

# Comments on C-E Subtitle Translation of

## *Farewell My Concubine*

### ABSTRACT

Nowadays, popular films are increasingly active on the Internet. Confronting such a mass need for film translation, subtitle translation is winning more favor compared with traditional dubbing translation. In view of the social function played by subtitle translation, research on it should be further strengthened.

Within the framework of eco-translatology put forward by Professor Hu Gengshen, taking *Farewell My Concubine* as main corpus source, this thesis adopts such research methods as qualitative analysis and case study. The following questions are intensively discussed: (1) What are the main language features of the Chinese lines of *Farewell My Concubine*? (2) Considering the above features, what kind of translation strategies at linguistic, cultural, communicative and aesthetic level should the translator adopt to better achieve subjectivity and adapt to the subtitle eco-environment?

Through the analysis, the final conclusions are as follows: (1) The main language features of the Chinese lines of *Farewell My Concubine* are as below: concise but emotional dialogue; strong Beijing Opera and Beijing dialect flavor; sharp but implicative expressions; rich of slang and idioms. (2) Considering the above features, at linguistic level, such lexical strategies as condensation, expansion, substitution, adding are mainly adopted; meanwhile, at syntactic level, the translator prefers phrases to complicated sentences, passive to active voice sometimes and uses more ellipsis and condense paraphrasing strategies. At cultural and communicative levels, the emphasis is on the sentence structural adjustment and inner-sentence relationship to better express the original meaning and implication. The aesthetic level concentrates on the enjoyment of the target audiences. In addition, the unity sequence chain between the original text and the translated text is finally achieved through the modification of "Two stages of adaptation and selection in the translating process" illustrated by Hu Gengshen.

The thesis aims to provide a reference for subtitle translation learners and practitioners. By learning about the distinctiveness of subtitling eco-environment, they can better adapt to the eco-environment and improve their translation quality.

**KEY WORDS:** subtitle translation; eco-translatology; *Farewell My Concubine*; adaptation; selection

# 电影《霸王别姬》的汉英影视字幕翻译评析

## 摘 要

当今时代,越来越多的影视作品在互联网平台日趋活跃。面对海量的影视翻译需求,相比较传统的“低效,高耗”的配音翻译而言,原滋原味的字幕翻译逐渐受到更多人的青睐。但较之字幕翻译的社会作用,现阶段的研究无疑尚有欠缺。

本文以胡庚申教授提出的“生态翻译理论”为理论框架,综合系统研究了电影《霸王别姬》的汉英字幕翻译,采用了定性分析和例证剖析相结合的研究方法,具体探讨了(1)电影《霸王别姬》的汉语字幕语言有哪些特点?(2)基于这些语言特点,在语言维,文化维,交际维和美学维层面上,译者在字幕翻译过程中应该通过哪些策略的选择和运用来更好地发挥自身主体性从而适应字幕翻译生态环境的需求?

通过分析,本文最终得出如下结论:(1)电影《霸王别姬》的汉语字幕语言具有以下特点:对白简短精炼但富含感情;京剧味,京腔味十足;寓意丰富但表达犀利;俚语,习语气息重。(2)基于以上语言特点,在语言维层面,译者主要采用了浓缩、泛化、替代、增译等词汇策略和短语替代句子、被动替代主动、省略句的使用以及长句的压缩性意译等句法策略;在文化维和交际维层面,压缩,意译,省略,调整句子结构和句间关系,主语转换和主被动语态间的互换等策略被多次使用。美学维度则更多地是通过音美,形美或意美等策略来带给受众更好的审美感受。此外,本文通过对胡庚申教授提出的“翻译过程中两个阶段的适应和选择”图示加以完善,最终论证和实现了原文本与译文本间生态序链的完整性。

本研究希望对字幕翻译学习者和从事字幕翻译的工作人员能够有所引导和启发,使之更深刻系统的了解影视字幕翻译生态环境的复杂性和特殊性,在今后的学习和工作中,做出正确的选择去更好地适应字幕翻译生态环境,全面提高影视字幕翻译质量。

**关键词:** 字幕翻译; 生态翻译; 《霸王别姬》; 适应; 选择

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

Innovation of information technology brings energy for the advancement of broadcasting ways of film and television programs. More and more foreign popular films are increasingly active on the Internet; more and more local films with Chinese elements are also introduced abroad. Researchers on subtitling translation are becoming more and more important.

### **1.1 Research Background**

China's Opening-up and Reform facilitates the cultural communication between China and the outer world. In the introduction of foreign films and TV plays, language understanding becomes an obvious barrier for audiences. Two major solutions to solve such a barrier are dubbing and subtitle translation. Relatively, the latter one is more favorable than the traditional dubbing way because of its cost-effectiveness, short producing cycle and audience-acceptability. With higher educational background and foreign language level, many Chinese audiences expect that films can be displayed with "a natural and original flavor" nowadays.

Under such circumstance, subtitle translation seems to be more acceptable to get access to foreign audience. Among so many elements involved in the subtitle translation process, the translator plays the most significant part, thus becoming a key and central element in the subtitle translation system. Therefore, a good subtitle translation with "a natural and original flavor" sets high and strict requirements for the translator. Just as Mao Dun (1984) puts that, "A good translator, on the one hand, must learn foreign language; on the other hand, should try to think and imagine within native language background. Only in this way can he/she get rid of the language and lexical restricts from the original text, thus, the translated text can be integrated with pure native language and faithful reflection of the original text's content and style" (Mao, 1984: 12). Therefore, studies on subtitle translation, including the subtitle translator and subtitle

translation system, should attract more attention.

The eco-translatology of Professor Hu Gengshen provides us with a systematic theoretical framework for our study of subtitle translation system in a new perspective. Under its guidance, we can study subtitle translation from an ecological angle. In this thesis, the author will comprehensively further study and analyze subtitle translation with reference to eco-translatology.

## **1.2 Research Significance and Purpose**

The significance of this research can be pursued from both theoretical and practical aspects.

Theoretically, this thesis adopts eco-translatology as theoretical foundation, which started in 2001 and developed in 2009. Since its born, eco-translatology has been guiding many researches of various fields. This thesis proves and interprets the applicability and guidance of eco-translatology for subtitle translation. All these contribute a lot to the systematic study of subtitle translation.

Practically, through a detailed case study of *Farewell My Concubine*, a Chinese film, the author concludes certain skills which are quite useful for the subtitle translators. Besides, such a systematic study can provide a reference for subtitle translation learners and practitioners so that they can better adapt themselves to subtitle translational eco-environment and improve the quality of their translation.

The author aims at better interpreting and broadening the explanation power of eco-translatology and promoting the comprehensive and systematic study of subtitle translation.

## **1.3 Research Methodology**

Taking *Farewell My Concubine* as an example, the thesis mainly adopts such research methods as theoretical analysis and case study.

As for the theory part, descriptive method is mainly adopted. The author first reviews previous studies on subtitle translation and eco-translatology, *Farewell My Concubine*, as well. Being guided by eco-translatology, more elements can be observed to enrich the eco-environment of subtitle translation. Thus, particularities of subtitle

translation can be more useful for the investigation of subtitle translation strategies.

In the detailed case study of *Farewell My Concubine*, qualitative analysis is preferred. Thus, a number of exact examples are explored through comparison and other analytic methods. As far as *Farewell My Concubine* is concerned, it is rich of Chinese cultural phenomena, concepts and terms. It is a typical representative of classical Chinese literature art. Taking it as a case study, general and concrete subtitle translation strategies can be concluded to improve translation quality of similar subtitle translation works.

## **1.4 Thesis Organization**

This thesis consists of five chapters:

Chapter One serves as a general introduction, explaining the research background, research significance and purpose, and research methodology.

Chapter Two is comprehensive literature review, exploring previous studies on eco-translatology, subtitle translation and more specific on *Farewell My Concubine*.

Chapter Three focuses on the theoretical foundation of this thesis, in which, the author introduces eco-translatology particularly, its key concepts such as “Doing things with translations”, “Adaptation”, “Selection”, and “Three-dimensional transformation” etc. With her own theoretical contributions, the author also introduces the eco-system of subtitle translation.

Chapter Four is a comprehensive analysis of *Farewell My Concubine*. In this section, the author concentrates on the translator’s subjectivity in the process of subtitle translation and multi-dimensional transformation which covers language level, cultural level, communicative level and aesthetic level.

Chapter Five is the conclusion which presents the major findings and limitations of this study.



## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

Nowadays, foreign popular films are increasingly active on the Internet; more and more local films with Chinese elements are introduced abroad. This cultural communication has greatly enhanced the audience's enthusiasm of learning foreign languages so as to appreciate foreign films with "a natural and original flavor". Subtitle translation has become a new trend, and the subtitle translator has won more space to build a promising career. With a specific case study of *Farewell My Concubine*, this thesis puts subtitle translation within the framework of eco-translatology. In the following, the author will have a literature review of the studies on subtitle translation, the relationship between eco-translatology and subtitle translation and *Farewell My Concubine*.

#### 2.1 General Studies on Subtitle Translation

Two main solutions to solve language barrier in the process of enjoying foreign movies are dubbing and subtitling. With the social and technological development, subtitling is becoming more favorable due to its cost-effectiveness, short producing cycle and time-efficient. In this section, the author will concentrate on the previous studies on subtitle translation including its definition, classification, restricted factors, language features and translation strategies.

##### 2.1.1 Definition and Classification

"Subtitling" is a complicated and meaningful term. It can be defined in various ways. To understand it better, its definition and classification will be covered in this section.

Since "subtitling" means a lot, many well-known scholars have given different definitions of "subtitling". Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) defines "subtitling" as "a special type of language transfer which includes meanings at three levels: interlingual communication, discourse simplification or condensation, conversion from oral to

written texts” (Birgit, 1993: 212). R. E. Asher and J. M. Y. Simpson hold that “Subtitling refers to the words printed or super imposed on a film in a foreign language to translate what is being said on the sound track” (Asher and Simpson, 1994). Shuttleworth and Cowie believe that “Subtitling is the process of providing synchronized captions for film and television dialogue” (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 2004) came from. Besides, Baker M. Routledge says “Subtitles, sometimes referred to as captions, are transcriptions of film or TV dialogue, presented simultaneously on the screen” (Routledge, 2004). Chinese scholar Li Yunxing announced “Subtitling Translation Strategy” in 2001, which studies subtitle translation from the angle of textual translation theory. Subtitling can be classified differently perspectives. In the field of linguistics, intra-lingual subtitling and inter-lingual subtitling are two main types according to Gottlieb Henrik (1994) in *Subtitling Diagonal Translation*. As its literal meaning implies, intra-lingual subtitling mainly ranges within the same cultural language, meanwhile, inter-lingual subtitling indicates the language exchange from a foreign language to a native one, that is, among different languages. In the technical field, different types as open subtitles (cinema subtitles), inter-lingual television subtitles and closed (optional) subtitles can all be covered.

