtitle translations have been discussed on the basis of this theory. The author also makes a detailed analysis of the micro-aspects of subtitle translation, including its features, constraints and functions. These aspects provide more challenges for subtitle translation.

Guided by the studies on both the macro-level and the micro-level, this thesis put forward five principles for subtitle translation. Besides, the author also makes some suggestions when these principles cannot meet at the same time in order to make sure of a successful translation of film subtitles. Meanwhile, these principles can also serve as the evaluation criteria for the subtitle translation. The principle of the audience's response should be regarded as the supreme overriding principle. What's more, some special requirements for English-Chinese subtitlers have also been presented to regulate the subtitle translation practice.

Key words: Subtitling, Functional Equivalence, Principles, Requirements

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Acknowledgements

攻读学位期间主要的研究成果目录

Introduction

People may not know when a new book will be on list, but they will never miss the information about when a new movie makes its premier. Film is one of the most popular forms of mass entertainment as well as a comprehensive artistic form skillfully integrated with literature, drama, painting, music, dancing and photography. It is widely accepted by people of different ages, social status, cultural and educational backgrounds. For many people, film is a good way for entertainment; for some others, film is an important channel to know more about the outside world. In a word, film plays a crucial part in our daily life.

In 1929, the first sound movie *Lights of New York* came into being in America. Since then people tried various ways to assist their language transfer to overcome language and cultural barriers which interfere their understanding of the foreign films. Thus began a new area of translation, namely, audiovisual translation (AVT).

With the development of technology and the emergence of Internet, people can enjoy films and TV shows through various ways, either in front of a computer or a big screen. The policies of reform and opening up to the outside world marked a rapid increase of the inter-cultural communications between China and other countries. As an important

form of cultural exchange, great attention has been paid to the audiovisual culture, and a great number of foreign films and TV plays are flooding into China. Meanwhile, some excellent Chinese movies have gradually appeared on the world stage. In this circumstance, audiovisual translation has been needed in a large scale and becomes indispensable in the process of cultural exchange.

However, the status quo of the translation of films hasn't caught up with the prosperity of film market, and audiovisual translation is relatively a new area. Although film translation plays a crucial part in the field of translation, scholars didn't make enough efforts on the audiovisual translation studies compared with what they have done in the literary translation. And studies on audiovisual translation get less attention both at home and abroad. The following reasons can account for this discrepancy. Firstly, scholars would rather devote their energy to the development of an abstract translation theory than make the empirical study of actual translation, let alone the translation of films. Secondly, cultural prestige is the basic consideration of many scholars and translation theorists for selecting their studying objects. And it is thought more prestigious to study literary works than to study popular literature, such as film translation (Dirk Delabastita, 1990). Fortunately, great changes have been viewed due to the economic and social development and audiovisual translation begins to attract some experts' attention with

people's gradually increasing demands. Some institutions and scholars start to focus on it and make great accomplishment in the studies of audiovisual translation. And audiovisual translation gradually gets its proper place.

Audiovisual translation can be divided into two main categories: subtitling and dubbing. The former one is visual, relating to the presentation of written texts on the film screen. The latter is oral. With the consideration of their respective popularities, costs, and complexities, this thesis mainly focuses on the study of subtitle translation. This does not indicate that dubbing isn't worthy of studying. In fact, most of the audiovisual translation studies in the past decades place their emphasis on dubbing. Therefore, studies on subtitle translation still have a lot of vacancies to be filled in.

As for the status quo of subtitling, movie fans are aware of that there are only a few websites which offers film subtitles by some professional translation groups, but these sites grant some permission to submit subtitles by movie fans in a free way. As a result, one can find various versions of subtitles for a film. Some of the target versions are completed only in a few hours, thus qualities of their translations cannot be guaranteed.

What's more, the *London Times* has ever reported that some European film companies sent their movies to India and Malaysia either

for subtitling or dubbing in recent years, only for the sake of saving the costs of those films. But varied translation standards evidently degraded the films' quality and had some influence on the audience, which in turn lead to a substantial loss for the companies.

Beyond that, Deborah Chan who specializes in translating Chinese movies makes a remark that there are some ridiculous errors in film subtitles, making both the audience and the film makers suffer a lot.

These phenomena are no exceptions, reflecting the chaos of international audiovisual translation market. Thus a lot of improvements should be carried forward, among which some theories are urgently needed to guide the process of subtitling.

Although there were some traditional researches on film subtitling, most of them are made on the basis of the scholars' experiences. In China, studies on audiovisual translation with few systematic theories as guidelines lag rather behind that of some western countries, let alone on film subtitling. And relevant articles and works are rarely presented. Owing to such a back drop, it is very necessary but crucial to make a further study in this field so as to break the bottleneck for the film subtitling.

Chapter 1 Subtitle Translation as a Studying Object

Nowadays, high technology and globalization boosts the development of film industry. On this account, subtitle translation studies have drawn an increasing attention from scholars and translators. But the status quo about subtitle translation is far from satisfactory for the shortage of systematic theories as guidance. In order to construct an adequate framework, general studies about the subtitle translation should be started as a basis.

1.1 A Brief Introduction to Subtitling

Before making a further study on subtitle translation, we should firstly have a clear understanding of the definitions of subtitle and subtitle translation.

1.1.1 Definitions of Subtitle and Subtitling

According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, "a subtitle is a printed translation of foreign language dialogue appearing near the bottom of the screen of a motion picture" or "a printed statement or fragment of dialogue appearing between the scenes of a silent motion picture." (Philip, 1986)

For the majority, subtitles are regarded as the words printed on a film screen either in a native or a foreign language, in the hope of helping the audience to understand what is being said in the film. In reality, subtitles are just supplements instead of being the main focus of the viewers, which can help the viewers to get the information and appreciate what we cannot get from the phonetic dialogue and visual picture.

As for subtitle translation, i.e. subtitling, it is a method or technique of providing subtitles.

According to *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997:161), subtitling is a term used to refer to one of the two main methods of language transfer used in translating types of mass audiovisual communication such as film and television.

Henrik Goltlieb gives a more specific definition that subtitling is a (1) written, (2) additive, (3) immediate, (4) synchronous, (5) polymedial translation. The details of these five labels are explained as follows:

- “(1) Being of a written——as opposed to a spoken——nature, subtitling differs from all other types of audiovisual translation.
- (2) The label additive indicates that in subtitling, verbal material is added to the original, maintaining the source language discourse.
- (3) The label immediate refers to the fact that in filmic media all discourse is presented in a flowing manner, beyond the control of the listener-viewer-reader.
- (4) The label synchronous reflects the fact that the original film (at least its

non-verbal part) and the translated dialog are presented simultaneously—unlike “simultaneous” interpreting.

- (5) The term ploymedia states the fact that at least two parallel channels are used to convey the total message of the original” (Gottlieb, 1992:162).

Even though there are various definitions, we can see that subtitling is a kind of language transfer, in the process of which the spoken or written message of an audiovisual product is changed into a written form and added usually on the bottom of the screen of a motion picture.

1.1.2 Classifications of Subtitling

Different groups of subtitling can be categorized on the basis of different criteria. According to Gottlieb, subtitling can be classified in terms of the linguistic and technical aspects respectively.

From the linguistic aspect, subtitling can be distinguished into two main categorizations: intralingual subtitling and interlingual subtitling.

Intralingual subtitling also includes two types: (1) subtitling of domestic programs for the deaf and hard-of-hearing; (2) subtitling of foreign-language programs for language learners. In the process of intralingual subtitling, the subtitle translators only take down what is spoken in the film and present them on the screen. No other languages are involved.

Interlingual subtitling is not the case at all. In this subtitling

practice, the subtitler should “cross over from speech in one language to writing in another” (Gottlieb, 1994:247). Thus, both the form and the languages are changed.

Another distinction can be drawn in terms of technical process of subtitling.

(a) Open subtitling (not optional). It includes: (1) cinema subtitles, which are either a physical part of the film (as in films for public viewing) or transmitted separately (for example at festival screenings); (2) interlingual television subtitles transmitted terrestrially and broadcast as part of the television picture.

(b) Closed subtitling (optional, transmitted as teletext). This type includes: (1) television subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, selected by the individual viewer on a remote-control unit and generated by a decoder in the television set; (2) interlingual television subtitles transmitted by satellite, allowing different speech communities to receive different versions of the same program simultaneously. (Ibid)

In this thesis, the author confines her discussion to interlingual, open subtitling with specific reference to Chinese subtitling appearing simultaneously in English films.

1.1.3 Comparisons Between Subtitling and Dubbing

As is known to all, audiovisual translation can be mainly categorized

into two forms: subtitling and dubbing. Subtitling relates to the written text onto the film screen. Dubbing involves the using of the acoustic channel in screen translation. Nowadays, subtitling has gained more and more popularity, especially among the young generations. The following reasons can account for this phenomenon.

To begin with, subtitling, compared with dubbing, is relatively cost-effective in both labor forces and financial resources. To subtitle a film, only one person is needed to translate the dialogues into the target language. Then the translated version is checked and easily transferred onto the film by professionals. However, to dub a film is not the case at all, for the process of dubbing is far more complicated. In the first place, the translator should offer the literal translations of the source text, and then the target versions of translations shall be composed into dialogues by the adapters. In this process, lip-synch should be taken into consideration. Next, some professional dubbing actors will be asked to revoice the dialogues. Last but not the least, it is very necessary to have the dubbed versions revised and edited by the professional technicians. Obviously the whole dubbing process is very complex as well as costly.

What is more, subtitling can maintain the original flavor of the foreign films to the utmost. The audience can receive the film information as well as enjoy the foreign language, which are also conducive to foreign language learners' listening and speaking abilities as the original voice is

maintained. On the flip side, dubbing will lose fidelity to some extent. The dubbed voice sometimes sounds so queered that the audience will lose their interest in those audiovisual products. Therefore, subtitled films are preferred by most people, especially the youngsters.

