

Subtitling English-Language Films for a Chinese Audience: Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Transfer

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the complex and intricate linguistic and cultural negotiations which take place when Anglophone films are officially subtitled for a Chinese audience. Different from the fansubbed ones, the authorised subtitles offer a stable body of work. They also underline an extra layer of cultural intervention in keeping with André Lefevere's (2002, p. 14) writing on the cultural institutions which shape the process of translation. The subtitles in question have not only been filtered through the Chinese translator's perspective, they have also been mediated by the government office which oversees the films chosen for subtitling and the way in which they are subtitled.

The thesis works on case studies from the genres of five films including children's films, political films, chick flicks, historical films and comedy seeking to break new ground by offering the first study of subtitling in relation to thematically heterogeneous genres of films and different disciplines. This contemporary phenomenon of subtitling from English into Chinese thus provides a valuable case study for the discipline of Translation Studies. Moreover, the project marries translation theory, literary criticism, political analysis and cultural criticism to unpick and analyse the translation strategies at play in the case study films. A dynamic theoretical framework is generated to argue that subtitles need to be evaluated as the intersection between multiple competing constraints and via the prism of multiple theoretical and scholarly disciplines.

Building on Venuti's binary argument in relation to foreignisation and domestication, this dissertation extends it to complex translational processes which sit at the confluence of linguistic, cultural, historical, political and commercial considerations. It adopts Jerry Griswold's (2006, pp.: 1-2) four themes in the construction of children's literature to capture and mediate the source film targeting children. When it comes to the translation of political film, Jonathan Charteris-Black (2005) and Meifang Zhang's (2016) work on political rhetoric and analysis is applied. To respond to the challenge that translators faced in specific historical context, examples drawn from the subtitles are grouped under Eva Wai-Yee Hung's (1980: 122) suggested aspects to unveil the historical specificities in early Dickens's Victorian era. The chick flick case study will apply Bronislaw Malinowski's (1994, p. 6) term "context of situation" to group examples with a clear attempt to broaden the scope of context. Lastly, in order to examine the complexities of humour in subtitling, Delia Chiaro's (2010) notion of

Verbally Expressed Humour (VEH) and four types of humour proposed by Patrick Zabalbeascoa (1996) will be considered to test the suitability of the classification of the comedic case-study film.

In order to examine the complex and intriguing subtitling relationship between the Anglophone source films and their Chinese subtitled versions, three main research questions are raised:

- (1) How do the five case studies cast light on the complexities and specificities of the subtitling process between Anglophone source films and the Chinese contexts for which they are destined when subtitled?
- (2) How do the case study films mediate the British culture and language of their source for the Chinese culture of their target audience?
- (3) Do specific film genres trigger the use of specific subtitling strategies in specific film genres or is the process of subtitling more fluid and dynamic?

The dissertation proved that the Chinese subtitles re-evaluate the complexities and specificities of British culture linked to the varied films and posit Chinese cultural values to shape the multidirectional facet of translation as much as the original source shapes its own. The study, thus, suggests that the hybrid dynamics of transformation occur as a result of the various forms of transfer and the interaction between them: linguistic, cultural, political, historical, ideological transfer and the transfer of gender, sexuality, and humour. Through this transformation, the Chinese subtitling process allows for elements of British heritage to permeate the Chinese culture with the ultimate goal of enhancing China's own cultural values.

KEYWORDS: British culture; Chinese subtitles; domestication; foreignization; subtitling

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跨语言和跨文化转换：英文电影的中文字幕翻译研究

摘要

本博士论文旨在探究官方英文电影的字幕翻译中译过程中，语言和文化转换的复杂性和独特性。与非官方的字幕制作不同，官方的字幕更能体现其稳定性；也和比利时学者安德烈·勒菲弗尔的操纵学派不谋而合。他认为，文化因素决定着整个翻译过程(Lefevere 2002, p. 14)。本文研究的字幕翻译进程不仅受中文译者的影响，也受中国政府监管。

本文开展了五种类型的电影案例分析，分别有儿童电影、政治电影、女性电影、历史电影和喜剧电影。本研究的原创性在于成为字幕翻译史上首个结合了不同电影种类和多个交叉学科的创新型研究。对当代中英文字幕翻译的研究提供一个宝贵的案例。本文的跨学科包括文学批评、政治分析、文化批评，这些动态结合的学科使本项目的理论框架和翻译策略分析更全面。再次证明，翻译学并不是孤立于其他学科的，恰恰相反，它是和其他学科共生的。

此研究建立在翻译理论家韦努蒂所提出的异化和归化这两个翻译概念的基础上，进一步延伸了翻译过程中的复杂性。此复杂性在于结合语言、文化、历史、商业等重要因素以重新解读翻译过程。具体而言，本研究采用了美国学者杰瑞·格里斯伍德四个构成儿童文学的关键词来重塑儿童电影的字幕翻译。政治电影章节选取的是乔纳森·查特里斯—布莱克(2005)和张美芳(2016)对政治话语的修辞与分析的分类进行探索。为了帮助译者翻译晦涩难懂的历史内容，历史章节借用孔慧怡(1980, p. 122)对维多利亚早期创作的《雾都孤儿》所归纳的不同例子类型来分类，以讨论带有历史特殊性例子的字幕翻译。而女性电影的案例则运用马林诺夫斯基(1994, p. 6)的术语“情景语境”来将例子归类，以进一步拓宽语境的言语范围。最后，为验明幽默翻译的复杂性，迪莉娅·基亚罗(2010)提出的“口头表达的幽默”概念和帕特里克·萨波毕斯可(1996)的四种幽默能够帮助我们更恰当地把喜剧电影中的幽默进行分类。

为了探讨错综复杂的字幕翻译过程、源语英文电影和他们对应的中文字幕三者之间的关系，本文提出以下三个科学问题：

- (1). 五个案例电影是如何体现源语英文电影和对应中文字幕语境之间的复杂性和独特性的？
- (2). 五个案例电影的中文字幕翻译是如何平衡英国语言和文化、中国文化和目标中国观众三者之间的差异的？
- (3). 不同的特定电影类别是否存在特定的字幕翻译策略与之相对应，还是字幕翻译过程更多样和动态发展？

最后，本论文得出的结论是：官方的中文字幕翻译实践重新审视了不同类型的电影所关联的英国文化的复杂性和独特性，并且结合中国文化的价值观融合进此纷繁复杂的翻译过程中，这种介入和原电影被植入源语文化的程度是一样深刻的。本文因此

提出多种形式和类别的转化是交织在整个字幕翻译的动态变化发展过程当中的：语言、文化、政治、历史、意识形态的转化，以及性别、性向和幽默的转换也在字幕翻译过程当中有所体现。总体而言，一方面，英文电影里面的英国特性能在中文翻译过程中渗透的，另一方面，中文字幕翻译的首要任务是为传播其自身的中华文化而服务的。

关键词 英国文化，中文字幕，归化，异化，字幕翻译