### **2.1.2 Restricted Factors**

Unlike textual translation, subtitle translation is more complicated and thus is restricted by various different factors. Studies on such constrained factors are quite prosperous. Related significant studies will be listed as follows:

Guo Jianzhong (1998) thinks that there are four variable factors affecting the translator’s choice: “author’s intention” “the type of text” “the purpose of translation” “the reader’s literacy level and requirements” (Guo, 1998: 14).

Specific to the subtitle translation, there exist more factors constraining the translation quality. Most of these factors are uniquely belonging to subtitling field. Basically, it is limited by time and space on screen (Zhou, 2011). On the one hand, the limitation of the screen space makes it difficult, or even impossible to convey too much information within each line; on the other hand, such factors as quantity and complexity

of the text, the speed of the dialogue, the audience's reading speed and the necessary intervals between subtitles all influence the duration of a subtitle (ibid). Thus, Jorge Díaz Cintas (2008) puts forward the 'six-second rule' which means that " an average viewer can comfortably read in six seconds the text written on two full subtitle lines, when each line contains a maximum of around 37characters, i.e. a total of 74 characters" (Cintas, 2008: 97). In addition, when viewing the subtitles, the audience may also spend some time appreciating the images to understand the subtitle more efficiently; therefore, the audience may also need to know more about the language features to grasp the key information faster.

### **2.1.3 Language Features**

All the constrained factors mentioned in 2.1.2 make subtitling quite different from any other forms of textual translation or literacy translation.

Subtitle is an aggregation of moving pictures, images and sounds, therefore, the audience hardly have enough time to read and fully understand the subtitle, let alone looking back at the parts that are not understood. Under such circumstance, it seems quite significant to study its language features and master more skills.

According to Gottlieb Henrik(1992), subtitling, as a form of translation, has five features: written, additive, immediate, synchronous, polymedial (Henrik, 1992: 162). Subtitling translation is a written one instead of an audiovisual translation; all the discourses are presented in a flowing and simultaneous manner; at least two channels are employed in the subtitling process. Apart from all the relatively superficial features concluded by Gottlieb, there are more of different levels to explore since subtitling itself is originally involved in language transfer and cultural shifting. The achievement of these two aspects contributes to a good subtitle translation.

In *Film Translation: A More and More Important Part in Translation Field* (2000), Qian Shaochang analyzes the differences between film language and written language and meanwhile, he describes the five characteristics of film language: audibility, comprehensiveness, immediacy, popularity and no-note (Qian, 2000: 61). All these characteristics make subtitling really a challengeable job. On such a basis, Li Yunxing

(2001) points out: As a specific manner of delivering information, subtitling is constrained by many factors (Li, 2001: 39). Thus, subtitle translators should ensure the cohesion and coherence of the information to guarantee that the audience can acquire the clearest information with the least efforts.

Only after a detailed study of subtitle language features can we move on to the strategies that are used in the subtitling process.

#### **2.1.4 Translation Strategies**

In the process of subtitle translation, the application of translation strategies is very useful and significant. Usually, translation strategies are summarized from translational practice, meanwhile, they can also guide the translation practice to achieve better quality. Thus, review of the previous studies of translation strategies is quite necessary.

Gottlieb (1994) touches on ten types of strategies: expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, resignation, condensation, decimation and deletion. Many of the ten types will be further discussed in the following chapters. Besides, according to Lomheim's model, film translation strategies includes omission, compression, expansion, generalization, specification, and neutralization (Wang, 2011). Skopos theory supports different strategies such as reduction, anglicization, literal translation, domestication and etc (Dong, 2011). Li Yunxing (2001) claims that the common deduction strategy can further be categorized into three types: condensation, reductive paraphrasing and deletion. Meanwhile, other scholars such as Jia Wenbo (2007) and Dong Haiya (2007) also published their papers in *Shanghai Journal of Translators* which are really significant for the study of subtitle translation strategies.

All the above four sections respectively summarizes the previous literature review about the definition and classification, restricted factors, language features and translation strategies of subtitle translation. All these four aspects are significant and necessary enough to lay a solid foundation for the following analysis of eco-translatology and subtitle translation, *Farewell My Concubine* as well.

#### **2.1.5 Subtitle Translation and Eco-translatology**

Eco-translatology, as an original translation system of Chinese, has always been

focusing on textual translation, such as classical literature, children literature, poems, plays and so on. The application of it only covers interpretation, scenery sign translation and subtitle translation. As for subtitle translation, it has always been a hot topic. The previous theoretical perspectives of it are mainly about Plural Complementary Translation Theory, Skopos Theory, Relevance Theory and Adaptation Theory, Multimodal Discourse Analysis Theory, Translation Aesthetics Perspective, etc.

After being proposed, eco-translatology has aroused much attention and researching interest in it. Over one hundred monographs have been published. Meanwhile, over sixty universities have adopted eco-translatology as a theoretical framework to guide the Master or PhD students to complete their dissertations; they also encourage their students to publish journal articles based on eco-translatology. All these evidently show that eco-translatology is keeping moving ahead to its international field.

Subtitle translation starts early in the West, and it has formed a systemic scale and system. Subtitling forms vary from dubbing to subtitling in different countries. China's subtitling history can be divided into two stages taking the foundation of Republic of China as a boundary (Zhang, 2009). There are no large-scale subtitling translation activities before China's foundation. Subtitling translation enjoys its historic advance after the appearance of "earphone", which refers to the person who wears earphone to conduct subtitling translation activity. Since then, subtitling has welcomed its prosperous developing stage. Subtitling translation of dramas, TV plays and films are all the most important developing force of its self-advancement.

The present study of subtitle translation based on eco-translatology is not so systematic and authoritative. The convenient database--- Outstanding Masters Dissertation Library, only includes one Master Thesis written by Liu Fang from Hunan Normal University who studies the subtitle translation of the film *Hero* from the perspective of translator's subjectivity in adaptation and selection. This is an important reference for the accomplishment of this thesis. In this thesis, the author tries to combine eco-translatology with subtitle translation.

## 2.2 Summary

This chapter mainly reviews studies on definition, classification, restricted factors, language features and translation strategies of subtitle translation. Considering this thesis takes eco-translatology as the main theoretical framework, the author reviews studies which combining subtitle translation with eco-translatology.

The existing studies of subtitle translation, though from various theoretical perspectives, all take the popular films such as *Avatar*, *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, *Shadow of Mulberry*, *Being Alive*, *Kung Fu Panda* and etc. as analytical examples. *Farewell My Concubine*, a quite traditional, well-known Chinese film with rich Chinese elements, has seldom been studied before. From the perspective of the author, on the one hand, it's an ideal medium for the foreigners to know more about China and Chinese culture; on the other hand, it can be studied in the perspective of eco-translatology so as to support and replenish this theory. Therefore, the thesis takes the subtitles of *Farewell My Concubine* as detailed and main corpus.

Basing on all these foundations, this thesis takes eco-translatology as a framework and conducts a comprehensive study of the eco-system and elements of film subtitle translation, translator's subjectivity in the whole process of subtitle translation, the language features of *Farewell My Concubine* and different strategies at "multi-dimensional transformation" levels. Taking *Farewell My Concubine* as an example, the thesis mainly adopts such research methods as theoretical analysis and case study, and delicates itself to a further study and analysis of subtitle translation in the perspective of eco-translatology.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This chapter concentrates on eco-translatology and gives a brief introduction and summary of the theory; as well as outlining the contributions of the thesis and the eco-system of subtitle translation.

#### **3.1 Introduction to Eco-translatology**

Eco-translatology is a compound word. Ecology mainly studies on the relation and living creatures to each other and to their environment (Hornby, 2008 : 541). It's a concept first proposed by German biologist Ernst Haeckel in 1866. Till now, it has developed into an independent sub-discipline. Translatology is a discipline focusing on the rules and arts of translation activities. From the introduction of the terms: ecology and translatology, we can naturally draw the conclusion that eco-translatology is an interdisciplinary branch.

Eco-translatology, proposed by Prof. Hu Gengshen in 2001, mainly considers translation as adaptation and selection, from Tsinghua University in 2001. Inspired by Darwinist evolutionary idea of “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest”, such eco-translatology is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese philosophy of “nature and humanity”, “neutral and harmony”. By introducing the concept of “translational eco-environment”, Hu argued that on the one hand, the translator should adapt to the demand of translational eco-environment; on the other hand, the translator should make adaptive selections according to the requirement of translational eco-environment. In view of the complexity of eco-environment, Prof. Hu Gengshen suggests that the three-dimensional transformation be used as an analytical way.

#### **3.2 Key Concepts of Eco-translatology**

Only grasping the core contents and the key concepts of eco-translatology can we apply the theory into practice to interpret and analyze practical problems. Thus, in this section, such key concepts as “doing things with translations”, “translator's

subjectivity”, “adaptation and selection”, “three-dimensional transformation” will be deeply discussed.

## **(1) Doing Things with Translations**

According to Prof. Hu Gengshen (2008), “doing things with translations” means at least two aspects: the objective effects of the translated texts and the subjective, initiative effects of the translator in translation process. The translator, as a creator, can do things such as language creation, interpersonal communication, cultural evolvement, social reform and translational development. Only learning about the functions and essences of “doing things with translations”, can the translators do much more that they want consciously and actively.

“Doing things with translations” is a significant and necessary requirement to evaluate whether a translated work is qualified, whether a translator is fully adaptive to the translational eco-environment. Thus, the achievement degree of the translator’s “doing things with translations” is an emphasis in this thesis.

## **(2) Translator’s Subjectivity**

Antoine Berman, a French scholar, argued that translation critics must take the translator as their starting point and advocates the slogan “turn to the translator” (Liu, 2011). Since then, the researches series of Douglas Robinson, Han Ziman, Lawrence Venuti etc. all have weakened the central role of the translator. Based on their researches, Prof. Hu Gengshen proposes that the translator is centered in translation process. As an independent individual, the translator leads and dominates the translation activity all the time. He (she) is at the crossover of different languages and cultures. The translator is both the subject of translation process and the foundation of translation behavior (Hu, 2011) .