However, we cannot draw a conclusion that dubbing is inferior to subtitling as dubbing also has its advantages. When watching a dubbed film, audience's education background will never be a barrier. Whether you are literate or not, you can always enjoy the film. In addition, the audience can pay more attention to the moving scenes rather than change their sight from pictures to subtitles, which will pose some hindrance to the audience's appreciating process. Of course, this cannot deny the fact that subtitle translation is becoming an inevitable trend in both people's life and the audiovisual market. Beyond that, the author's preference can also account for why this thesis makes further study on subtitling rather than dubbing.

1.2 Previous Studies both at Home and Abroad

As film subtitling is an indispensable sub-branch of audiovisual translation with rare engagement, let's make a review of its previous studies in the macro-field of audiovisual translation.

Researches in audiovisual translation originated from western countries, and the experts who have made outstanding contribution to this

field are also from European countries. Advanced science and technology foster the popularity of television and draw the attention of some experts, which play an indispensable role in the developing process of audiovisual translation and its relevant theories. In addition, the intimacy among European countries and high degree of relevance among their languages also enhance the audiovisual research.

1.2.1 Studies Abroad

The first academic articles related to audiovisual translation in terms of translation dimension appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1956, the first volume of the journal *Le linguist/De taalkundige* had made a superficial study on this special subject in a couple of pages under the title of *Traduction et Cinema*. In 1960, the first edition of the magazine *Babel*, named *Cinema et traduction*, marked the beginning of the audiovisual translation studies. From then on, a large number of relevant articles and essays can be seen on various magazines and journals.

In 1974, Dollerup published an important article *On Subtitles in Television Programmes*, which focused only on subtitling. This article analyzed the different types of errors in the subtitling of television programs from English to Danish. Besides, he also pointed out the pedagogical value that subtitles have in the foreign languages acquisition process, which still has some profound influence on our current education

area.

Istvan Fodor is regarded as a milestone in the dubbing area, whose research has laid a solid foundation for the theoretical study on audiovisual translation in western countries. It is Fodor who initially made a systematic and comprehensive study on dubbing translation in terms of linguistics, semiotics, psychology and aesthetics, etc., in his English book *Film Dubbing: Phonetic, Semiotic, Esthetic and Psychological Aspects* published in 1976. On the one hand, he suggested that the dubbed language should be synchronized with character's personalities, as well as the content of the film. On the other hand, he discussed the different meanings of body languages due to the linguistic and cultural varieties, and the different visual effect on people's sensation of the film language caused by the angle of photographing. Moreover, he assumed that the absolute synchronization cannot be achieved because of the uniqueness of every language and culture.

The year 1982 witnessed an important article under the title of *Les sous-titres...un mal nedcessaire* which left the deepest impression. In this book, Lucien Marleau discussed the problems arose in subtitle translation and divided them into four types, namely, technological, psychological, artistic-aesthetic and linguistic. Moreover, he offered some beneficial suggestions on the presentation of the subtitles, and took the initiative to transcend the region of literature by discussing the economic factors, the

film industry and the related professionals that participate in the process.

In the same year, an article named *Subtitling: Constrained Translation* was published by Titford, which had played a profound influence. When dealing with subtitling, Titford proposed the concept of “constrained translation”, for he held the view that the problems relating to the translation practice “derive essentially from the constraints imposed on the translator by the medium itself” (Titford, 1982:113). Although focusing on subtitling, Titford didn’t seem to be conscious of the terminological value of this proposal. Several years later, Mayoral Asensio, Kelly and Gallardb applied this concept of “constrained translation” into the translation practices.

From the end of the 1970s to the whole 1980s, Helene Reid devoted his endeavors to the studies of subtitling. Reid was a prolific writer, and his researches mainly dealt with the relationship between the public and the subtitles, and the figure of the translator from a distinctive professional perspective. In 1978, she issued an article about an apology in defense of subtitles, which she considered to be “the intelligent solution”.

In 1989, Delabastita conducted a detailed study on audiovisual translation from a Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) approximation. According to him, a film is composed of various signs and channels, all of which should be taken into consideration when handling with dubbing

and subtitling problems. What's more, when analyzing the norms that underlie translation behavior, Delabastita focused his attention on the cultural factors but without renouncing the analysis of translation as a process. In addition, he also gave a list of questions which would provide some guidance for the inquisitive audiovisual researcher.

Accidentally, Lambert published a panoramic work with a similar title to Delahastita's article in the same year. But his book, in French, dealt with the influence that mass media has on our modern societies. Lambert also made a specific study on the role played by language and translation. According to him, the developments that people are experiencing will not only lead to the end of monolingualism, but also bring about the arrival of multilingualism. His article of 1990 has a significant impact for the subtitling studies, for he made a detailed analysis of the various features that define the subtitling discourse.

From 1990s, the western audiovisual translation started its golden age, and the related theories have made a revolutionary progress. Meanwhile, this decade also marked a change of language along with English achieving its dominance in the academic exchanges instead of French.

At the beginning of 1990s, two essential books came into being almost at the same time. In 1991 Luyken, in collaboration with four European professionals issued the book *Overcoming Language Barriers*

in Television: Dubbing and Subtitling for the European Audience under the sponsorship of European Institute for the Media (EIM). From a professional perspective, they made a detailed discussion on the various translation modes applied to audiovisual translations. Beyond that, many statistics have been illustrated to compile the volume of translated programs, costs of labor force and audience preferences in a systematic way.

In 1992, a book named *Subtitling for the Media: A Handbook of an Art* was published by Ivarsson, a Swedish subtitler. This book made a detailed introduction to history of the technical aspects of subtitling. And it is regarded as the first book ever to handle exclusively with film subtitling. Ivarsson's long-term translation experience contributed to his superb translation skills, both theoretical and practical. In 1998, Ivarsson with the assistance of Carroll, issued the revised second edition of this book. In this edition, they updated some new strategies and skills for subtitle translation due to the technological development. Consequently, its title has also been changed into a much more sober and concise one: *Subtitling*. These two works have laid a solid foundation for the further researches in this field.

Since 1995, the western audiovisual research has leapt forward with increasing related theories. Distinguished scholars at that time were Gambier (Finn), Gottlieb (Danish), Karamitroglou (Greek), Ivarsson

(Sweedish), Chaume and Diaz-Cintas (both Spanish), etc. Among them, Gambier is inarguably a leading figure in this area. His research covers the classifications of the various audiovisual modes, the translation strategies and skills, the reception of the audiovisual translation, etc. He has also taken part in most of the conferences relating to this area. In addition, he has been assigned as president of the few international associations on AVT (FIT-Media and ESIST), and edited a large number of works. In his books, Gambier put forward a term “transadaptation”, which “might allow us to go beyond the usual dichotomy (literal/free translation, translation/adaptation, etc.) and take target audience into consideration more directly” (Gambier, 2003:171). What’s more, he discussed how the rapid technological development and the globalization of communication network have added new domains to the field of translation and raised more changes for translators. In addition, he also claimed that audiovisual translation should highlight interdisciplinary.

In Tomaszkiwicz’s doctoral dissertation, the author focused on the linguistic operations in the process of subtitling practice from French into Polish. She firstly gave an introduction to the general problems in cinema translation, and then conducted a detailed analysis of the two strategies that characterize the subtitling of films, namely, elimination and condensation. Also, she has made a general study on subtitling in terms of the linguistic perspective. In 1994, she applied the relevance theory to the

study of subtitling, which marked her most significant contribution.

Dries, as a researcher in the EIM, had a productive period in the mid 1990s. She has compiled substantial research materials on audiovisual translation. Besides, she also published some articles to discuss the problems and obstacles arising from the circulation process of European audiovisual products. One of her primary objectives is to wake up linguistic awareness of all professionals in the relevant industry. Her researches have offered us a relatively thorough description of the different national practices of most European countries. Dries made her most interesting contribution by putting forward a series of guidelines, in the hope of giving a boost to the production and distribution of audiovisual products.

Gottlieb, as a prolific theorist in this area, also started his research of subtitle translation in the 1990s. He carried out researches on the linguistic dimension of subtitles, the translation of idioms from English into Danish, the training and teaching of subtitling and, more recently, the corruption of the Danish language by English through subtitled and dubbed films. A majority of related researches are collected in his volumes of 1997 and 2001. In his famous article *Subtitling: Diagonal Translation in Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, published in 1994, he made a clear description of interlingual subtitling, shedding some light for latter researches. Moreover, in *(Multi)Media Translation: Concepts*,

Practices, and Research, Gottlieb proposed a series of strategies in subtitle translation, covering expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, deletion, etc. His research has contributed a lot to the theoretical and systematic studies of subtitle translation.

In 1999, Linde and Kay issued a book *The Semiotics of Subtitling*. Differing from the previous studies, this book focused on the intralingual subtitling (English-English), with the aim of rendering better service for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. In this book, they explored the main characteristics of intralingual subtitling, the relationship between text and image, the differences between an adult and an infant audience and the reception of subtitles. Also, this book offered some references for all those who are interested in intralingual subtitling.

Karamitroglou published his doctoral dissertation, *Towards a Methodology for the Investigation of Norms in Audiovisual Translation*, in the hope of transcending the linguistic dimension and setting audiovisual translation firmly in the target culture. He proposed a model of analysis by using some concepts such as polysystem and norms. Besides, he applied this model in a case study, so as to figure out the preliminary norms that determine the translator's choice when subtitling or dubbing children's programs in Greece. The use of these up-to-date translation concepts marks his main contribution. By applying them to the area of audiovisual translation, Karamitroglou also extended both the

functionality and the dimensions of relevant studies.

