

# Analysis of the detailed factors affecting the subtitle translation

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**Abstract:** In recent years, as the cross-cultural exchanges between China and other countries have become more frequent, more and more English film and television works have flooded into the Chinese market, attracting the attention of many audiences. In order to enable Chinese audiences to better appreciate these film and television works, high-quality and high-level subtitle translation is indispensable. Since China started late in film and television sector, there are still many immature places in the research on subtitle translation. This article aims to analyze several classic English film and television works, summarize, and study the detailed factors that affect subtitle translation.

**Keywords:** Subtitle translation; Chinese and Western culture; detailed factors

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## 1 Introduction

With the increasing frequency of cultural exchanges between Chinese and foreign films and television, subtitle translation has received more and more attention in recent decades and become more and more important in translation field. The people's growing need for a better life has greatly promoted the increase in the audiences' demand for high-quality film subtitle translation. Excellent subtitle translation allows viewers to intuitively understand the charm and differences of Chinese and Western cultures while having a good

movie-viewing experience.

Nowadays, most domestic academic papers on subtitle translation of film and television works focus on the systematic nature of translation, while ignoring the details of translation, causing the audiences to misunderstand some movie lines and Western culture. This article mainly analyzes the lines in several classic foreign films and TV series, and summarizes the detailed factors that are generally ignored by the subtitle translation teams.

## 2 Detailed factors affecting subtitle translation

### 2.1 Translation of non-dialogue content in film and television works

In film and television works, in addition to the dialogue between the characters, there are many non-dialogue content, such as letters, short messages, signs and other information. These information may be important clues throughout the entire film and television work, or may be important information used by the audience to understand the storyline and infer the progress of the plot. For example, in the first episode of the first season of the British drama *the Detective Sherlock*, after the incident, when inaccurate information was revealed to reporters at the Metropolitan Police Agency in London, the protagonist Sherlock sent text messages to all reporters with the content "*wrong*" to tell people the truth. Renren Film and Television Translation Team translated its Chinese meaning "错". This text message can not only help the audience understand the progress of the plot, but also vividly show the protagonist's arrogant char-

acter to the audience. If the translator ignores this content, the characters and confusing cases to be portrayed in this play cannot be better rendered and conveyed. Therefore, translators should pay attention to these detailed factors to better show the content and ideas of the work.

## 2.2 Mutual translation of Chinese and English proverbs

In daily life, people often use common sayings and proverbs when communicating. When watching film and television works, we will also find that proverbs often appear in the lines, and the translation of these proverbs plays an important role in the audience's understanding of the content and context of the film and television works. Some translators do not pay attention to the translation of common sayings and proverbs, and only translate them into smooth sentences. In fact, the Chinese nation has a long history, and its traditional culture is extensive and profound. If translators carefully savor and think, they can find Chinese proverbs that correspond to the English proverbs in film and television works.

For example, there is a sentence in *Kung Fu Panda*: "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery." The translator translates it as: "往者不可谏, 来者犹可追". This phrase comes from *The Analects of Confucius*. In this translation, if the translator translates this sentence literally, it is: "昨天已成历史, 明天仍为秘密". By comparing these two translated sentences, we can easily find that for Chinese audiences, the previous sentence is more charming and thought-provoking. This is the charm of Chinese traditional culture.

Due to the influence of culture, the literal meaning and image meaning of the original cannot be retained during translation. The original image can be converted into an image which is familiar to another reader, thereby conveying the pragmatic purpose of the original text and the implicit meaning of the translator. As a translator, one should improve his knowledge and internal cultivation, actively promote traditional Chinese culture, and fully demonstrate the unique charm of Chinese culture in his translation.

## 2.3 The use of buzzwords in translation

Today, people use various types of social media for office, communication, and entertainment. On these social media platforms, young people have created many Internet buzzwords to express their personalities and life conditions. Youth buzzwords are not only

a practical need for social development, but also an urgent need for the expression of youth groups and an inevitable trend in the development of linguistics.

In the era of globalization, cultural integration of various countries is bound to be a trend, and Internet buzzwords are also the product of multiculturalism. The use of Internet buzzwords enables people from all over the world to understand and communicate with each other. In the popular American drama *The Big Bang Theory*, the translator has used buzzwords many times to translate, and the protagonists' humorous attitude towards life in this drama is vividly expressed. In the fifth episode of the 12th season of *The Big Bang Theory*, Sheldon said this sentence: "Don't go man's plaining things to her." In Renren Film and Television Translation Team, the translator translated it as: "别拿直男癌说教那一套对他呀". The term "直男癌" originated from a ridicule of male chauvinistic boys by netizens. Here, the translator uses the internet buzzword "直男癌" to help the audience understand the scene more clearly.

## 2.4 Translation of lyrics

Film and television works are composed of two factors: sound and picture. Among the factors of sound, film and television music is an important component. Film and television music mainly refers to the music that appears in film and television works, including different types of titles, such as opening songs, ending songs, and interludes. Good film and television music can not only enrich the plot and create an atmosphere, but also resonate with the audience. This is the unique charm of film and television music. Most translators did not translate the lyrics, which makes it difficult for the audience to empathize. For example, in the movie *call me by your name*, Ellio learns that his beloved is about to get married. He sits alone in front of the fire, crying and recalling the sweet time between himself and Oliver in just six weeks. The lyrics of the episode are: "Is it a video? Is it a video? I have loved you for the last time". The translation of the lyrics is: "难道这爱只是一场虚幻? 只是空欢喜一场? 我已经最后一次用力爱过你". If the translator translates it carefully, the audience can integrate into the film at a deeper level, grieve with the protagonist, sink into memories, and resonate.

## 3 Conclusion

In recent years, the domestic film and television industry has developed rapidly, and research on subtitle translation of film and television works has also been

paid more attention. Although the breadth and depth of film and television translation needs to be improved compared with translation studies in other fields, its development trend should not be underestimated. Through this article, it is hoped that translators can not only improve the level of literal translation, but also pay attention to the details of translation on the basis of understanding the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and finally provide a high-quality translation. Of course, the ultimate goal is to improve the level of subtitle translation and contribute to cross-cultural communication.

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