The concept of “translator-centeredness” lays emphasis on the role of the translators. It facilitates translators’ sense of self-dignity, self-discipline and self-improvement. In terms of the eco-translatology, translator-centeredness is achieved largely through the translator’s subjectivity which mainly consists of the translator’s adaptation and selection. In the following section, the thesis will concentrate on the



translator's adaptation and selection.

### **(3) Adaptation and Selection**

The idea of "adaptation and selection" comes from Darwin's theory of evolution. Transplanted to the field of eco-translatology, the "adaptation and selection" here concentrates more on the translator. On the one hand, the translator should adapt himself/herself to the eco-environment of the target-text; on the other hand, he/she should also make selections representing eco-environment. All the selections are in order to select and create better translated-texts. Thus, the translation process can be defined as a dynamic cycling process of adaptation and selection (Hu, 2011). On the basis of the above, Hu Gengshen concludes that the best adaptation is selective adaptation; the best selection is adaptive selection; the best translated -text is the one that is highly adapted and selected.

In the process of translating, the translator has to make adaptations and selections at different levels. This view is not really rare in the translation field. The well-known Eugene Nida (2000) once said: "A translator must engage in thousands of decisions involving both selection and arrangements to fit another culture, a different language, diverse editors and publishers, and finally a reading audience " (Nida (2000: 7). This evidently proves that the translator's adaptation and selection is far more significant for producing better translated texts.

Generally, the translator's adaptation and selection includes two aspects: without doubt, he/she should make adaptations and selections on the basis of his/her own competence and translational needs; in addition, the translator's adaptation/selection to the elements of the complicated translational eco-environment is also really meaningful. The latter one will be discussed in the following section.

### **(4) Three-dimensional Transformation**

This section is designed to focus on the question: At what different levels should a translator make adaptations and selections in the eco-environment?

According to eco-translatology, the three-dimensional transformation is a fundamental translation method, that is, under the guidance of the principal

“multi-dimensional adaptation and adaptive selection”, a subtitle translator should concentrate more on the adaptive and selective transformation at linguistic level, cultural level and communicative level.

The transformation at linguistic level mainly refers to the adaptive and selective handling of the language form, such as lexical level, syntactic level and so on. The transformation at cultural level pays more attention to transmitting and illustrating the cultural meanings of the source text under different cultural backgrounds. This transformation aims to avoid distorting the original texts by concentrating on the whole culture systems. The transformation at communicative level cares more about the achievement of communicative intentions. Beyond the above linguistic level and cultural level, this level emphasizes the communications among the characters in the film.

In the following chapter, the thesis intensively illustrates those linguistic problems existed and corresponding strategies.

### **3.3 Theoretical Contributions**

Since eco-translatology came into being at the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has aroused the researchers' strong interest. It has been put into use in different aspects such as classic literature, plays, poems, interpretation and etc; meanwhile, however, it is also facing unprecedented doubts about its explanation power. Why is eco-translatology questioned? How will the theory be improved? The following sections will work on solving the above problems.

#### **3.3.1 Criticisms on Interpretation Power**

Eco-translatology has aroused attention from many scholars of various fields. Many papers have discussed and analyzed it from linguistic, philosophical, historical and many other perspectives. This phenomenon can prove that it is a promising theory with a convincing explanation power. However, it has also come under questions on the other hand. This section will brief on the main criticisms on eco-translatology and also raise my doubts about it.

Generally, the doubts about eco-translatology are mainly seen in its interpretation

power, its development prospect and its theoretical profundity. Meanwhile, my doubt mainly directs at Hu Gengshen's Figure "Two stages of adaptation and selection in the translating process" (Hu, 2004).

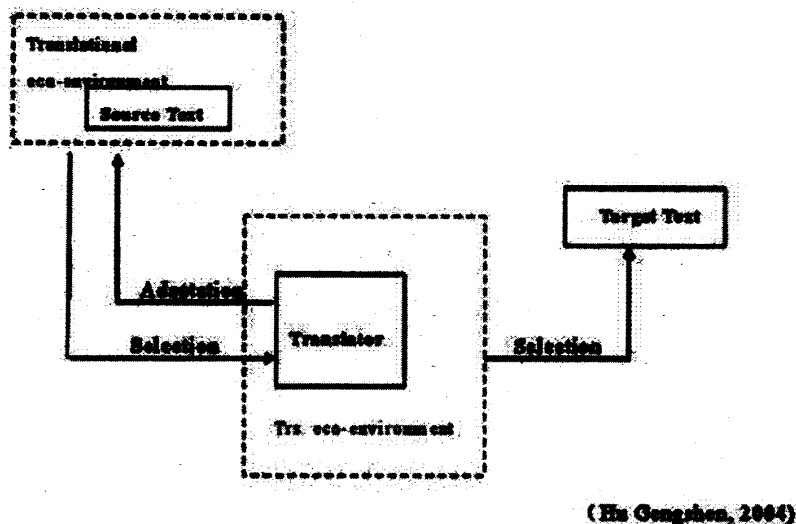


Figure 3.1 *Two stages of adaptation and selection (Original Version)*

Notes: the area within the dotted lines refers to the source eco-environment and the target eco-environment respectively.

In the figure, we can see two frames with dotted lines. They represent the 'translational eco-environment' around 'source text' and 'translator' respectively. From the directions of arrows between them, it can be seen that there is an interaction between the two 'translational eco-environments', which means that the 'translational eco-environment' centered round the 'source text' first selects its most ideal and suitable translator with translation experience, strategies and some other elements so that he/she can fully adapt to the translational eco-environment's requirements. Then, in the next translation stage, the selected translator should try best to reach the standards set by the source text. Only in this way, can he/she accomplish his/her work which truly reflects the original content, style and taste. The next is the translator's selection of the target text. Even the same source text can be transformed into different target texts because of various factors. Thus, the translator's function in this procedure is to select the source text according to the needs of translational eco-environment.

To Hu's above figure, I try to make a supplement as a contribution of this thesis in the next section.

### 3.3.2 Theoretical Contributions to Eco-translatology

After the detailed analysis of the figure "Two stages of adaptation and selection in the translating process", attention should be drawn to the right part of the Figure 2. The ecological chain is interrupted at the point of 'target text'. In other words, there is no direct connection between the 'source text' and the 'target text'. This is really a defect that needs to be dealt with.

With time passing by, some translated texts have been canonized. However, some others have been finally eliminated by the target eco-environment and some other elements. What are the standards that distinguish classical translated texts from the eliminated ones? Usually it is believed that a translated version is quite wonderful when it can truly and originally reflect and present the essence of the source text. Considering this, the author comes up with an idea that there should be a direct connection between the source text and the target text. The modified figure is as below:

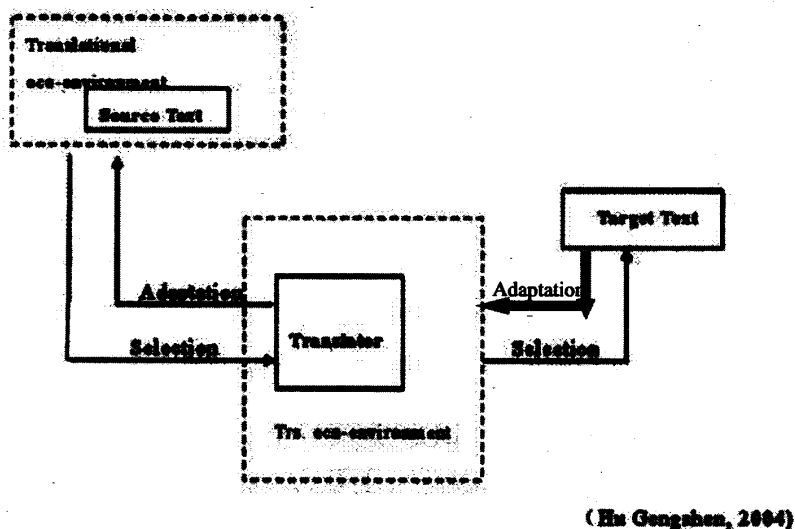


Figure 3.2 *Two stages of adaptation and selection (Modified Version)*

Notes: the area within the dotted lines refers to the source eco-environment and the target eco-environment respectively; the added arrows refer to the modified part.

The added arrows in the figure can help form an integrated unity which embodies the interactive relationship between the source text, the translator, and the target text. It's

common knowledge that target text should not be independent from the source text. A good target text should be loyal and faithful to the source text. Generally speaking, when judging the translation quality of target text, a must standard is its loyalty and faithfulness. However, source text and target text, both as written texts, cannot interact with each other directly; the relationship between them is achieved through the translator. The target text, which can fully adapt to the translational ‘eco-environment’ of the ‘source text’, can be the best result of the translator’s selection. Other than such kind of original “selection unity chain” proposed by Hu Gengshen, this thesis works on fulfilling the complicated relationship by adding the modified part. In this way, the “adaptation unity chain” is finally completed.

### **3.4 The Eco-system of Subtitle Translation**

Subtitle translational environment is a complicated eco-system which composes of many elements. Similar to the tradition of classical literature translation, the eco-system should at least contain the source text, translator, target text, readers, publishers and etc. As far as subtitle translation is centered, it also consists of such elements as the director, the actors/actress, music, scripts, screen writer, audience. Besides, due to the particularity of the subtitle translation, the eco-environment of subtitle translation also includes the scenes, actions, mood and language style, time and space and so on in a cinematographic work (Liu, 2011).

On the basis of the above analysis and conclusion, when researching subtitle translation, one should take various factors and eco-elements into consideration so as to achieve a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the translated version.

### **3.5 Summary**

After a detailed analysis and introduction of eco-translatology as a theoretical framework for this thesis, the key concepts (“doing things with translations”, “translator’s subjectivity”, “adaptation and selection”, “three-dimensional transformation”) of eco-translatology, the theoretical contributions of the thesis and the eco-system of subtitle translation all have been covered to lay a solid foundation for the next chapter— A Case Study: *Farewell My Concubine*.

## Chapter Four

### Subtitle translation of *Farewell My Concubine*

The advent of modern information times has provided favorable conditions for the broadcasting of TV plays and films on a global scale. Language barriers, cultural differences and some other cultural elements are no more the major obstacles. Dubbing, subtitling and many other ways all have acted vigorously in showing foreign TV plays and films with original tastes; meanwhile, more and more Chinese films and TV plays with distinctive local tastes are becoming familiar to foreign audience in helping audiences understand foreign films and TV plays, subtitling is preferred both by translators and audiences. This chapter conducts a comprehensive analysis of translator's subjectivity, lexical level, syntactic level, cultural level, communicative level and aesthetic level embodied in subtitle translation on the basis of the subtitling of *Farewell My Concubine*.