At international level, audiovisual translation, particular the subtitle translation is making good progress. There are a large number of conferences on audiovisual translation. But most of these conferences place their emphasis on subtitling, because many participants come from Northern Europe where the practice of subtitling is much more popular than dubbing. And a majority of relevant works and papers have been published one after another.

In 1987, there was a Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling in Stockholm under the auspices of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). As the first convention in this field, it triggered the explosion of related conferences and publications. In this conference, a proposal of a non-binding guideline was achieved in the hope of enhancing the communication and dissemination of the subtitled television programs among countries.

In 1995, the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (ESIST) came into being. It serves as a meeting as well as a reference for people working in the field of audiovisual translation. This association has an international vocation, with members from all over the world rather than only from the European countries as its name may have shown. The International Comparative Subtitling Project marks its one of the most ambitious projects. Three short scenes of different types were

distributed to the participating companies in the hope of generalizing about the different national practices in subtitling. According to the rules, these companies should not only subtitle those shorts in the conventional method, but also answer a short questionnaire. About 50 companies worldwide participate in the project, involving a total of 18 languages and over 20 different countries.

1.2.2 Studies in China

In 1949, Changchun Film Studio produced the first dubbed film from Russian to Chinese, which marked the beginning of Chinese audiovisual translation study and practice. Since 1980s, audiovisual translation has become popular for a large amount of foreign films have been introduced into China. And some scholars began to shift their eyes on audiovisual translation studies. Yet, compared with the west countries, the related researches in China start quite late and are still at starting phase. Most of relevant studies are experiential and prescriptive and scholars who are engaged in this area are very rare. We cannot find a single work but only some limited articles published in some journals. Here the author just introduces some influential scholars and articles.

Professor Qian Shaochang, from Shanghai International Studies University, can be regarded as a leading figure in this new area. He began to engage himself in subtitle translation early in 1984 and acquired much

experience from his subtitle translation practice for some TV programs and documents. In his article *Translation of Puns in Films*, the author held that puns are practically untranslatable on the basis of his own experience. Moreover, he also analyzed the translation of puns from English to Chinese which offers some convenience for Chinese audience to understand the English movies. In 2000, he published another article *Film Translation—the More and More Important Realm in Translation Field*, pointing out the importance of film translation so as to draw more attention to it. Firstly, he made comparisons between film language and written language by analyzing the five characteristics of the film language: audibility, comprehensiveness, immediacy, popularity and no-note. Besides, he presented seven techniques in film translation based on his personal translation experience. In the end, Qian Shaochang considered “expressiveness” as of the most significance among Yan Fu’s “Three Principles” for translation—faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance.

Ma Zhengqi who is an expert in the studies of translation and cross-cultural communication, has the experience of audiovisual translation for nearly thirty years. In 1997, Ma Zhengqi, issued an article *On the Basic Principles of AVT*, in which he analyzed the basic principles of audiovisual translation, and attempted to explore the theories and practice of dubbing. In 2005, he published a book *Scenario Translation & Dubbing* which has left the deepest impression. In this

book, the writer illustrated the nature and significance of film dubbing, and discussed the translation principles from the aspects of communication science, semiotics, hermeneutic, etc. He stated that dubbed film is a form of language and cross-cultural communication, and studies on film translation cannot be separated from the cross-cultural communication (Ma Zhengqi, 2005:42). Moreover, he creatively explored the artistic law of dubbing in terms of aesthetics and discussed the evaluation standards of dubbing translation. However, this book only focused on dubbing translation and subtitle translation hadn't been dealt with.

Zhang Chunbo enjoys prestige for his long-term research and practice in the field of audiovisual translation. In 1998, he issued an article titled *A Preliminary Study of Screen Translation*. In this article, Zhang Chunbo firstly distinguished the screen transition and literary translation and explored the features of screen language; then he made further discussions on the nature, principles and skills of AVT. What is more, he also analyzed the cultural factors influencing film translation, and discussed the strategies for translating puns with examples in illustration.

Li Yunxing, a professor from Tianjin Normal University, has a great reputation for his discourse translation studies both at home and abroad. He conducted an analysis of subtitle translating from the perspective of

discourse translation theory in his famous article *Strategies for Translating Subtitle* published in 2001. Li Yunxing held that the basic requirement for subtitle translation is to provide the most relevant information in the most efficient way within the time and space constraints. In the article, he gave a brief introduction to subtitle translation, including its classifications, features, constraints, as well as functions. Then he proposed some corresponding strategies for subtitling, especially for dealing with some culture-specific words by means of illustrating some examples. Concretely, he divided reduction strategy into three categories: condensation, reductive paraphrasing and deletion.

Zhao Chunmei is an experienced editor in translating of foreign film scripts and scripts of TV drama series. In the essay *Translation into Chinese of Film Scripts and Scripts of TV Drama Series——Four Main Conflicting Demands*, Zhao Chunmei put forward the four main conflicting demands in the process of dubbing with cases in illustration. These demands are length VS content, word order VS picture order, naturalization VS alienation and transliteration VS semantic translation. While discussing these conflicts, she also suggests some approach to solve them.

In China, relevant conferences or organizations are really few. On October 18-20, 2001, an *International Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context* was held the in Chinese University of Hong

Kong, which has a significant meaning for the Chinese film subtitle translation. With the participation of scholars, business professionals and other interested parties, the conference not only explored the horizons of dubbing and subtitling in theory but also discussed the feasibility of cooperation between business and business and academic world. What's more, the relevance of dubbing and subtitling to the theory of translation studies also has been investigated and ascertained from a wider perspective. In 2007, the second session of *International Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling* was held in the same place, involving a wide range of theoretical fields. This conference reflects the fact that audiovisual translation, particularly subtitling, has obtained an increasing attention, and relevant theoretical studies are not only necessary but also in an urgent requirement.

1.3 Summary

The previous studies show the research of audiovisual or subtitle translation. In the western countries, translation is developing in a smooth way. A series of sound theories, almost covering all aspects, have been formed due to the efforts of relevant scholars. While, relevant researches just start in China, even though audiovisual products have obtained much more popularity than literature works for many years. In the field of film translation, many scholars place their emphasis on its characteristics and

the corresponding strategies. And some of them make analysis with concrete statistics and cases, which are definitely served as the guidelines for the further studies in this field. Besides, some scholars take linguistic, cultural and economic factors into account, in attempt to make standardization on layout and punctuation of subtitle translation. Nevertheless, the real scientific research is not just confined to these problems, and there are indeed some problems with the current study of film translation.

1. It is difficult to reach a consensus on many issues. One significant debate is on whether film subtitling or even audiovisual translation should be considered as a serious scientific subject, though many concepts and opinions have been proposed. Another debate set on whether audiovisual translation should be categorized into the subject of translation or adaptation has never ceased. With these issues unresolved, many scholars try to avoid the studies in the relevant field, thereby slowing down the formation of a sound system of theory. A thorough study covering details and diversified situations are in dire need.

2. It is found that many literary translation theories are not fully adequate to be the guidance of audiovisual or subtitle translation. As a result, a great number of scholars just turn their eyes on film translation practice instead of making further researches in the relevant theories, and most of their translation practices are made out of experience. Even

though a few scholars have put forward some relating theories or strategies, these accomplishments come from analyzing previous translation theories and case studies, so as to guide the translation practice.

3. The current principles and criteria may vary in different countries as a result of different features of written languages. These differences add more difficulties to make quantification of translation principles and standard. Even though the translation strategies have been explored, there are still some problems to be addressed. How can we judge the strategies are proper or not? What principles are used to guide the translator's choice of strategies? How can we evaluate the subtitled version of a film is good or bad? All these questions should be explored by our further studies.

4. Even though the influence of the audience and the economic factors are mentioned in some researches, the importance of their role and to what extent they perform the influence have not been studied in subtitle translation.

5. In China, subtitling doesn't get enough attention compared with dubbing, even though subtitled films obtained more popularity. Besides, the deficiency of material really hinders the theoretical studies in this domain.

Looking back previous researches and problems in the current

studies, the thesis tries to find solutions to these problems.

In this thesis, the author, on the basis of functional equivalence theory, attempts to establish the macro-framework of English–Chinese subtitle translation, including its enlightenments on film subtitling, the principles for subtitle translation, and some special requirements for English-Chinese subtitlers, so as to provide the evaluation criteria for the film subtitle translation. Actually, some of these principles and requirements can also be applied to the Chinese-English subtitle translation. But it is more suitable for a Chinese speaker to evaluate the Chinese subtitles on the English film. Thus, the author mainly focuses on the subtitle translation from English to Chinese.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Considerations

In this Chapter, the author makes a macro-theoretical study on the subtitle translations. The theories involved in this part are mainly Functional Equivalence theory and some views of Reception Theory.

As we have mentioned in the introduction, films, as a major form of entertainment, also render services in cross-cultural communication as well as commercial value for people. In recent years, films have obtained more and more popularities among the mass audience, who play a significant role in the development of the film industry.

However, the traditional translation theories mainly focused on the structure of the language rather than the meaning. Besides, the response of the target language audience was ignored, resulting in the misunderstanding and confusion of the film information, and the distortion of the film text. Of course, this would degrade the quality of the film and exert some influence in the film industry. Thus, subtitle translation can be regarded as an audience-oriented activity.

As a reader-response based approach, Nida's Functional Equivalence places the reader's or the audience's response above all other factors which have some influences on the subtitle translation. Therefore, it is quite adequate to be the guiding theory for studies on subtitle

translation. In addition, the Reception Theory is also used to guide the author's research.

2.1 Subtitle Translation and Equivalence

Equivalence is the basic problem for language translation, and achieving equivalence in the target text is the final goal of translation. Film subtitling is no exception. Before further studying this problem, let's make a discussion on whether equivalence can be achieved between different languages.

As we know, a language is a particular code system used by particular group of people or a nation to communicate. Even though there are language and cultural disparities among nations, basic feelings and mental activities are the same as human beings, which make languages translatable. Just as George Steiner says, all human beings share the common nature of perception and response. These capabilities manifest themselves through our languages. For that reason, they can be grasped and translated. Eugene Nida also states that "anything that can be said in one language can be said in another" (Nida, 1974:4). The history of communication and cultural exchanges between people from different countries has verified his point of view. But these communication and exchanges can only occur where equivalence is established.

Equivalence is generally considered as a word or a phrase that in a

specific context exactly corresponds to the smallest unit in the original. However, this definition is a little bit vague and ambiguous, and a full equivalence can never be achieved between two languages. Catford resolves this problem by introducing situational features. He argues that in the linguistic sense, items with the same meaning can rarely be found, but they can play the same function in the similar situation. Therefore, these items, which are interchangeable in a given situation, are translation equivalents. Based on this translation standard of equivalents, the focus of translators should be placed on the effect of communication. As long as the communication effect is achieved, translation equivalence is established. That is to say, if an item or a word of the target language can be suitably used in the same speech situation, it can be regarded as the equivalence of the corresponding word or item in the source text.

Nida also distinguishes two kinds of primary equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence, in his book *Towards a Science of Translating* published in 1964. The former implies faithfully reproducing the formal elements of the original text, including both the form and content of the message. Formal equivalence is a kind of source language-oriented translation theory, in the hope of retaining the information and structure of original language. It is appropriate in certain circumstances. It is a means of providing some degree of insight onto the lexical, grammatical or structural form of a source text. However, target

text with the use of formal equivalents might not be easily understood sometimes by the target audience, which will surely degrade the quality of translations. Besides, formal equivalence cannot be achieved sometimes, because some language pairs cannot find formal equivalents in the target language. Therefore, it does not make much sense in the film translation.

Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, focuses not only on the message itself. On the basis of the equivalent effect, dynamic equivalence emphasizes that the relationship between the target receptors and target language message should be primarily equivalent with that between the source receptors and the source message. Therefore, its focus of attention is directed toward the receptor's response instead of the source message.

Nida clearly defines dynamic equivalence translation as: the closest natural equivalent to a source-language message. This type of definition contains three essential terms:

- “(1) equivalent, which points toward the source-language message,
- (2) natural, which points toward the receptor language, and
- (3) closest, which binds the two orientations together on the basis of the highest degree of approximation” (Nida, 1974:166).

However, the criterion “natural” is hard to achieve. Generally, two kinds of adaptation must be involved in a natural translation, namely,

grammar and lexicon. The grammatical changes can be easily made, since any change should observe the obligatory grammatical structures of the receptor language. But the lexical modification is less readily made for the shortage of obvious rules. Another problem lies in the extent to which the message fits the target-language audience. Thus, there are some restrictions in terms of dynamic equivalence translation.

In 1986, Nida published another work *From One Language to Another* (1986). In this book, he uses the term “functional equivalence” as a substitute for “dynamic equivalence” in order to avoid misleading. When people still linger on the dispute on free translation or literary translation, emphasizing form and content respectively, Nida’s functional approach provides a satisfactory solution to this problem, for the equivalent response is what a translator concerns most.

In the subtitle translation, it is very difficult to translate every piece of message for the special features of the film. Beyond that, Chinese and English languages differ greatly in their structures. Moreover, some items cannot find equivalence in another language, thus it is hardly possible for subtitlers to adopt formal equivalence approach. Therefore, functional equivalence theory offers translators a better solution for they are guided by the equivalent effect. Even the absence of certain words can be translated into another language or idea clearly by adding other words. The equivalence is achieved, as long as the target audience gets the

intended message.

2.2 Subtitle Translation and Style

Style is another important factor in translation. Before making a further research on this issue, let's have a look at the general definition of style.

According to the revised edition of *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (J. A. Cuddon, 1979), style is characteristic manner of expression in prose or verse; how a particular writer says things. From this definition, we can get the general idea that style is the way a writer uses language, which covers the choice of words, the figure of speech, the shape of sentences, etc. Actually, style can be regarded as the soul of every piece of writing.

According to Nida, translation involves in "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, firstly in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida, 1974:12). From this definition, we can see that translation is not only a science with peculiar laws and methods, but also an art of reproduction. The thought, feeling and style should be reproduced without any distortion.

There is no doubt that style is significant to all writers and translators, and different works carry different styles. However, regarding the matter of how to reproduce the original flavor or style, opinions differ.

The main difference lies in whether the original formal properties, such as the syntactic structure, the rhetoric devices, the order of words should be duplicated. Hot debate on this problem has been lasting for many years.

However, it is easier to address this issue if the functional equivalence theory is taken into consideration. The style of a work has great influence on the readers, thus the original style should be remained in the target version. Nevertheless, this issue is rather complicated, and the awkward imitation of the original style in the target text may lead to the unreadable text, let alone touching reader's heart. Even though the two versions seem the same in form, they may differ from each other greatly in their flavors. Thus all should be guided by the similar effect they cause on readers.

Film subtitles, as the basic component of audiovisual products have their stylistic features. And the subtitling process is a much more complicated one for the spoken language should be coordinated with the non-verbal language. However, from the perspective of subtitling, style mainly refers to the way the speakers express their personalities and emotions. Without these differences, film characters would be like a body without soul. Thus, it shall be regarded as the soul of a film.

2.3 Subtitle Translation and Culture

Culture is another significant factor that should be taken into

consideration in translation, particularly in subtitle translation. In the past years, scholars began to be aware of the significance of culture in translation, though the word “culture” was not used at that time. Since the opening-up policy, a great many theories have been introduced into China, Chinese theorists absorbed some advanced theories and further developed them. From then on, cultural factors began to draw some attention of translators and theorists.

Studies show that culture is the source of language and language is the carrier of culture. Since culture came into being, it must be spread, exchanged, continued and developed. And translation is the tool of culture communication. Therefore, culture and translation are indispensable. Without culture, translation would be like a body without soul; and without translation, culture may not be so lively and diversified. And translation makes a great contribution to the prosperity of the world culture. Also, a satisfactory translation cannot be achieved if the translator has no adequate knowledge of the two cultures involved. In the process of providing help for Bible translators, Nida turns his eyes on the cultural factors in translation.

In 1964, Nida distinguished the cultural system into five types, namely, the ecological culture, linguistic culture, religious culture, material culture and social culture. According to his works and articles, translation is not a matter of language alone. The details are explained as

follows:

“A language is always a part of culture and the meaning of any text refers directly or indirectly to the corresponding culture. Ultimately words only have the meaning in terms of the corresponding culture”. (Nida, 2002:286)

He also points out that translators should at least have the bilingual competence, but this is virtually not enough. A competent translator is also required to be bicultural in order to sense the cultural implication under source language. (Nida, 2002)

In fact, culture elements deserve more attention than linguistic factors. According to Nida, many translation errors occur as a result of the translator’s wrong cultural assumptions rather than his or her inadequate linguistic knowledge. (Nida, 2004:29). He also states that the meaning of verbal symbols on any and every level depends on the culture of the language community. Thus, in the process of translation, translators should determine the meaning of a word not only by looking at the syntactic context, but also by considering its cultural context, for “the cultural contexts of words are the keys to understanding the meanings of texts” (Nida, 2002:272-273).

The current society is reflected in certain aspects of a language, but primarily in its optional features, i.e. in certain hierarchies of vocabulary

and in the priorities given to various discourse patterns. But a language does not, however reflect the culture in its phonology or syntax, which are largely fixed and arbitrary and must be in such an order to function more or less automatically (Nida, 2002:80). This point of view is of great significance for translators so as to avoid close reproduction of the syntactical structures of the original language, and to render a natural translation in the target language. Therefore, it is very necessary for translators to adopt the cultural adjustment for producing a functional equivalent translation.

In subtitle translation, the cultural elements should also be taken into consideration, for foreign people may not share the same cultural connotation as we do. Also the time and space constraints make this theory more outstanding. Only when translators adopt appropriate strategies guided by this theory, can the audience understand the cultural information in a short time.

2.4 Subtitle Translation and Receptors

Just as other forms of literature, films are translated for their receptors, that is, the audience. Thus the receptor is another important factor that deserves study.

According to the film sociology, when an audience appreciates the film, he or she is indirectly participating in the course of

meaning-processing. This coincides with the Reception theory, which maintains that literature should be treated as a dialectical process of production and reception. In this reader-response theory, the focus is placed on the reception of a text on its receptor. According to this theory, the audience should be regarded as the producer rather than the consumer of meanings. As a matter of fact, the meaning of a text can be explained in different manners by different audiences, thus the translation should be determined by the audience's receptions. The most significant inspiration of this theory is that the receptor's role will be greatly raised, and the audience's response is considered as a natural result of the works' effect on its receptor.

Nida, also absorbing some inspiration from this theory, regards the reader or receptor as the primary evaluator of the translation quality. Based on the principle of equivalent effect, Nida's dynamic equivalence, later with the name of functional equivalence, emphasizes that the relationship between target receptor and target language message should be primarily equivalent with that between the original receptors and the source message. A dynamic equivalent translation attempts to relate the receptor modes of behavior relevant within the context of target language culture, aiming at reproducing a full and natural expression. And the receptors are not asked to comprehend the cultural patterns of the source-language context. Therefore, its focus of attention is directed

toward the receptor's response instead of the source message.