#### 4.1 Introduction to *Farewell My Concubine*

The film version adopted in this thesis is the 1993 one whose heroes and heroines are Duan Xiaolou (acted by Zhang Fengyi), Cheng Dieyi (acted by Zhang Guorong) and Ju Xian (acted by Gong Li) respectively. In the film, Xiaolou and Dieyi are fellow apprentices learning Beijing opera performance together from childhood. Later on, their cooperation in the opera *Farewell My Concubine* makes them famous overnight throughout Beijing city. Thereafter, they make a promise to each other that they will perform *Farewell My Concubine* together as long as they are alive. However, their different understandings of the relationship between the opera and life finally lead to their different choices: Until mid-age, Xiaolou deeply knows that the opera isn't his whole life, so he gets married with a famous whore called Juxian; Dieyi, however, becomes totally immersed in the complicated plots and role relationships of the operas, especially *Farewell My Concubine*. Around such a classic and famous opera, the love and betrayal among them become escalating with the changes of times and eventually develops into a tragedy.

In *Farewell My Concubine*, Beijing Opera art is the central cultural element. Through its subtitle translation, the translator, also the directors, expects to make Beijing Opera known by the people in the world so that the latter can be closer to China and Chinese culture.

After the film was shown, the comments and the accomplishments it has achieved are enough to prove the filmmaker's ideal choice of the author to choose *Farewell My Concubine*.

As the fifth works of Director Chen Kaige, *Farewell My Concubine* is also the turning point of his directing career. His incisive thinking and understanding of the traditional culture, people's survival state and humanity penetrate the whole movie. It's one of the most successful masterpieces that produced jointly by the filmmakers from Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China; in addition, it's also one of the representative works commonly appreciated by the audiences in the three regions. It is the first film that won the Golden Palm Prize in mainland China. It has been keeping the highest-grossing record of Chinese melodrama movies in America which also marks the climax of Chinese films in America. Meanwhile, it also got great box-office successes in such countries as Japan, Germany, Korean, France and so on. It should be concluded that *Farewell My Concubine* has achieved great success both in the art and business.

#### **4.2 Translator's Subjectivity in the Subtitle Translation Process**

According to Hu Gengshen's eco-translatology, translation process is translator-centered and the translator dominates the translation activity all the time. Not only as the subject of translation process, but also a doer of translation action, the translator has to make many adaptations and selections in the translation process. The translator's subjectivity lays more emphasis on the centeredness of the translator, which is especially of importance to subtitle translation.

There are also many previous literary translations focusing on the translator's subjectivity. They depend largely on the translator's translational competence. Wilss Wolfram defines competence as "an SL [source-language] text-analytical competence and corresponding TL [target-language] text-reproductive competence" (Wolfram,

1982:118). Similarly, Wang Zuoliang (1989:73) also points out “Translators should translate the works that are more similar to their previous works; otherwise they will produce translated works with low quality” (Wang, 1989:73). In addition, Peter Newmark also notes sharply that: “A satisfactory translation is not always possible, but a good translator is never satisfied with it. It can usually be improved. There is no such thing as a perfect, ideal, or ‘correct’ translation. A translator is always trying to extend his knowledge and improve his means of expression; he is always pursuing facts and words” (Newmark, 1988). Here we can easily come to the conclusion that when evaluating whether a film subtitle translation is successful or not, the translator’s translational competence must be taken into consideration.

Generally, the translator’s subjectivity in subtitle translation includes the following different levels: firstly, the subtitle translator plays a decisive role in transplanting the original film to the target cultural soil; secondly, subtitle eco-environment is relatively more complicated than that of conventional sense, thus, the subtitle translator has to adapt and select as a response to the corresponding eco-environment. Therefore, the subtitle translator’s subjectivity is mainly manifested in the multi-dimensional adaptations and selections.

Or rather, the translator’s subjectivity in the film *Farewell My Concubine* is really worthy of exploration and study.

Linda Javin, the subtitle translator of *Farewell My Concubine*, is a suitable and qualified person for both the director and the audiences. Since 1976, Linda has been playing an important and active role in broadcasting, studying and exploring Chinese culture. As an internationally renowned sinologist, translator and writer, Linda Javin has made great efforts in learning, feeling and appreciating Chinese culture. It is really a tough time full of difficulties and hardships under the specific social conditions then. After years of efforts to learn Chinese language, history, literature and many visits to China, Linda has begun to embark on her Chinese literary writing career recently. All these can prove that she is really a competent and qualified subtitle translator of *Farewell My Concubine*. Her wonderful bi-lingual and bi-cultural competence does give her favorable advantages in adapting to the eco-systems better and thus make more



wise and ideal selections.

Another point to be noticed here is that the bi-lingual and bi-cultural competence is a necessary but not sufficient condition for being a competent translator. A clear and systematic knowledge of the specific features of film language, constrained factors of subtitle translation and translation strategies is also needed. As far as subtitle translation is concerned, rich and high level translation practices are indispensable to produce translated texts that qualified, audience-targeted and faithful to the original texts.

Linda Javin has been working on Chinese film subtitle translation since the Cannes International Film Festival of 1985. So far, she has finished the subtitle translations of more than 12 Chinese films, mostly directed by the Chinese famous directors such as Tian Zhuangzhuang, Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou. The most familiar are “*Forever Enthralled*”, “*Farewell My Concubine*”, “*Temptress Moon*”, “*Devils on the Doorstep*”, “*Hero*”, “*A City of Sadness*”, “*Ashes of time*”, “*Raise the Red Lantern*” and so on. With these subtitle translation experiences, Linda has made contributions to the success of the films in achieving high box office.

The above analysis shows that Linda’s subjectivity were fully exhibited because of her excellent bi-lingual and bi-cultural knowledge, her rich subtitle translation experience. There are enough reasons to believe that Linda Javin is the most suitable subtitle translator catering to the needs of *Farewell My Concubine*’s eco-environment.

### **4.3 Language Features of *Farewell My Concubine***

After a general introduction to *Farewell My Concubine* and the subtitle translator’s subjectivity in the translation process, the author intensively concludes the main language features of *Farewell My Concubine* in this sub-section. Being clear about the main language features of the Chinese lines of *Farewell My Concubine* can set a bright direction and lay a solid foundation for the translation strategies at different levels in the next section.

Through comparison and analysis, the main language features of the Chinese lines of *Farewell My Concubine* are concluded as below: concise but emotional dialogue; strong Beijing Opera and Beijing dialect flavor; sharp but implicative expressions; rich

of slang and idioms. All the features are drawn from the corresponding lines in the film and all these language features will be illustrated combining with the specific case analysis in the following interpretation. Thus, different translation strategies at different levels can be generalized and concluded to cater for the different language features. Only in this way can the translator make adaptative selections and selective adaptations according to the requirements of target eco-environment.

#### **4.4 Multi-dimensional Transformation**

Obviously, to produce qualified translated texts, the translator should try to adapt to the eco-environment multi-dimensionally, and make the corresponding selections according to the needs of the eco-environment. Now the questions about this selection are: Considering the above language features, what kind of translation strategies at linguistic, cultural, communicative and aesthetic level should the translator adopt to better achieve subjectivity and adapt to the subtitle eco-environment? Only after solving this problem, can we classify whether a translated version is reliable or not, whether it is faithful and truthful to the original version. This multi-dimensional transformation in subtitle translation is necessary and significant for both the understanding of the audience and conveying of the intention of the director and subtitle translator.

The following analysis will concentrate on the subtitle translation of the film *Farewell My Concubine* within the framework of multi-dimensional transformation proposed by Hu Gengshen. In addition, considering the specific language features and cultural elements of *Farewell My Concubine*, complementary aesthetic level is also concluded within the general analyzing theoretical framework. What will be followed next is the detailed analysis of the subtitle translation from linguistic level( lexical and syntactic level), cultural level, communicative level and aesthetic level.

##### **4.4.1 Linguistic Level**

“Linguistics” is a complex term which composes of various levels belonging to the broad language scope. Linguistics can be defined as “a systematic (or scientific) study of language” (Dai and Xiong, 1989: 75). Generally, linguistics includes phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and morphology. Considering the unique features of

subtitle translation, “linguistic level” here specially refers to the basic lexical and syntactic level. In the process of analyzing the author’s adaptations and selections at linguistic level to the eco-environment, some subtitling examples in *Farewell My Concubine* will also be used to illustrate those proper and good adaptations and selections, which convincingly show the subtitle translator’s “competence” and “need”. As well, this paper will give her some modified translated texts to achieve better information-conveying effects.

#### 4.4.1.1 Lexical Level

A lexicon, essentially means a catalogue of a given language’s words (its wordstock) ; more formally, a lexicon is a language’s inventory of lexemes. Lexical level in the thesis generally emphasizes the words and short phrases that are used in the subtitle translation: why does the translator choose these words and phrases? What kind of translation strategies are used in the subtitle translation process? What’s the function of these expressions? All these issues will be deeply explored in this section with some examples.

(1)

嚷嚷什么啊，我还没招呼呢。

What are you screaming for? I haven’t even said hello yet.

According to the definition from Baidu Online Dictionary, “招呼” has different meanings such as “greeting, saying hello, taking care and looking out”. From the concrete dialogue circumstance, it’s not difficult to make it clear that “招呼” here means “commanding” instead of “saying hello”. In the film, “招呼” implies that before the master bids someone to punish Little Stone, he has already begun to scream. Here, Linda translates it as “say hello” is not very precise. To cater for the foreigner’s tastes, I suggest more simple and direct expression, “I haven’t begun to punish you yet”, for example. Such kind of translation can help foreign audiences to get the main meaning and catch the plots development as soon as possible. Paraphrasing translation strategy is preferred here to achieve functional equivalence as much as possible.

(2)

别介！都是下九流，谁嫌弃谁啊？

他祖师爷不肯赏饭吃，谁也没辙。

Prostitutes and actors are equally despised by society.

But I have no place for him. What can I do?

“祖师爷” is similar to “forefathers” to some extent in China’s history. Without knowledge of the specific historical period, foreign audiences won’t understand its exact meaning. Perhaps we can understand it as “destiny” “fate” or “god” of western culture, there are still cultural differences between them. From the plots in the film, we know that Mater does not want to accept Little Bean as his disciple, so he explains that Little Bean is not destined to be an actor. From this perspective, “destiny” is the most ideal choice to express the original meaning. Considering all these factors, Linda uses the strategy of “free translation” to put it as “I have no place for him” to refuse Little Bean’s mother. Thus, she makes the lines easier to understand, and meanwhile, to avoid leading to a cultural misunderstanding.