This theory broke the limitation of traditional translation approach, placing an emphasis on the relationship of source language text and target language text. At the same time, the response of the readers to the translated version is also taken into consideration. A good translation is the one which can let the target language readers resonant the image or conception with what the source language readers feel.

Film translation is a kind of literary translation, but it is different from the traditional literature. Film has a history of over one hundred years. And this process proves the fact that film is a major form of entertainment for the mass audience instead of being the teaching books for students, or the precious artistic works collected in the rich men's cupboard. And the life of a film is a process of creation, industrial production and circulation. Even though it is endowed with other enrichments, entertaining the audience should be placed in the first. Therefore, these theories about the relationship between translators and its receptors are also adequate to guide the subtitle translation.

Chapter 3 A Detailed Analysis of Subtitle Translation

After making a macro research on this subject, the following part focuses its attention on the detailed analysis of subtitle translation, so as to provide better services for constructing its theoretical framework.

3.1 Subtitling—A Special Genre of Literary Translation

It is generally accepted that film is a comprehensive art form, but dispute on the nature of film art has been lasting for long time. And in the past, many scholars considered it as inferior to the traditional literature. However, things have changed a lot.

Wang Xiaoyu, a professor of East China Normal University, quoted in her book as that in terms of style, audiovisual literature can be categorized into dramatic form, novelistic form, poetic form, psychological form, etc. She also states that one can read some literary scripts of special stylistics if he or she is intended to know the relevant kinds of audiovisual literature. It is obvious that this kind of categorization is more close to the categorization of literature, drawing increasing attention in the modern society.

From the perspective of film production process, film products are the results of various factors, among which the film scripts are

indispensable. Film scripts are the basis of film productions, and many scripts are initially literature works, such as *Gone with Wind*, *Pride and Prejudice*, etc. Without a good script, a successful film cannot be achieved, for no one would like to take a risk to invest substantial money in it. A successful literary script is the guarantee of a successful movie. On the other hand, many film subtitles are published as a book for the reader to appreciate and study. Thus it is necessary to categorize the audiovisual text into the literature.

But film literature is different from the traditional literature for its varied displaying forms. Here the author presents specialties from the following aspects.

3.2 Features of Subtitle Translation

It is well known that audiovisual products are a kind of artistic forms in which moving images and voices are perfectly integrated together. Those pictures and voices flash rapidly on the screen without giving the audience another thought. As a result, film languages are often popular languages easily understood by the common people. Moreover, all the films wish to enjoy a high box office so the receptors of the films are the mass people of all social status rather than a particular social group. All of these require that subtitle translation must bear some special features.

3.2.1 Popularity

This feature is decided by the specialty of the film language itself. Since its creation, films are a major form of popular arts, which is different from the literary works such as novels, essays and poems. Because these literary works have to defer from one another in their content and the elegance of their languages in order to meet the needs of readers with special education backgrounds. But the film audience is not confined to any special group, for all groups may be involved. This feature is also decided by the commercial property of itself. For the purpose of compensating costs of film production and acquiring more profit, all films directors wish their own films can be widely recognized by the public to realize the commercial objectives. As films' potential receptors are the mass people with varied ages, backgrounds, and social status, their contents should be in accordance with the common people's education and their reception capabilities. The crux of the matter lies in the film language, for the obscure and artificial language will drained the audience's interests, which in turn loses the films' market as well as its inherent value. Only a film is easily understood by the audience, will it get their appreciation, and whole value be manifested completely. Thus when subtitling a film, translators should also choose popular oral language rather than flowery words to make it clear and easily understood. Of course, there are some exceptions such as the translation of a speech

or some other special styles.

3.2.2 Instantaneity

Films are composed of large numbers of motion pictures with character's dialogues, and subtitles are also shown on the screen simultaneously to interpret those dialogues, thereby they are shortly presented. And the duration of a full single-line subtitle has its own temporal parameter. Unlike literary works, they would pass in the blink of an eye, and can neither be browsed as a book, nor be noted with explanations. Thus, the length of translation should be in strict limitation, and only concise translation is allowed. Beyond that, the film information should be easily understood by the audience without any notes. Hence, this feature poses some obstacles for translate cultural information.

3.2.3 Harmony

According to Baker (1998), film is a semiotic composition consisting of four channels:

1. The verbal auditory channel, which includes dialogue and background voices and maybe lyrics.
2. The non-verbal auditory channel, which is made up of natural sound, sound effects, as well as music.
3. The verbal visual channel, comprising the sub-titles and any

writing within the film, as for example, letters, posters, books, newspapers, graffiti, or advertisements.

4. The non-verbal visual channel, which includes the composition of the image, camera positions and movement as well as the editing controls the general flow and mood of the movie.

Besides the dialogue, the film products also include background music, body language, etc. These languages are not isolated but interact with each other, working together as indispensable parts of the film. Therefore subtitles should be in harmony with other kinds of film languages. In some films, certain nonverbal messages need to be subtitled. Otherwise, they may trigger some misunderstanding and confusion to the mass audience.

3.2.4 Space Limitations

Subtitles are space-limited. As a special kind of textual translation, subtitles are usually presented at the bottom of the screen, so that they only cover a limited area usually occupied by image action which is less important to the general aesthetic appreciation of the target film. Generally, no more than two lines can be presented once in a scene, and action. The number of characters per line should base on the portion of the spoken text, and be limited by the space of the screen. Generally speaking, no more than two lines of subtitles should be presented and

14-16 words should remain on the screen. In other words, subtitles should be informative as well as concise; sometimes some unimportant information such as prepositions and pronouns can be omitted.

3.3 Constraints of Subtitle Translation

Subtitles are an important component of the original film and there are many factors restricting the process of subtitling. For the purpose of providing enough reading time and maximum information for audience, the translators should think over the translation carefully. Subtitle translation bears both the features of general translation and its unique individuality. Here, the author would analyze its constraints in terms of the following three aspects.

3.3.1 Technical Constraints

Technical constraints mainly refer to the time and space available for the presentation of the subtitles. Let's make a further analysis of the spatial and temporal constraints of the film subtitles.

(1) Spatial constraint

Spatial constraints are concerned with the size of screen, the lines of subtitle and words count. According to Karamitoglou, subtitles usually consist of no more than two lines of an average maximum length of 40 characters on which it is hard to reach an agreement. As a rule, subtitles

should be placed at the lower part of the screen and the lowest line should appear at least 1/12 of the total screen height above the bottom of the screen on the horizontal axis, so that the important image action would not be covered, and the eyesight of the audience would travel a shorter distance on the film screen to read the subtitle. Sometimes there is an exception, and subtitles could be placed at the upper part of the screen. In addition, subtitle are either centered or left aligned on the screen.

(2) Temporal constraint

The restriction on time derives from the need for synchronicity and the reading speed of viewers. Guardini states that the time available is decided by the following aspects:

- “(a) the duration of the utterance in the original version;
- (b) the reading speed of the viewers;
- (c) the visual information given in the screen, which also needs to be perceived clearly by the viewer, and
- (d) the editing style adopted in the film” (Guardini, 1998:98).

Karamitroglou has made a systematic and exhaustive research on this subject. Firstly, initiation of the speaker’s utterance doesn’t indicate the beginning of the presentation of the subtitles. In fact, they should be presented 1/4 of a second later because it is the right time for our brain to process the advent of spoken linguistic material and guide the eyes

towards the bottom of the screen to anticipate the subtitle. Secondly, over the issue of the duration of subtitle, two important factors should be taken into account. One is the reading speed of the audience, the other the time taken by sound or image. Due to the varieties of educational background and the comprehension ability, people's reading speed may vary from one another. Karamitroglou holds that the average reading speeds for a text of average complexity has proven to be about 150-180 words per minute, i.e. between 2.5-3 words per second. It implies that a full two-line subtitle of 14-16 words should be kept on the screen for a maximum time of something less than 5.5 seconds so that the audience will have enough time to catch the meaning. As for a single-line subtitle, it should be remained for at least 1.5 seconds, even though only one word exists. Otherwise, the subtitle would like a mere flash for the audience and irritates their eyes. Thirdly, there is also some restriction on lagging-out time. That is to say, after the end of utterance, subtitle should be kept on the screen for no more than 2 seconds, even though no other utterance starts in these two seconds. The reason lies in that subtitles should be faithful to the spoken text in content as well as the time of presentation. Otherwise, the quality of the subtitles will be degenerated and feelings of distrust would be generated among the audience.

3.3.2 Textual Constraints

As we have mentioned above, film language is made up of the following four channels: the verbal auditory channel, the non-verbal auditory channel, the verbal visual channel, the non-verbal visual channel. Because of this feature of the film language, the key to subtitling is to pay more attention to the verbal visual channel instead of the verbal acoustic channel. Accordingly, the subtitle translators should not ignore the visual information provided by the film and render some subtitles when needed, even though no utterance is offered then. This will minimize the chance of being criticized by the audience for the short of sufficient information. Textual constraints also relate to the “change of medium” in subtitle translation. In subtitle translation, the oral languages are replaced by the written words. The change of mode will inevitably cause large amount of adjustments in the original film text.

3.3.3 Linguistic Constraints

We can make analysis of linguistic constraints from two aspects. One is concerned with the structural aspect of language, and the other is related to the cultural aspect of language. Guardini also categorizes the linguistic constraints into two kinds, i.e. intra-linguistic constraints and extra-linguistic constraints. Based on his study, intra-linguistic constraints mainly handle with syntactic and grammatical differences between the

source language and the target language. It is the culture rather than structure of the language that is covered in the extra-linguistic aspect, such as the wordplay, idioms and proverbs as well as slang translation. In the process of subtitling, the cultural information should be properly handled; otherwise, it would lead to misunderstandings which in turn, will degrade the quality of the film.