(3)

要想人前显贵，您必得人后受罪。

今几个是破题儿，文章还在后头哪！

If you think you’re above everyone else you’ll learn the hard way.

This is just the beginning. Wait till you see what’s in store.

“破题” once appeared in “*Romance of the Western Chamber*” by Wang Shipu, a playwright of Yuan Dynasty. Since then, it has been widely used in various circumstances to refer to “the first time”. From the translated version, it’s clear that the translation of “破题” as “beginning” exhibits that the subtitle translator, Linda Javin, is quite familiar with the usage of the old Chinese words. Such translated text better serves for the goal of functional equivalence.

(4)

夜奔 Fleeing by night.

回首望天朝，急走忙逃，

顾不得忠和孝。

I look back at the Celestial Court and hurry onwards in flight.

Heedless of filial piety.

“夜奔”，“Fleeing by night”，is a scene in the traditional Chinese opera “*The Story of a Sword*” composed in the Ming Dynasty by Li Kaixian mainly tells the bitter experience of Lin Chong after being persecuted. Translating“天朝”as “Celestial Court” is quite easy

to cause misunderstanding. From the opera plot, it's known that “天朝” here means “Imperial Court”. Similarly, adopting “filial piety” as the translation of “忠和孝” also shows an omission of “忠”. Loyalty to “Imperial Court” is much valued under the specific social situation then. By modifying, the translated version can be easier for the foreign audiences to grasp the most useful and significant information as soon as possible.

(5)

人得自个儿成全自个儿。

Each person is responsible for his or her own fate.

Such an expression is commonly seen in China's daily talk, mainly used to comfort someone or guide someone. Originally, it means helping others realize their own hopes and dreams. When it's used on somebody himself, it mostly emphasizes on the meaning level of being responsible for one's own future, choices, etc. Here, Linda renders it as “Each person is responsible for his or her own fate”, which exactly expresses the definite meaning of the original text. Thus, foreign audiences can grasp the meaning exactly without misunderstanding or meaning-loss.

(6)

座是汪洋汪海

一个个都伸着脖子，等着瞻仰您二位的风采呢。

A crowd of people are there

craning their necks to catch a glimpse of their idols.

Actually, these lines are not so difficult to understand, since there are no complicated cultural terms or comprehensive social backgrounds. Its central meaning is nothing but the popularity and adoration of Duan Xiaolou and Cheng Dieyi among their fans. What's worthy of paying attention here is the transformation strategy from the second person to the third person to achieve the effects of strengthening the communicational functions. Using “their idols” to replace the simple word “you”, Linda vividly highlights the craziness and admiration of those opera fans to Xiaolou and Dieyi. Superficially, the changing from the second person “you” to the third person “their idols” may lead to deviating from the original plots; actually, “their idols” better emphasizes the supreme status of Duan Xiaolou and Cheng Dieyi in their fans' hearts.

(7)

段老板，

咱们到这儿来，可都是找乐子的。

扔出去的，可都是白花花响当当的大洋啊！

今几个谁跟谁都别找不痛快。

Oh, it's Mister Duan!

Listen! We're all here to have a good time

and spend a lot of money.

so let's not pick fights with each other.

The example here is only to show the wonderful expressional function of the translator's usage of paraphrasing strategy. By skipping over the superficial literal meaning, Linda helps the audiences filter the useless information, and keep the most useful information to better serve the aim of saving viewing time and keeping pace with shifting screens. Linda's paraphrasing strategy is not the most ideal choice because it fails to keep the original literature elements; however, it's really a wise decision considering the time limitations between screens shifting. Therefore, meaning-convey and functional equivalence is the most important under limited viewing time.

(8)

真他妈想当太太奶奶啦你，

做你娘的玻璃梦去吧。

你当出了这门，把脸一抹擦，你还真成了良人了？

So you want to become a rich man's wife!

Go live out this goddamn fantasy' then

Don't think that when you walk out this door, you'll become a lady of virtue.

“太太奶奶” has different meanings in China in different social contexts. Without thinking or checking it, it's easy to translate it as “grandmother” “lady” or something like these. From her translated lines, it can be believed that Linda Javin is quite proficient in Chinese language and qualified to act as the subtitle translator of *Farewell My Concubine*. This is also shown from the translation of “良人”. “良” means “good, kind”, but here, “良人” doesn't mean “a good, kind or nice-hearted person”, instead, it refers to the woman who has abandoned prostitution and become a traditional honest and good woman. Linda's translation of “a lady of virtue” is quite authentic and loyal to the original text. From this, we can strongly feel that bilingual competence of the subtitle translator is really significant for the quality of the translated texts.

(9)

世卿世受国恩，

岂敢昧法？

更不敢当众违背天理良心。

The government has always been good to me,

I wouldn't dare deceive the court.

Nor would I betray the laws of Heaven or my own conscience.

“天理”“良心” are terms that are quite commonly-used words in China. From literal works to daily talks, from traditional plays to modern films, such kind of expressions are useful guidelines to arouse Chinese People's self-reflection. They are invisible ethical rules guiding people's behaviors. Since they are so local and traditional, it's not surprising that it is a little complicated for foreign audiences to figure them out. Based on the “audience-centered” principle, Linda brings “Heaven” into her translation. In Christian culture, “Heaven” serves as the source of various moral concepts and systems. “Heaven” and “God” are existed to guide and restrict people's behaviors. Linda's translation has wonderfully adapted to the target eco-environment and is really worthy of referencing of the subtitling workers and learners.

(10)

略有国学常识者都明白

此折乃国剧文化中之最精粹，

何以在检察官先生口中，竟成了淫词艳曲了呢？

Anyone with any common sense knows that

“Peony Pavilion” is the quintessential Chinese opera.

How can that be obscene to the prosecutor's eye?

In the translated version, Linda substitutes the word “此折” (this play) with the title of the play “*Peony Pavilion*”. By restoring its title, Linda uses a more concrete concept to replace the pronoun “此”. Such kind of adaptation and substitution is really necessary for the audience to grasp the exact meaning of the pronoun without viewing back, thus, it's useful for saving viewing time. To better express the view that the prosecutor is ridiculous, Chinese lines strengthen the character “口” (mouth or speaking), but Linda skillfully uses “eye” to lay stress on the visual communication. Such kind of transformation is also because of the different expressing habits between Chinese and English.

(11)

赶紧着，不然，刘邦可就要杀进城来了。

Talk to each other already. The Han King is about to enter the city!

This example typically shows that translated texts must serve for the aim of expressing communicational meanings. Actually, it's not the most ideal choice here to render “赶紧着” as “Talk to each other already”. In my view, Na Kun here only wants to let Duan and Cheng “talk to each other as soon as possible”. The social situation is quite complicated and turbulent then. They should grasp the chance and cherish the precious meeting time to chat with each other. Therefore, Linda's simple and direct expression aptly meets the needs of communicating. Regardless of the wonderful expressing effects, there is a flaw in the translated text “already”. As far as I am concerned, “talk to each other as soon as possible” is the most suitable choice, which expresses the central meaning directly and precisely.

(12)

不罚，不罚你永远还是下三滥。

还想成角？做梦。

And if I don't punish you, you'll always be third-rate.

You want to be a great actor? Dream on!

“下三滥” is a traditional Chinese expression that describes some impuissant and footling people in the lower class status in China. To avoid misunderstanding of it, Linda just translates it as “the third rate”, simply and concisely. As for “角”, it's a technical term specially used in dramatic performance referring to leading roles in dramas. But “成角” here means becoming a famous actor or actress. Linda's translation retains the most important and essential meaning. This is also the need of the target eco-environment.

(13)

你要是不这么着啊，

他们就像那狗尿苔似的，长咱们家了。

But your friends really leave me no choice.

They are a bad influence.

“狗尿苔” is a kind of poisonous mushrooms which grow around smelly wall corners or dried dung. Because of its strange growing preferences and habits, it's not so popular



among Chinese people. With time passing by, it is compared to those negative images or figures. Thus, as an unfamiliar concept, it's hard to explain and translate for a Chinese translator, let alone Linda Javin, a foreign subtitle translator. Considering the complexity of explanation, the limited viewing time and screen space, Linda just uses the strategy of paraphrasing here to avoid difficulty in understanding and viewing of the audiences. From the translated text, we can know that Linda flexibly translates it as "a bad influence", which pays more attention to the expression of the communicational meaning.

(14)

请坐请坐，受老朽一拜。

Please have a seat. Let this decrepit old man pay his respects.

“老朽” is commonly seen in ancient China, which is a self-deprecating saying to mock one's advanced age and decay. Meanwhile, “拜” is a classical Chinese etiquette that embodies respectfulness, thankfulness and congratulations sometimes. Combining with the scene and plots in the film then, Duan Xiaolou's giving up singing opera, the divergence between Xiaolou and Dieyi, both make their Master angry and unsatisfied with them. Therefore, Master asks them to visit him and give them a good lesson. This line is extracted from the dialogues when they first meet. Linda's translation clearly shows the Master's anger and satire to his apprentice. In this example, Linda also transforms from the first person “老朽 myself” to the third person “this old decrepit man”. By strengthening the advanced age of the Master, Linda skillfully spotlights the anger of the Master, therefore, such kind of transformation is to serve for the expression of the communicational meaning.

(15)

那驴年马月的事全让你记住了。

Only you remember that kind of thing.

如此作践戏剧国粹，

到底是谁 专门辱我民族精神，灭我国家尊严？

How dare they consult our tradition and culture like this!

Who's disparaging Chinese traditions,

and disrespecting its culture?

The relationship between superordinates and hyponyms can bring unimaginable effects

if dealt well. For those who are not so familiar with Chinese culture, such hyponyms as “驴年马月” are really troublesome and laboursome to understand. Thus, taking its superordinates or the more general word into use may be an ideal and effortless choice. Instead of being hairsplitting on details, the translator generalizes them as “that kind of things”. This enlightens me that superordinates as a way of generalization is good choice to handle with those trivial local cultural terms.

(16)

没学过呀，那就别洒狗血了。

Just the way you're overplaying your part.

“洒狗血”，extracted from the ancient traditional opera circles, is originally used to describe those actors who have no discretion, self-consciousness and distortion. This line is a necessary and an indispensable condition to contrast Dieyi's attitude to Ju Xian, comparing with others. Between the words, Dieyi's strong abomination is thoroughly demonstrated. Comparing with the original text, Linda's translated text only keeps the main literal meaning, the communicative functions are not achieved so well. Kind of communicative meaning loss appears in Linda's version.

The analysis of the above 14 examples can evidently show the translator's different translation strategies at lexical level. “Simple and concise words”, “paraphrasing”, “cultural meaning shifting” and “persons shifting” etc. are mainly used to serve the needs of the target eco-environment.

#### 4.4.1.2 Syntactic Level

According to H.G. Widdowson (2000:46), syntax is “the study of how sentences are structured, or in other words, it tries to state what words can be combined it with others to form sentences and in what order” (Widdowson, 2000:46). Fotios Karamitroglou (1998) also stated that “simpler syntactic structures tend to be both shorter and easier to understand than complex syntactic structures and should, therefore, be preferred, provided that a fine balance is achieved between a) semantic aspects (maintaining the semantic load of the original), b) pragmatic aspects (maintaining the function of the original), and c) stylistics (maintaining the stylistics features of the original)”. From the above statements, it can be deeply felt that syntactic level covers a

wide range of linguistic features. Their views also have inspired an intensive study of the syntactic features of subtitle translation.

(17)

别介！都是下九流，谁嫌弃谁啊？

他祖师爷不肯赏饭吃，谁也没辙。

Prostitutes and actors are equally despised by society.

But I have no place for him. What can I do?

The subject of the original text is “祖师爷”, which is similar to “ancestors”. By shifting the subject into “I”, Linda finally achieves the communicational aim—to show the Master’s reluctance on accepting Little Bean. In the film, the Master doesn’t want to accept Little Bean as his disciple, since there is no proper place to settle him down. Considering all these factors, Linda’s translation wonderfully reflects the complicated mental activity of the characters. Each line in the film is to serve for the self-image shaping of the characters. Through using “I have no place for him”, Linda skillfully implies that Master doesn’t reject Little Bean on purpose; on the contrary, everything is destined; therefore, he is not to be blamed. Such kind of shifting also reveals Linda’s competence when adapting to the needs of eco-environment.

(18)

我他妈小癞子，什么都不怕。

I’m not fucking scared of anything.

The only strategy used here is paraphrasing. By skipping the unimportant information, the translator only keeps the essential part to make the audiences grasp and catch the plots development quickly and easily. Considering the different sentence structures of Chinese and English, it’s really necessary and useful to make some adjustments on the sentence structure. Linda’s translation has made some adjustments to adapt to the original text, however, it is still not so good as “I’m a fucking rascal, scared of nothing” from my point of view. The author’s modified version can adapt better to the original eco-environment.

(19)

时不利兮骓不逝。骓不逝兮可奈何，虞姬虞姬奈若何。

I have fallen on bad times and even my horse won’t run away to save itself.

If it won’t run away, what can I do?

And my beloved concubine what shall I do about her?

Extracted from the poem “*Last Song*” written by Xiang Yu of Chu Dynasty, these lines are a wonderful reflection of Hero Xiang’s emotion and thinking. Compared with the famous edition of Xu Yuanchong, Linda’s translated version is relatively literal and simple which is easier for audiences to get the main points. To make the comparison between the two translated versions more intuitional, the following is Xu Yuanchong’s version.

《垓下歌》项羽  
力拔山兮气盖世。  
时不利兮骓不逝。  
骓不逝兮可奈何！  
虞兮虞兮奈若何！

Xiang Yu’s Last Song

I could pull mountains down, oh! With main and might,  
But my good fortune wanes, oh! My steed won’t fight.

Whether my steed will fight, oh! I do not care.

What can I do with you, oh! My lady fair! (Xu, 2013)

After attentively comparing, it’s obvious that Xu’s version is more literary. In addition to the most typical feature—rhyming, balanced sentence structures and full of aesthetic enjoyment are really worthy of imitating. Meanwhile, Linda’s translation is quite literal and simple. It can cater for the target foreign readers both in language expressions and styles. As for subtitle translation in this thesis, Linda’s version is more suitable considering the limitation of time and space. Time efficient is another requirement of the target eco-system.

(20)

人纵有万般无奈，可终也敌不过天命啊。

No matter how resourceful you are, you can’t fight fate.

The original version and Linda’s translated version both contain the most important information to serve for the plots developments, however, their expressions are from the opposite perspectives. In the original text, the lines lay more emphasis on the frustration and helplessness of human beings; Linda tries to illustrate it from the perspective of capability and resourcefulness of humans. This shows Linda’s adjustments to the

sentence emphasis. Such paraphrasing strategy is very common. Whatever, they finally get to the same destination through different paths. What they choose to do is nothing but to better adapt their own cultural background and needs of specific eco-environments.

(21)

男怕夜奔，  
女怕思凡。

Dreaming of the World Outside the Nunnery  
is the hardest female role.

There are two operas in the original text, *Fleeing by night* and *Dreaming of the World Outside the Nunnery*, which are the hardest male and female roles for opera actors respectively. By using the strategy of ellipsis, Linda skips the male role, and only keeps the female role. Little Bean's difficulty of performing *Dreaming of the World Outside the Nunnery* is emphasized through such ellipsis strategy. This is also because of the consideration of the limited time and space. Ellipsis strategy is really a wonderful choice for the subtitle translators to better adapt to the specific needs of subtitle eco-environment

(22)

唱戏得疯魔，不假。可要是活着也疯魔，  
在这人世上，在这凡人堆里，  
咱们可怎么活哟？

Dieyi, you really are obsessed.

You obsession with the stage carries over into your everyday life.

But how are we going to get through the days  
and make it in the real world among ordinary people?

The above lines contain some local cultural terms. Linda's translated text can show the skillfulness of her use of the paraphrasing and condensation strategy. By using the strategy of condensation, by taking the limited time and space factors into consideration, she finally gives the audience more advantages at grasping more information in a short time. Such kind of transformation also implies Linda's subjectivity, adaptations and selections during the subtitling process,

(23)

真他妈想当太太奶奶啦你，

做你娘的玻璃梦去吧。

你当出了这门，把脸一抹擦，你还真成了良人了？

So you want to become a rich man's wife!

Go live out this goddamn fantasy' then

Don't think that when you walk out this door, you'll become a lady of virtue.

The original text is rich with traditional and Chinese elements. How to translate those elements faithfully into English is a great challenge to every subtitle translator. Linda does a good job by using such terms as “a rich man's wife” “fantasy” and “a lady of virtue”. They embody their cultural meanings into themselves, thus, the foreign audiences can understand the lines easier and better. This example here is used to further emphasize the importance of the translator's adaptation and selection when coordinating sentence structures and sentence- sentence relationships.

(24)

尘世中，男子阳污，女子阴秽。

独观世音集两者之精于一身，

欢喜无量啊。

In this world, there is foulness in both men and women.

Only the Bodhisattva embodies both male and female essences.

Such ecstasy!

“Yin” and “Yang” is a pair of unique concepts in Chinese culture, which imply the differences between men and women. In addition, “观世音” originates from Buddhism. They are full of specific cultural meanings. Linda skillfully wanders through different cultural ideologies, and eventually forms the translated version which authentic represents the central ideas of the original text. By using exclamatory sentence and coordinating sentence parts, three separate English sentences are combined together to serve for the original text. Therefore, the subtitle translator's competence of adjusting sentence structure and inner-sentence relationship is a must for a qualified translator.

(25)

你这师弟呀，也不知道是这世道跟他找别扭呢，

还是他跟这世道找别扭。

总是轻省不了，早晚还得出乱子。

只要你跟他在一起，我的心里就不踏实。

I don't know whether Dieyi goes looking for trouble

or if it's trouble that comes looking for him.

But sooner or later they always meet.

Whenever you're with him, my heart is in my throat.

From the translated lines, we can see that there is no direct connection between the original text and the translated text when it comes to the third line. Instead of the literal equivalence, Linda just combines the first two lines together to lay a good foundation for the audience to understand the following content. Such a big adjustment of the inner-sentence relationship and order is out of saving screen space and saving more viewing time.

(26)

世卿世受国恩，

岂敢昧法？

更不敢当众违背天理良心。

The government has always been good to me.

I wouldn't dare deceive the court.

Nor would I betray the laws of Heaven or my own conscience.

“受” sentence pattern is a typical passive voice in Chinese. By shifting the sentence from passive to positive voice, the subject of the sentence also changes from “I” to “the government”. This shifting aims to put “the government” “the court” “the laws of Heaven” and “the conscience” at the position of same importance. It can also show the mental activities and moral beliefs of Mr. Yuan at that time. From this, we can learn that voice shifting is a method of shifting sentence emphasis, thus, it may be good for the target audience to better understand the plots development.

(27)

嘿，这来福就等着您喷它两口呐！

瞧见没有，欢实了不是？

Lucky' the cat' wants you to blow more opium smoke at her.

See that? It sure makes her come to life.

The strategy used here is adding. By combining the lines with the screen pictures, we can know that what is elliptical following “喷两口” is opium. Opium is the key information for the foreign audience to know clearly about the circumstances of Dieyi then. This adding strategy is really necessary sometimes to achieve an integrated understanding of the whole film. This scene is really pivotal for the foreign audience to catch the following plots development. Sometimes adding strategy is quite significant

for the target audience to get the central meaning as soon as possible.

(28)

新军临朝，江山易主。庆典能少得了您二位吗？

The empire may change hands, but rest assured you'll still get top billing at the celebrations for the new regime.

Condensation is a common and useful strategy when dealing with the expressions which contain repetition and antithesis. By condensing the repeated information, the translator concludes “new army” and “rivers and mountains” as “the empire”. Basing on the meaning of the former part, the latter doesn't use a new sentence. Instead, the two parts are combined into one unity.

The above two sub-sections jointly form the analysis at linguistic level of *Farewell My Concubine*. Detailed illustration and examples analysis are covered in this part. Different dealing strategies are also interpreted combining with corresponding case analysis. After such analysis at linguistic level, now the following section is designed to analyze at cultural level.

#### 4.4.2 Cultural level

The relationship between language and culture has always been worthy of researching deeply. As for film subtitling, more points, aspects and constrained factors should be taken into consideration in the subtitle process. The most obvious feature is the time limitation. Just as Fang Mengzhi (2004) says the single-line subtitles on the screen may be only 2 seconds; two lines, about seven seconds. In addition, Chinese culture is characterized with its euphemism and connotation. To express the original taste with limited screen space and viewing time requests more abilities and cultural knowledge accumulation of the subtitle translators.

(29)

磨剪子来，镪菜刀

Bring your knives for sharpening? Sharpen your knives.