3.4 Functions of Subtitle Translation

As a popular form of language transformation, subtitles offer more and more services for people's lives. Generally speaking, subtitles mainly have three functions.

3.4.1 Delivering Information

According to Nida, translation is a kind of communication. In his definition of translation, the primary aspect that language translation should deal with is the meaning, namely, the information of the source language. Subtitle translation, as a sub-branch of translation study, also delivers film information. To those who don't know foreign languages, subtitles can help them conquer the linguistic barriers to get a better understanding of the foreign films they watch. To the hard-of-hearing, subtitles also offer them chances to get access to this interesting form of entertainment by watching the visual words. If the information cannot be

transferred correctly, the audience would fall into confusion when watching the motion pictures. As a result, film translators should faithfully transfer the film information.

3.4.2 Spreading Culture

As is known to all that film is a kind of comprehensive art forms. Film languages, including speech, image, music, literature, sound effects, are all conducive to reflect the human languages, lifestyles and even values, all of which are significant parts of their social culture. Therefore, when enjoying film plots, film viewers are also receiving the cultural information of the source language. Subtitles make it possible for Chinese people to appreciate exotic life, and they are also beneficial to spread our Chinese culture to the world and deepen their understanding of China. Consequently, this function requires translators not only transfer the language information of the source film accurately, but also deliver the culture information efficaciously. In this process the elaborately weighing of the words, especially the culture-specific words, is absolutely indispensable.

3.4.3 Aesthetic Enjoyment

Art will provide aesthetic enjoyment for people, so will film. What film can give lies not only in the beautiful scenes, costumes, stars and the

complex plots, but also in the beautiful language. Generally when we comment on a film, film language plays a vital role. Dialogue constitutes a large part of film language, and it will affect the quality of the film directly. Usually film language is concise, as it has to narrate stories in a limited time; film language is also expressive, cutting out all the unnecessary repetitions and unrelated details. When the protagonists are expressing emotion, they will convey the maximum information through minimum use of words. Meanwhile, film language is sometimes different from what people use in daily life, for it may employ some rarely used rhetoric devices to realize the desired effect. People will often be attracted by the beautiful language that is expressive, forceful, tactful and humorous, which will give aesthetic enjoyment to the audience.

3.4.4 Realizing Commercial Value

As a popular entertainment, film also brings its commercial purpose. Almost all film directors want to obtain the highest box-office value, which is also one of the factors propping up the development of film industry. Owing to the film subtitle translation, films gradually transcend national borders and languages marching to the world, which would definitely bring higher box office value. This function requires subtitlers to take the commercial purpose into consideration, and try to make the language more popularized and easy to understand in order to attract the

audiences of different cultural backgrounds.

However, no matter what functions films can play, one influential factor can't be ignored, namely, the mass audience. As the receiver of film information and the disseminator of the culture, film audience also play a decisive role in film's commercial value. Hence, it should be considered as the factor of utmost importance when making subtitling.

Chapter 4 Principles and Requirements for Subtitle Translation

As is known to all, subtitle translation follows the rules of general translations, but it should bear its own translation standard for its unique features. In the past decades, many people who engaged in this field are all busy in exploring the translation strategies. But without translation principles as a guidance, how to choose the most adequate strategies? How to evaluate the quality of translation?

On the basis of the above analysis, the author proposes some principles in order to provide some evaluation criteria for subtitle translation. Beyond that, some special requirements for translators have been put forward to improve the quality of subtitle translation.

In the chapter, all the data cases¹ are mainly from *Roman Holiday*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Kung Fu Panda II*, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, *Ghost*, *Forrest Gump*.

4.1 Principles for Subtitle Translation

The principles for translation have always been a hot debate for many scholars. Yan Fu proposed three translation principles, i.e. faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance. But how to deal with the

situations where the three criteria fail to be met at the same time, which is often the case? What's more, subtitle translation is not the same with literary translation. An Australian writer Linda Jaivin employs three words to describe the basic translation principles, namely, "briefness, straightness, clearness". "Briefness" is the initial principle, and "straightness" means directly handling with the euphemisms or expressions with rich meaning. This principle is put forward for the Chinese culture and the implicit Chinese language. "Clearness" refers to that translation should be easily understood. On the basis of these principles, the author makes some integration and provides some other principles.

4.1.1 Principle of Faithfulness and Conciseness

No matter what kind of translation, being faithful to the original text is the basic principle. Otherwise, the nature of translation would be changed and the target text cannot be categorized into translation. Film subtitle translation is no exception. However, some problems should be pointed out. Firstly, there are cases when the form and content of the source message cannot be faithfully transferred at the same time. In this circumstance, the faithful translation of the source content should take predominant precedence over the transformation of the original form. Otherwise, film audience may not understand what the actors want to say,

let alone appreciate the film. This would certainly lead to a failure of the film. Moreover, the target text should be faithful to the content of the moving pictures. Even though lip-sync is not necessary in the film subtitling, the target version of subtitles should be well coordinated with the protagonists' expressions, behaviors, tones and mood of utterances, which are also parts of the source content. Look at this example:

(1) Chris: Thanks anyway. Very much. Maybe next quarter.

Doctor: It's possible.

(The Pursuit of Happiness)

Target version:

克里斯：真的非常感谢。或许下个季度。

医生：可能哦。

In this conversation, the doctor utters his words with a rising tone. If we just translate into “有可能”, the target version is not faithful enough. But if we add a mood particle “哦”, the source text has been faithfully transferred in the largest extent. And the doctor's friendliness has also been delivered.

Other factors should also be taken into account, namely, the film context. And the translators should determine the meaning of certain words in the concrete context. Otherwise, the audience would get into confusion, which will certainly influence their reception of the other message. Let's look at the following examples:

(2) But their son, Lord Shen saw darker path in the fireworks.

(Kung Fu Panda II)

One Chinese version for comparison:

但他们的儿子，沈王爷在烟火中看到了一条更黑暗的道路。

The words “darker path” should be literally translated into “黑暗的道路”. But from the screen, we cannot see a path presented on the screen. Then, they may be a metaphor. From the following part of the film, we could see that this “darker path” is actually a plan. Thus, here is the suggested version:

但他们的儿子，沈王爷在烟火中看到了一个邪恶的计划。

Apart from faithfulness, the target version should also be concise for the time and space constraints. This principle raises more challenges for translators, for the target subtitle should be as short as possible without the loss of important information. Otherwise, the audience wouldn't get enough time to read the subtitle, and the film would probably fail in its box offices. For example:

(3) Po: And the Five! Man, you should've seen them! They totally hate me.

(Kung Fu Panda)

Version1: 阿波：还有那五个，你真该看看他们那样，他们恨死我了。

Version2: 阿宝：而那五个，天啊，他们都快恨死我了。

In this example, we can easily see that the underlined parts are faithfully translated in the Version 1, but are omitted in the Version 2. But the omission is acceptable without any loss of important information.

(4) Crane: Yeah, I should probably get to sleep now.

(Kung Fu Panda)

Version1: 仙鹤: 是呀, 我现在也许真该睡一会儿了。

Version2: 仙鹤: 是啊, 我得早睡了。

In the example 6, the target version 1 is more faithful to form of the source text. But the target version 2 is obviously more concise.

When faithfulness and conciseness contradict with each other, the latter should come first as long as the major information is remained. Otherwise, the audience would have not enough time to read them, leading to the loss of information in the audience's mind. This would in turn affect the faithfulness of the source film.

4.1.2 Principle of Naturalness

To obtain naturalness can serve as another principle in the Chinese to English subtitle translation. By naturalness the author means that the sentences in the target text should be naturally rendered so as to conform to the regular standard of Chinese language. Only in this way, can the audience watch the Chinese films without any trace of awkwardness

strangeness in its grammatical and semantic form. Here're some examples:

(5) Master Oogway: One often meets his destiny on the road he takes to avoid it.

(Kung Fu Panda)

Some versions for comparison:

Version1: 乌龟大师：越想逃避宿命，越会在半道上与宿命撞个正着。

Version2: 乌龟大师：逆天行命，反促因果。

These two versions are both provided on the screen. Version 1 follows original form, and faithfully conveys the source message. But this piece of subtitle appears on the film only for several seconds. It is very hard for people to understand it for Chinese people don't express similar opinions in that way. In the version 2, translators use parallel structure with only eight words to make a transformation, which not only conveys the original meaning but also naturally delivers Master Oogway's wisdom. Thus the latter is much better than the former.

(6) Crane: Yeah, or could at least touch his toes.

Monkey: Or even see his toes.

(Kung Fu Panda)

Version 1: 仙鹤：是呀,至少手能碰到脚趾头。

金猴： 他胖得连脚趾头都看不见。

Version 2: 仙鹤: 怎么着也该得够得着脚趾头吧。

金猴: 能看着就不错了。

In this example, the version 2 is more natural. The words “怎么着...” and “...就不错了” are often used in the oral Chinese.

(7)Po: I just... My whole life I dreamed of...

(Kung Fu Panda)

Version 1: 阿波: 我只是...我从小就有一个梦...

Version 2: 阿宝: 我只是...我这辈子就梦想着...

Verb groups are used more in the Chinese languages, therefore “梦想着...”, is more suitable.

When naturalness and faithfulness cannot meet at the same time, the former should be placed on the first place. Otherwise, the audience would lose interest in the film, let alone getting the faithful information. However, this way of language transfer should also be made on the basis of the original film information.

4.1.3 Principle of Remaining the Original Style

Film is a kind of comprehensive art, and the verbal language in the film products covers all aspects of people's lives, such as lyrics, poems, proverbs, terms, etc. However, English films can be categorized into different groups, such as comedies, sad movies, historical movies, and so on. The language in these films has different styles. For example, in

comedies, the language is humorous and tasty, while in sad movies, the style of language is cumbersome, which is appropriate to the screen.