Sharpening knives is a traditional craftsmanship that is disappearing in China. Their dreich yo-heave-ho can evoke many people's memories of childhood. Such lively lines full of traditional Chinese cultural elements, on the one hand, are not so easy to



translate; on the other hand, deserve more efforts for the foreign audiences to figure out. Considering all these factors, Linda pays attention to the retaining of its central meaning. Actually, a more literal translation method “Sharpen your scissors, sharpen your knives” may achieve more active functions here. It’s the easiest to understand, and it can save viewing and thinking time as well. As for some complicated cultural terms, the best way, the easiest as well, maybe literal translation, which can avoid misunderstanding and superfluous deducing. Finally, they benefit a lot to saving viewing time.

(30)

都是下九流，谁嫌弃谁啊？

他祖师爷不肯赏饭吃，谁也没辙。

Prostitutes and actors are equally despised by society.

But I have no place for him. What can I do?

“下九流” is a concept that exists in ancient China referring to the nine professions in lower social status. When translating it, Linda points out that prostitute and actors both belong to such group. “Prostitutes and actors” are added by the translator combining with her understanding of the characters’ relationship and the screen shifts. Therefore, addition is also necessary to supplement the lost meaning. Only after achieving this can the audiences understand the lines better in limited time.

(31)

小爷我今儿练的是九转金炉的火丹功。

I have been practicing Kungfu to keep myself warm.

When dealing with those terms with strong cultural meanings, it’s proper and wise to conclude some specific tiny terms into a general broader concept. As a result, the translator can save efforts; the audiences can get the general meaning without being entangled in those unimportant tiny details. Different eco-systems between the target text and the source text require the translators to be familiar with the two different cultural backgrounds. Kungfu in the translated text, though fails to express the original Taoist cultural meanings, it really saves much screen space and viewing time, thus, it’s easier for foreign audiences to understand. When handling some complicated cultural terms and elements, superordinates can contribute a lot for the translator to make proper

adaptations and selections confronting with the requirements of the eco-environment.

(32)

那么日后踏雪访梅，再谈不迟。

Ah, then we shall exchange poetic thoughts some other day.

哎呦 这水流千遭 到了还得归海不是？

虞姬跟霸王说话 中间还得隔着乌江啊？

The river's course is twisted, but in the end it flows to the sea.

But what gulf still lies between our concubine and our king?

“踏雪访梅”，extracted from *Night Vessel*, written by Zhang Dai of Ming Dynasty. Originally, it's used to refer to describe the enjoyment with the beautiful scenery and the pursuit for wonderful poems of the ancient poets. In *Farewell My Concubine*, Mr Yuan invites Xiaolou and Dieyi to his house to have some wine and chat about certain details of the opera. The latter example is also full of cultural terms, which is said by Nakun when he tries to encourage Dieyi to talk with Xiaolou hurriedly and actively. In both examples, Linda deals with the cultural elements skillfully and flexibly.

(33)

这武二郎碰上西门庆，不打，不打能成吗？

You know the old story about Pan Jinlian's husband meeting the man who screwed her? Did he have any choice but to fight?

师哥今儿神不在家，说走嘴了。

师哥该死。

I wasn't thinking. I really put my foot in it this time.

I'm a damn fool.

It's an old story about Pan Jinlian and his husband in ancient China. Without good knowledge of historical and literary sources, the translator will be unlikely to produce a proper translated text. When performing translation, a translator needs to place the specific written text under some relative social and cultural backgrounds. This is useful and meaningful for a better and comprehensive expression of the original meaning. The story of “武二郎” “西门庆” is typically traditional Chinese cultural element, the translated text can't be formed without relative culture knowledge. For some literary allusion, stating its general meaning to offer a general idea is very helpful for the audience to grasp the central meaning. Such kind of dealing strategy is also the need of the target eco-system.

(34)

这妞够厉害的呀。

What a dragon lady!

Different cultures have different cultural prototypes. Dragon is a propitious symbol in China. As a Chinese totem, all Chinese people see themselves as the grandsons of the dragons. It's a positive and lucky symbol for Chinese people. However, because of the cultural differences, the "dragon" in Western countries means more evil than good. Its fierceness and grisly outlooks make people feel uncomfortable. Thus, "a dragon lady" here, on the one hand, can show Ju Xian's courage for true love; on the other hand, the image of "dragon" can clearly show to the foreign audiences that Ju Xian is at the bottom of the society and she is despised by the social group. Linda's choice of "dragon" clearly shows her comprehensive consideration for the complicated circumstance then.

(35)

功也不练 嗓也不叫 耍贫顶嘴你倒学成了。

唱戏的不靠这个 凭的是功夫 本事 玩意。

没你的近道可走。

If opera relied on being a smart-ass, you'd graduate with honors.

Opera requires practice, skill and talent,

There are no shortcuts.

This scene happens at the latter part of the film. Dieyi tends to give Xiao Si a good lesson and tries to punish him. In Dieyi's opinion, Xiao Si is skillful at bickering and acting against him. With Linda's translation, Dieyi's anger and dissatisfaction can be clearly felt. Besides, there is also a tone of satire between the words. The above words used here are full of typical western cultural elements. All these form an ideal understanding condition and environment for the foreign audiences to achieve an integrated perception in the target eco-environment.

In this section, the thesis intensively explores the relationship between language and culture in subtitle translation. Due to limited viewing time and screen space, translation for the cultural terms and elements requires more strategies and skills. After the analysis at cultural level in this section, several translation strategies can be concluded for the following subtitle translation practitioners to adopt to better perform,

his/her own subjectivity and adapt to the target eco-environment.

#### 4.4.3 Communicative Level

Film subtitle translation, is a kind of communication to some extent. The screen pictures, the lines, the sound, the music and even the dressing style of the characters can contribute to the achievement of communicative meanings. A precise, brief and direct communication can be helpful for the audiences to save viewing time and keep pace with the plots developments. Therefore, how to transfer a literal written text into a more communicative one surely needs a lot of translation strategies. In this section, the author selects some examples to show the strategies used by Linda at communicative level.

(36)

小豆子，没事，朕都耗了一炷香了。

Don't worry, Douzi. We're already halfway through.

In ancient time, when there is no watch to tell the time, people often use a stick of incense to indicate the passing of time. Even modern Chinese can hardly make it clear that how long a stick of incense exactly represents. Under such circumstances, the final translation "We're already halfway through" is quite acceptable because of its simpleness and conciseness. When it comes to some accurate numbers and other data, it's unnecessary to make the exact numbers clear. Under such circumstances, conveying of communicative meaning is the primary goal and the most important requirement of the target audiences and eco-environment.

(37)

打自有唱戏的行当起，哪朝哪代他也没有咱京剧这么红过，  
你们算是赶上了。

From the time opera began, it's never such popularity as it does today.  
You're lucky to be part of it.

Instead of trying to find equivalent expressions to substitute the original meaning, Linda only contains the most communicative meaning and her skills of paraphrasing can be perfect felt. We can conclude that transforming the part of speech is useful and helpful to express the original meaning better. "Be lucky" is adopted here to emphasize the popularity of opera with a strong tone.

(38)

火气壮，又没钱找姑娘，  
总得找个地界熬熬火不是。

They are only trying to find a way  
to kill their spare time.

Literal translation has two demerits: wasting screen space and time sometimes; leading to foreign audience's misunderstandings or understanding difficulty. In e.g. (36), several local cultural terms and several colloquial expressions both increase the difficulty of revealing the meanings with the original flavor. Therefore, we can strongly feel the fascination of Linda's paraphrasing strategy at the communicative level. Through omitting some unimportant and non-substantive parts, the most obvious and key communicative information is directly conveyed with limited words in the least time. This is a kind of adaptation and selection of subtitle translator to the needs of the foreign audiences.

(39)

瞧您这意思，我是找对主了。

可这人那，也总有指望错的时候。

From your expression, I see I've come to the right place.

But sometimes one's hopes are misplaced.

这林黛玉要是不焚稿，

那叫什么林黛玉呀！

All you classic consumptive heroines burn your letters.

Lines in the first example are said by Juxian to Mr Yuan when Dieyi is in Japanese prison. Juxian's character in the film is honest and straightforward. She tries to help his husband Xiaolou to save Dieyi out. Considering the specific needs of the eco-environment then, the lines here should be translated very powerfully and influentially to show Ju Xian's eager and wisdom when trying to help Dieyi out. Her uses of positive and negative tone jointly show her braveness, courage and wisdom. As for the latter part of the example lines, Linda's translation combines the original text with the screen pictures then. Therefore, it seems that there is kind of inequivalence between the original text and the translated one. Regardless of the change of the sentence structures, the communicative meanings of those are quite agreeable.

(40)

站起来都是七尺高的老爷们，  
放着正经营生不做，就会在一个小虫子身上找饭折，德行！  
Some friends they are!  
They only wanted to take advantage of us.

(41)

正经营生？  
我姓段的就会唱戏，  
戏你不让我唱了，不玩蝻蝻 我干嘛去啊？  
我抬棺材掏大粪去。  
Get a job? I'm an actor.  
What else do you want me to do!  
You're the one who doesn't want me to sing opera anymore. Now what?  
Get a job? That's easy for you to say. I know nothing but opera.

Subtitling is a comprehensive system composing of various factors. Lines are only a slight part. Sometimes, it's really essential to combine the subtitle translation with the screen shifting. To understand the above lines better, every audience should learn to pay attention to the pictures and watch carefully about the characters' behaviors, facial expressions and even the tiny mental activities. Only combining them together, can a translator form a satisfactory text and adapt better to the cross-cultural eco-environments. The above e.g. (40) and (41) are good illustrations of such adaptations.

In this section, the thesis concentrates on the examples lines analysis at communicative level. The cases analysis takes screen pictures, the lines, the sound, the music and even the dressing style of the characters into the illustration angles. Considering the various districted factors of subtitle translation, more precise, brief and direct expressions are preferred to achieve communicative functions. After a comprehensive analysis at linguistic, cultural and communicative levels, it's natural and cohesion to move onto the next supplement analyzing aspect—aesthetic level.

#### **4.4.4 Aesthetic Level**

Translation aesthetics is an intensive study of the aesthetic issues of inter-lingual conversions to improve such conversional ability and aesthetic appreciation ability (Liu, 1986: 19). The aesthetic level here is different from the translation aesthetics; but they still have something in common, just as the definition of translation from Fu Zhongxuan

says translation is a kind of aesthetic appreciation activity converted from aesthetic subject to the object through aesthetic inter-media (Fu, 1993).

As far as the aesthetic level in subtitling field is concerned, this paper takes it as a supplement to the “three-dimensional transformation” in Hu’s eco-translatology. The aesthetic level concentrates on the joyfulness of the target audiences and try to avoid losing aesthetic enjoyment as well through “the beauty in sound, form and sense” and some rhetorics. Attention is mainly paid to the cultural equivalence, functional equivalence and poetic equivalence between the cross-cultural language translation activities with some examples. Meanwhile, some examples and details cases are also ready in this section.

As a part of theoretical contributions to eco-translatology in the thesis, the aesthetic level in this section is not so mature and systemic. As mentioned in the above paragraph, the “aesthetic” here mainly focuses on reader’s appreciation from cultural equivalence, functional equivalence and poetic equivalence. Transformation of cultural meaning, on the one hand, should be quite loyal and faithful to the original cultural and communicative meaning; on the other hand, it should also be poetic equivalent and structurally balanced. Thus, the audience could enjoy the aesthetic enjoyment of the lines.

(42)

要想人前显贵，您必得人后受罪。

今儿个是破题，文章还在后头哪。

If you think you’re above everyone else you’ll learn the hard way.

This is just the beginning. Wait till you see what’s in store.

Idioms and proverbs exist almost in every language and culture. They are the typical representatives of their cultures and ideologies. Linda substitutes the Chinese idioms with the corresponding English proverbs or slangs to achieve cultural equivalence and balance and bring aesthetic enjoyment of the texts to the audiences. “Wait till you see what’s in store” or “Wait till you see what is on offer” are both popular slangs in daily English communication. Linda adopts such slangs here are favorable for foreign audiences to grasp the main points in the least time. Subtitling eco-environment is such a complicated system that the translator should pay attention to every factor that would

influence the joyfulness of the audiences.

(43)

人纵有万般无奈，可终也敌不过天命啊。

No matter how resourceful you are, you can't fight fate.

Different cultures and language systems have their specific expressing habits, such as the differences between active and passive voice, between the first, second and the third persons. Linda, as a native English speaker, tries to illustrate such sentence from the powerfulness and strength of human beings, which caters to the tastes of foreign audiences and also meets the aesthetic requirements. In this example, the original text emphasizes that human beings are incapable sometimes and everything is destined. After comparing the translated text with the original one, it can be strongly felt that although the translated text emphasizes the importance of "fate" from the opposite angle, they finally both achieve the same communicational functions and bring the audience aesthetic enjoyments through keeping the beauty in sense.

(44)

一笑万古春，

一啼万古愁。

此境

非你莫属。

A smile ushers in the spring.

A tear does darken all the world.

How truly does this befit you.

Only you are possessed of such charm.

Poems and songs in ancient China are special cultural phenomena in the world. Thus, it's not so easy to translate them well. For such kind of original text, the meaning is not the only factor to be considered. The spirits together with the completeness of the forms are sometimes the same or even more important. The translated text from Linda keeps functional equivalence and poetic equivalence through maintaining the beauty in sound and form. The specific words and phrases, the sentence pattern and the inner-sentence relationship all have achieved functional and aesthetic equivalence. Considering all these facets, it's natural to come to the conclusion that Linda Javin is really a qualified subtitle translator, because she loyally expresses the original meaning, and meanwhile,



her translation also brings the same aesthetic enjoyment as the original text. Such kind of aesthetic enjoyment is really worth appreciating once and once again.

(45)

到没人戏不分，雌雄同在的境界。您给断断。

You will be judge.

Has he not blurred the distinction between male and female?

Partial changes are for meanings of the whole sentence. Though sometimes there are some phenomena of order conversion, they do not influence the charm and beauty of the sentences. Aesthetic level does not only mean paying attention to the beauty of the translated text, it also keeps an eye on the expressional beauty between the original text and the translated text. Any kind of meaning-losing or structural imbalance is seen as failing to achieve aesthetic enjoyments. With the beauty in from and sense, this example wonderfully and evidently shows the adaptation and selection of the subtitle translator to better achieve the various needs at different levels of the target subtitling eco-environment.

(46)

京戏是啥？就是八个字：

无声不歌，无动不舞。

What is Beijing Opera after all? You can put it succinctly.

“No sound is but a song. No movement is but a dance.”

When handling with subtitle translation, because of the complicated plots and the limitation of the space and the time slots between the screens shifting, sometimes the translated text usually omits something that is not so direct but can be imagined from the screen pictures. How to skillfully combine the screen text with the screen pictures is really challenge for the subtitle translators. Such adding strategy should be used properly so that it can help the audience grasp the central meaning, catch the plots development in the least time, and avoiding losing aesthetic enjoyment of the target audience as well.

(47)

你是想找个小力笨儿 小催帮儿.....

小跟包 小腿子 小龙套！

All you've ever wanted was a coolie, a stagehand,  
a follower, a bit player

The requirements of the aesthetic level are clearly shown in translated text. The equivalent cultural terms, equivalent communicative and cultural meaning all contributes much to the aesthetic joyfulness for the target audience through the beauty in form. This strongly proves Linda's competence in dealing with C-E subtitle translation. Keeping pace with the plots development and also appreciating the cross-cultural language phenomena are the results and gifts for foreign audiences.

This sub-section emphasizes the aesthetic level in subtitling field and takes it as a supplement to the "three-dimensional transformation" in Hu's eco-translatology. Cultural equivalence, functional equivalence and poetic equivalence between the cross-cultural language translation activities are intensively illustrated with some examples. It concentrates on the joyfulness of the target audiences and try to avoid losing aesthetic enjoyment as well through "the beauty in sound, form and sense" and some rhetorics. Though not so mature and systemic, it does offer some useful tips that are helpful for avoiding aesthetic enjoyment during the subtitle translation process. A translator's competence on keeping aesthetic equivalence of the lines is a research topic which deserves being researched deeper and deeper.

#### 4.5 Summary

Taking *Farewell My Concubine* as an example, the thesis mainly adopts such research methods as theoretical analysis and case study, hoping to further study and analyze subtitle translation from the perspective of eco-translatology.

The first point is that subtitle translator is the central one among so many elements of the subtitle translational eco-system. The translator's subjectivity can be interpreted as his multi-dimensional adaptations and selections to the subtitle translational eco-environment aiming to achieve "Doing things with translations". Considering the complexity, diversity and distinctiveness of subtitle translational eco-system, playwrights, directors, actors, audience, technology, language and so on should also be included in the eco-system.

In addition, the translator's "Three-dimensional transformation" mainly pays attention to language level, cultural level and communicative level. As a supplement,

the thesis also demonstrates the rationality and validity of aesthetic level which is concluded from the comprehensive analysis of *Farewell My Concubine*.

In Chapter Four, a comprehensive analysis of main language features of *Farewell My Concubine*, the translator's subjectivity and the multi-dimensional transformation of the subtitling of *Farewell My Concubine* at lexical level, syntactic level, cultural level, communicative level and aesthetic level all have been investigated. From the above examples and cases analysis, Linda's subjectivity, her adaptations and selections within cross-cultural translational eco-environments all strongly support the conclusion that Linda is a qualified subtitle translator for the needs of both eco-systems.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

Innovation of information technology brings energy for the advancement of broadcasting ways of films and television programs. Foreign popular films are increasingly active on the Internet. Confronting such a mass need for films translation, subtitle translation is winning more favor compared with the traditional dubbing translation. Considering the social function played of subtitle translation, efforts on the research of it should be further strengthened.

Interpreting the applicability and guidance of eco-translatology for subtitle translation, the thesis also hopes to provide a reference for subtitle translation learners and practitioners to better adapt to subtitle translational eco-environment and improve their translation quality.

#### 5.1 Major Contributions

Within the framework of eco-translatology proposed by Hu Gengshen, this thesis conducts a comprehensive study of the eco-system and the elements of films subtitle translation, the translator's subjectivity in the whole process of subtitle translation process and the achievement of "multi-dimensional transformation". Taking *Farewell My Concubine* as an example, the thesis mainly adopts such research methods as theoretical analysis and case study, aiming to further study and analyze subtitle translation from linguistic, cultural, communicative and aesthetic level. Conclusions drawn from this thesis are as follows:

(1) The main language features of the Chinese lines of *Farewell My Concubine* are as below: concise but emotional dialogue; strong Beijing Opera and Beijing dialect flavor; sharp but implicative expressions; rich of slang and idioms.

(2) Considering the above language features, at linguistic level, such lexical strategies as condensation, expansion, substitution, adding are mainly adopted; meanwhile, at syntactic level, the translator prefers phrases to complicated sentences, passive to active voice sometimes and uses more ellipsis and condense paraphrasing

strategies. At cultural and communicative levels, condensation, paraphrasing, ellipsis, sentence structure and inner-sentence relationship are mainly used to better express the original meaning and implication. The aesthetic level concentrates on the joyfulness of the target audiences and try to avoid losing aesthetic enjoyment as well through “the beauty in sound, form and sense” and rhetorics.

(3) The unity sequence chain between the original text and the translated text is finally achieved through the modification of “Two stages of adaptation and selection in the translating process” illustrated by Hu Gengshen.

## **5.2 Limitations of the Study**

It's normal that after a detailed and profound research, there still exists some defects and limitations in the thesis. After the comprehensive analysis of *Farewell My Concubine*, certain points and limitations need to be explored here so as to get a better overview of the thesis.

The thesis is organized under the guidelines of eco-translatology. Since various aspects and dimensions have been taken into the general analysis framework, the explanation and analysis of some perspectives are not so profound and comprehensive.

Aesthetic level is a new analytic dimension adopted by the author, trying to explain the cultural equivalence and functional equivalence between Chinese and English texts. Though the idea is relatively fresh, the author doesn't do a wonderful job due to the limitation of personal language level and cross-cultural accumulations.

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## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I'd like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Gao Wanlong. He gives me patient direction and a lot of guidance. His responsibility and proper guiding have left me a deep impression which will benefit me all my life.

Second, I'd like to give my thanks to all the teachers in the Foreign Languages College of Zhejiang Gongshang University. During the past two years, they help me lay a solid foundation for my research by their thought-provoking lectures.

Moreover, I really appreciate my friends' help and care which make me never feel lonely during the process of my writing. Their advice and encouragement have scared all the boredom and baldness away.

Last but not least, I want to give my thanks to everyone that has ever helped me gather materials and especially the electronic library in my university. I want to thank my family for their trust and support.

All in all, I want to give my great gratitude to anyone who has ever helped and supported me. This will encourage and enlighten me in my future life. Thank you with all my heart.

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