Apart from what we have mentioned above, in the same film, different protagonists boasts of different language styles, for every protagonist is unique in the film. These language styles not only reflect the characteristics of different protagonists, but also infer their status, sex, education background as well as other social factors. So in the translation process, language styles should be maintained to a largest extent. Here're some examples:

(8) Anne: And you are?

Joe: Bradley, Joe Bradley.

Anne: Delighted.

Joe: You don't know how delighted I am to meet you.

Anne: You may sit down.

(Roman Holiday)

One version for comparison:

安：尊姓大名？

阿祖：祖布利

安：很高兴认识你。

阿祖：我更高兴荣幸。

安：你可以坐下了。

This is a part of dialogue in *Roman Holiday*. When the Princess

Anne got tired of the tedious royal life, she escaped from the palace, and was brought to Joe's house by accident. The next morning, when she woke up, she uttered these words to Joe. But her way of speaking reveals her nobility. For Anne, "delighted" is the diplomatic language which she used to say. For Joe, this word exposes his excitement, for the accidental meeting with the princess would brought him many pieces of surprising news as a journalist. Thus, the original style should be remained in the target version. Here is the suggested version:

安：你是？

阿祖：祖布利

安：幸会。

阿祖：你不知道见到你我多荣幸。

安：赐坐。

(9) Mantis: When he walks, the very ground shakes!

(Kung Fu Panda)

Target version 1: 金猴：他一走动，大地都会颤抖。

Target version 2: 金猴：他一走，地也抖三抖。

After giving a performance of Kung Fu, the Furious Five laugh at Po with various words. And the Monkey is one of them. Version 1 only shows the literal meaning. However, in version 2, "走" rhymes with "抖" remaining the original style, since "walks" rhymes with "shakes" in the

source text. Besides, this way of expressions displays the teasing flavor of the Monkey's words.

What one must remember is that remaining the original style doesn't mean formal correspondence. On the contrary, what we pursue is the spiritual resemblance rather than the formal one.

4.1.4 Principle of Cultural Adjustment

As we have mentioned before, language and culture are indispensable. And film is composed of languages of various channels, then we can say that film is a particular kind of cultural product, which not only serves as a culture carrier but also reflects the culture of source language. Beyond that, film also poses great influence on people's perception and appreciation of the foreign culture. Through those voices and images, we acquire detailed knowledge of the foreign culture. With the economy rocketing high and globalization tendency strengthening, cross-cultural communication develops in a smooth way and an increasing number of foreign films are imported into China, especially those from America. Therefore, the translation of cultural elements is rather significant in subtitle translation.

As is known that people from different countries are the same in their basic feelings and mental activities, Chinese and English people have many cultural elements in common. In addition, cross-cultural

communication triggers the inter-pervasion and inter-impact of different cultures. Many foreign cultural images are accepted by Chinese people, such as McDonald(麦当劳), Karaoke (卡拉OK), Internet (因特网) . In this case, literal translation can produce the equivalence.

However, in most cases, some cultural elements are unique only in the one language, or the same connotations do not share the same language carrier between the source and the target culture, as a result of historical and geographical differences. For example, the ancient China placed great emphasis on farming, in the process of which cow is usually used to plough. Naturally, Chinese people are very fond of cow, and regarded it as a symbol of diligence and sincerity. People often quote a line from Lu Xun, a great Chinese writer, “俯首甘为孺子牛(cow)” in praise of some people capable of sacrifice and endurance. While in ancient England, horses are used to plough the land, thereby symbolizing the hard-working and industrious spirit. There are some English proverbs which can reflect this tradition, such as “work like a horse”, “as strong as a horse”. Britain is built on an island surrounded by water, which has given an immense development to navigation and fishery. Thus many English proverbs have something to do with fish, such as “a cold fish”, “teach a fish how to swim”, and so on.

Under such circumstances, literal translation cannot solve the problem, for which would lead to misunderstanding and confusion. While

this can be addressed by Nida's views about language and culture. To achieve functional equivalence, Nida states that "The greater the differences in the source and target cultures, the greater the need for adjustments" (Nida, 2001:95).

Therefore, cultural adjustment is very necessary for subtitle translation. When the target cultural image does not share the same connotation with the source image, the translators can make cultural modifications in handling some cultural words and idioms so as to achieve "similar response". For example,

(10) Gump: (Off screen voice) From that day on, we was always together. Jenny and I was like peas and carrots.

(Forrest Gump)

阿甘：(画外音)从那天开始，我们一直在一起，我和珍妮形影不离。

The English subtitles have rich cultural connotations. Through literal translation, the words "like peas and carrots" should be transferred into "就像豌豆和胡萝卜". Then the audience would get confused, because in Chinese culture, these two images do not have many connections and there's not much time for the audience to take a second thought. In fact, this idiom comes from the American slang language. These two kinds of vegetables often appear in the same plate to dot other vegetables, for their high value of nutrition. Thus, translators make some adjustment and

transfer it into the way which the Chinese audience are familiar with.

(11) Gump: It made me look like a duck in water.

(Forrest Gump)

阿甘：它让我如鱼得水。

Obviously, the underlined part is obviously a metaphor, indicating to do something very easily and naturally. If it is literally translated into “如鸭在水”, it may sound unnatural for Chinese audience. But when seeing the words “如鱼得水”, the Chinese audience could have in their minds the same pictures as the English audience could.

4.1.5 Principle of Similar Response Between Target and Source

Audience

Audience plays a decisive role not only in the process of film industry, but also in the subtitle translation. This can be accounted by the fact that a good translation may not lead to a successful film, but a film with terrible translation is destined to be a failure. Besides, even though film subtitles have various functions, its main objective is to make the film accepted, appreciated as the source audience does. What's more, it is impossible to translate all source messages for the limits of time and space, and the redundant message should be omitted without any influence on the target audience. Therefore, a best translation is the one

which evokes the similar response on the target audience as the source text does on the source audience. With this final objective in heart, translators can select different strategies to suit different text.

(12)Po: I'm coming at you with crazy feet.

(Kung Fu Panda)

阿宝：我用无影脚问候你。

When Master Shifu wants Po to show his Kung Fu, he says these words. Actually we all know that Po doesn't know Kung Fu, and he is a little bit coward, even though he pretends to be brave. The words "crazy feet" literally means kicking somebody continuously and quickly. But if they are translated into "我要对你进行狂踢", you cannot feel the humorous atmosphere. However, there's a kind of "crazy feet" in the Chinese Kung Fu, that is, "无影脚". Almost all Chinese people are familiar with it. But only skilled warrior can perform it. If Po said he could perform it, it must be a joke. Then, the target text has successfully produced the laughing point, giving the Chinese people a sense of humor.

(13) Master Oogway: There's a saying. Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the "present".

(Kung Fu Panda)

Version 1: 乌龟大师：有句话说的好：昨天是段历史，明天是个谜团，而今天是天赐的礼物。像珍惜礼物

那样珍惜今天。

Version 2: 乌龟大师: 有句话说的好, 昨日已逝, 明日未知, 而今日为金, 这就是为什么我叫它“今”日。

In the source version, the difficulty lies in the translation of “present”. This homograph carries two meanings: one is “gift”, and the other is today. Then, how to produce the similar effect on the target audience is quite a problem. In the version 1, translators render a text with the use of simile. However, the special effect of the word is diminished. Version 2 makes use of the homophone “jin”, perfectly presenting the equivalent effect on the target audience. What’s more, this version is very concise in form but rich in meaning, showing the character and wisdom of Master Oogway. Therefore, in this example, target version 2 can render better services for the target audience to get the similar response as the source audience.

These five principles do not contradict with one another. The principle of faithfulness and conciseness is the basis of translation, and the similar response principle should be regarded as the final objective. The first four principles can serve as the approaches to produce the similar response between the target and the source audience.

4.2 Special Requirements for A Qualified E-C Film Subtitlers

It is known that only limited scholars have paid their attention to the

research of subtitle translations, and there are very few translators engaging in the related jobs. This status quo can be attributable to the special problems confronting translators from the films. Unlike the translation of traditional literary works, such as a novel, a poem, or an essay, the duality inherent in the art of film requires language to combine with visual and acoustic images. This explains why some scholars refer to the translation of English films as “constrained translation”. Over the issue of subtitle translation, a large number of very different factors have to be taken into account, such as professional, sociocultural and technical ones, as well as language and communication factors, all of which have posed some special requirements for a qualified subtitlers.

4.2.1 Aesthetic Appreciation

It is said that music is a kind of audio art, painting a visual art, and film a psychological art. Many people may wonder why film should be a kind of psychological art, as we watch the films by our eyes and listen to the film.

In fact, films are different from the music or painting. There are many cases in the history that some musical and painting works didn't win much popularity when they were created. But many years later, people began to pay attention to these works and find out their values. But this cannot happen on the film art. The popularity feature makes it

impossible to wait, and it should be tested by the audience and the market as soon as it has been produced. Otherwise, it would lose its popularity forever. For that reason, film art is more like a psychological art than any other art forms. If the film cannot catch the audience's hearts, it will lose its basis for existence. Therefore, the research in aesthetic psychology has practical meaning for the existence and development of film industry.

Aesthetic psychology is a highly complicated system, especially relating to films. Modern research has proved that aesthetic psychology is composed of various factors such as perception, attention, imagination, emotion, and compassion, etc. And these factors are not independent, on the contrary, they interact with one another, constituting a dynamic structure of aesthetic psychology.

Before offering subtitles for the film, a subtitler should first watch the film or the film script to know the film content. But he is not an ordinary audience, for he should render services for other viewers. The specialty of subtitles lies in the fact that he watches the film not just by "eyes", but also by perception, comprehension, and imagination so as to transfer the original spirit. This kind of aesthetic appreciating process involves the appreciation of both the cultural features and the artistic features of films, so as to comprehend the connotation of film messages. Only an accurate comprehension of the message can provide a basis for

accurate and natural expression.

4.2.2 Linguistic Competence

Even though we have mentioned that aesthetic appreciation is very significant, some other requirements are also necessary for a real competitive subtitler. And linguistic competence is one of them. Qian Shaochang states that audiovisual translation is a part of literary translation, and it requires translators to have a good command of both the source and target languages. Only in this way can they catch the spirit of the film art and deliver the film information accurately.

Linguistic competence includes not only the observance to grammatical or syntactic structures, but also the skillful use of words, idioms, proverbs, and rhetoric devices, etc. Let's look at an example:

(14) Legend tells of a legendary warrior, whose kung fu skills were the stuff of legend. He travelled the land in search of worthy foes.

(Kung Fu Panda)

Two versions for comparison:

Version 1: 传说中有位传奇的大侠，他的功夫堪称传奇。他走遍各地，来寻找值得的敌人。

Version 2: 传说中有位传奇大侠，他的传奇功夫出神入化。他云游四方，寻找实力相当的对手。

The source message was faithfully transferred in both the two versions, but you don't find any interest in version 1 and it does not give you an amazing effect as the source message and the visual pictures do. This result is due to the linguistic competence of the translators. In the version 2, translators are excellent in language skills by using of the Chinese idioms in the process of subtitling, such as “出神入化”, “云游四方”, “实力相当”. These idioms make the audience feel as if they were in the film pictures.

4.2.3 Cultural Awareness

Traditionally, translators only pay their attention to the language itself in the process of translation, and they regard the bilingual competence as an essential requirement for translators. However, it is very hard for translators to have an active competence in both the source and the target languages. And some successful translators only have a passive competence in a source language. As a matter of fact, biculturalism is more significant than bilingualism for truly successful translating. Wang Zuoliang, a famous Chinese translator, states that the translator should be a real cultural man, which means he should have a good command of two languages and the corresponding cultures as well. He cannot understand the language without understanding its culture. Consequently, he cannot make good translation. Since English words or

idioms only have meaning in its own culture, translators cannot cannot make a thorough understanding without taking their cultural backgrounds into consideration. This can account for why a majority of training programs of translators and interpreters require that students should spend at least six months to a year in each of the countries where the acquired languages are spoken. Only in this way can they obtain the necessary sensitivity to the many special meanings of words and phrases (Nida, 2002: 82).

In the process of subtitling, translators should bear the cultural awareness in mind. On the one hand, they should have a thorough understanding of both the English culture and the Chinese culture; on the other hand, they should take proper attitudes toward the Chinese language culture. These two aspects will have a great effect on both the choices of strategies and the quality of the translation. Here's an example:

(15) Sam: You're going to be fertilizer. They are going to bury you
right next to Jimmy Hoffa.

(Ghost)

Suggested version:

山姆：你们会变成肥料，他们会把你们葬在大流氓吉米·霍法的幕旁。

In this example, "Jimmy Hoffa" is a cultural image originating from the American history. It is known to most Americans that Jimmy Hoffa

was a powerful but controversial leader of Teamsters Union from 1957 to 1971. Often alleged to have ties to organized crime, Hoffa was finally convicted of fraud and jury tampering in 1964 and served four years in prison before his sentence was commuted by President Nixon. In 1975, he was still trying to regain power in the union, but he disappeared from a restaurant parking lot in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He was widely assumed to have been killed by the Mafia. His body was never found, and in 1983 he was declared legally dead. But the Chinese audience are not familiar with him. Thus the literal translation will certainly diminished the equivalent effect. Therefore, translators should firstly understand the related culture, then choose the proper strategies to make some adjustment so as to save the audience's effort. In the suggested version, translators add “大流氓” to describe this figure, then the Chinese audience will obtain the similar effect as the American audience does.

4.2.4 Sense of Responsibility

This is the basic and the most significant requirement for translators. Nowadays, with the development of the technology, it is very convenient for people to share information and resources with other people on the internet, and film subtitles are no exception. People are allowed to submit their target version of subtitles to the some special film websites freely, and these versions differ greatly in their translation quality. Apart from

personal competence, translators' attitude can largely lead to these disparities. Some of the target texts have been completed only in several hours without careful consideration, affecting the audience's film-watching process. Therefore, a good translator should be responsible for both the source text and the target audience. Here are some suggestions.

In the first place, translators should make good preparation before translation. Those who start translating immediately upon the receipt of the subtitle list cannot render good services. An experienced translator would always watch the film or read the script first so as to he can get the general idea of the film and become familiar with the language style. However, a single viewing is not enough to obtain a fully understanding of every words of the film. It requires detailed watching for several time. In this process, some special details should also be taken into consideration, such as the mood of the utterance, the relationship between characters, the implication and reference of the text, the nonverbal information, etc. These details can make the target subtitles more accurate and original in style. In addition, translators should also find something about the director, the setting and the style of the film. All these information will have great influence on the choices of translation strategies.

In the subtitling process, the main objective of a translator is to

provide a expressive and natural translation on the basis of understanding. For this purpose, the subtitler should not only focus on the words, but also carefully consider the time and space constraints, the segmentations of the dialogues. In general conditions, no more than two sentences should occupy the same line. But if necessary, adjustment should be made either by combining two sentences into one or divide one into two so as to meet the semantic requirements or adress the time and space limitation.

The next step is the revising procedure, which can not be ignored by a responsible subtitler. Revising does not mean that the subtitler should reviewing it immediately after translation, instead, he or she should put it aside for several days until most of the details are forgotten. Then, the subtitler should carefully check it for mistakes, ommisions, additions. At the same time, the accuracy and consistency of the content should also be confirmed. A few days latter, a second revision should be done so as to guarantee the quality of translation.

Last but not the least, the testing procedure should be made to check the adequacy and the acceptability of the subtitles. It is highly desirable to find two experts in the fields of movie production and translation respectively to go over the target subtitles. The expert in movie production can judge whether the director's intention have been fully presented through the target message. And the specialist in translation is helpful to check the linguistic and stylistic problems, such as ambiguities,

awkward expressions in subtitles.

After checking by professionals, the translator should have the target subtitles loaded on the screen, and then invite some audience including both the source and target language speakers, to appreciate the film. In this process, the audience's response should be recorded to evaluate whether the different language audiences have the similar response. After watching, the translator can also ask the audience to give some suggestions so as to make some improvement. When the movie is shown on the screen, he or she can also invite some other translators to give their advices, which will be beneficial for his later work of subtitling.

Even though the whole process is very complicated, it is rewarding for a subtitler to get the knowledge that his or her work has been proved valuable to both the film makers and the audience. It will also pave a smoother way for his or her further development in translation.

Conclusion

Nowadays, many countries in the world have been aware of the significance of intercultural communication. And many things from foreign countries have been transmitted into China. However, there are still many foreign things which are unfamiliar to the Chinese people. In such cases, translation becomes more and more important. It is widely accepted that film is one of the best ways to reflect and transfer the culture of a given society, because it can make culture easily understood and accepted. However, the study on film translation is far from mature, with rare researches presented in China. Therefore, the author chooses the subtitling translation as a studying object.

Under the guidance of the Functional Equivalence theory, this thesis firstly makes a general studies on the subtitle translations in terms of four aspects. Film translation involves not only the linguistic translation, but also the conversions in culture and style. In the traditional translation theories, the audience is often ignored. However, functional equivalence theory, creatively absorbing essence from the reception theory, regards the audience's reaction as the highest evaluation criteria. Nida also suggests that the strategy-choosing process should be governed by the functional equivalence instead of the formal correspondence. This theory

has prevalent meaning in guiding the study of subtitle translation.

However, the general study is not enough. Then, the author makes a detailed analysis of the subtitle translation. Even though subtitle translation is a kind of literary translation, it also bears its unique specialties, which are shown in its features, constraints and functions. Meanwhile, these characteristics add more challenges to the subtitle translations.

On the basis of studies on both the macro-level and the micro-level, the author puts forward five principles to make sure of a successful translation of film subtitles. These principles can also serve as the evaluation criteria for the subtitle translation. Beyond that, some special requirements for English-Chinese subtitlers have also been presented to regulate the subtitle translation practice.

Film subtitling is a tough and complicated mission for translators. As a new research field, this thesis is unavoidable to have some limitations and deficiencies. Therefore, principles and requirements offered by the author should be regarded as suggestions rather than absolute rules. Besides, like any other theories, the theory of functional equivalence also has its weak points. This theory cannot explain and solve all the problems in the translation of film subtitles. And there are no certain criteria to evaluate the degree of equivalence. What's more, it is a much more complicated job to predict the audience's response and

appreciation psychology. All these problems deserve to be explored in the later studies of the translation field. All in all, from a long perspective, audiovisual translation, especially subtitle translation will surely attract more attention. Hopefully, this thesis will shed some light on the further study in this interesting but demanding field.

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Notes

[1] All the film examples including the target version in this thesis are selected from the following websites:

Roman Holiday

<http://tv.sohu.com/20090202/n262012902.shtml>

Kung Fu Panda

Target Version1:

<http://wenku.baidu.com/view/28ebed1655270722192ef7f5.html>

Target Version 2:

http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_7f9ee67d0100r4c4.html

Kung Fu Panda II

<http://www.docin.com/p-221285149.html>

The Pursuit of Happiness

http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzA1MzI3OTA0.html

Ghost

<http://video.sina.com.cn/v/b/53138514-1616928685.html>

Forrest Gump

<http://wenku.baidu.com/view/d2589ce86294dd88d0d26b8b.html>

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