

Original Paper

A Study on Subtitle Translation Strategies of *Kung Fu Panda 2* from the Perspective of Adaptation and Selection Theory

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Received: November 29, 2023 Accepted: February 17, 2024 Online Published: March 06, 2024
doi:10.22158/eltls.v6n2p1 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/eltls.v6n2p1>

Abstract

In recent years, with economic globalization, international cultural exchanges are getting closer. Many foreign film works have been introduced into China, especially the English films popular among Chinese audiences. In order to realize film appreciation between different languages, subtitle translation comes into being. However, as an emerging field, subtitle translation studies are not mature compared with traditional translation studies. The Adaptation and Selection Theory is the core theory of the eco-translatology which is a novel and relatively complete system of translation theory put forward by Hu Gengshen, a Chinese scholar. This thesis adopts the Adaptation and Selection Theory as the theoretical basis. Firstly, the research on subtitle translation at home and abroad is reviewed. Secondly, the development, main principles and applicability of the Adaptation and Selection Theory are elaborated. Finally, under the guidance of this theory, this thesis analyzes how translators choose appropriate translation strategies, based on the specific example of subtitle translation in Kung Fu Panda 2, to select and transform from the three dimensions. Besides, how to get a translation with a high “degree of holistic adaptation and selection” are also explored.

Keywords

subtitle translation, Adaptation and Selection Theory, Kung Fu Panda 2, the three-dimensional transformations

1. Introduction

Film is not only one of the main ways of mass entertainment, but also a carrier of culture, which has made an important contribution to the cultural exchanges. The deepening of globalization and the popularity of the Internet make it easier for people to access foreign films. When watching such films, due to language barriers, Chinese audiences can only obtain accurate information by relying on

translated Chinese subtitles, which makes the role of subtitle translation increasingly prominent. Like other translation practices, subtitle translation also needs research and guidance. Only with advanced and systematic theory can translation be carried out scientifically, and can translators be guided to achieve the better translational level to ensure the transmission of film information. After years of in-depth study, Hu Gengshen creatively combines Darwin's theory of biological evolution with translation studies, putting forward the Adaptation and Selection Theory which is the core theory of the eco-translatology. The rules of this theory in translation involves the following three aspects: adaptation and selection, translator-centredness and the three-dimensional transformations.

The Adaptation and Selection Theory is one of the guiding theories that widely used in the subtitle translation of English films. It requires the translator to take account of all factors in the translational eco-environment, actively adapt to them, and then choose appropriate translation strategies and methods to carry out the "three-dimensional transformations" which are the conversion of linguistic forms from the linguistic dimension, the transmission of cultural connotation from the cultural dimension, and the embodiment of communicative intention from the communicative dimension. In this way, the degree of holistic adaptation and selection of the translation can be improved, contributing to the higher recognition degree of audiences to the translation.

Kung Fu Panda 2, a Hollywood animated film released in June 2011, attracted millions of viewers in China and earned a high box office profit, whose success had great relations with the excellent subtitle translation. To prove that the subtitle translation's high degree of holistic adaptation and selection can be achieved through adaptation and selection from the three dimensions, the specific examples of subtitle translation in *Kung Fu Panda 2* are analyzed as the research object.

2. Subtitle Translation

2.1 Previous Studies Overseas

Western scholars started their studies on the translation of film and television earlier, and most of them are European. The good development of those studies in Europe is inseparable from the diverse linguistic and cultural characteristics of European countries.

In 1974, Cay Dollerup, an internationally renowned translator, published an article entitled "On Subtitles in Television Programmes" in *Babel* magazine, which was the first study of subtitle translation in the West. In this article, Dollerup examined the different kinds of mistakes that occurred when subtitles of English TV shows were translated into Danish. For example, some words and phrases have been translated into non-existent Danish, or translators cannot choose the correct equivalent when there are more than two words for a word in the source language (Dollerup, 1974). Although he pointed out the importance of subtitle translation in foreign language learning, it is a pity that he didn't propose solutions to these mistakes. Titford also put forward his personal opinions on subtitle translation, believing that the problems of subtitle translation mainly come from the restrictions brought by the media to translators (Titford, 1982). In this period, translators studied the subtitle translation of dubbed

films in detail. Though the system had not been formed, the way for future research on film and television translation was paved.

In the 1990s, the study of subtitle translation was in its heyday. With great progress, many theories and achievements were put forward by Western scholars at this time. Ivarsson published *Subtitling for the Media: A Handbook of An Art*, which marked a breakthrough in the research theory of film translation (Huang, 2014).

After 1995, the number of papers about theoretical studies has increased significantly, especially the research achievements of European scholars. Henrik Gottlieb, the professor of Copenhagen University in Denmark, put forward many systematic concepts and explanations of subtitle translation, including the characteristics, strategies and limitations. In 1992, Gottlieb proposed some specific methods for subtitle translation in his paper “Subtitle: A New College Course”.

The first foreign academic collection on subtitle translation was *(Multi)media Translation* published in 2001, which was edited by Yves Gambier, the professor of Turku University, and Henrik Gottlieb. On the whole, this collection gives a good summary of the Nordic subtitle translation, and most of the theories are also of great reference significance for Chinese subtitle translation. Published at the end of 2004, *Topics in Audiovisual Translation* is also a crucial work, representing the latest research achievements at that time (Zhu, 2013).

In addition, the programs and courses of film and television translation have been opened in more than 20 universities in Europe. Film translation has garnered increased interest from Western experts and scholars.

2.2 Previous Studies in China

Before the reform and opening up, there was almost no representative film translation practice in China. All foreign films released at that time were called silent films with subtitles in English. The plot description, which contains instructions and other relevant information about the plot, was the most commonly used. After 1921, many foreign films were introduced into China, so subtitle translation came into being. Cheng Shuren, a Chinese student in film major abroad, first introduced subtitle translation into China. It was after the reform and opening up that film and TV translation became really popular. Especially in recent decades, subtitle translation gradually shows a booming trend of development. In terms of theoretical research, China started relatively late compared with western countries. Although a lot of achievements have been made, but in general, there is still a lack of sufficient theories to support and guide the practice.

The well-known research experts in film and television translation in China include Qian Shaochang, a professor from the College of Journalism and Communication in Shanghai International Studies University, and Ma Zhengqi, the professor from the College of International Broadcasting in Communication University of China.

Qian Shaochang holds a prominent position in the realm of film and television translation within China. He has been engaged in it for a long time, gaining rich practical experience. Nearly a thousand films

and TV dramas have been translated by him, such as *Growing Pains*, *Grand Hotel* and *The Thorn Birds*, which were early introduced into China. In 2000, he published paper, “Film Translation—An Increasingly Important Area”, in which he summarized the five characteristics of film language. He believes that “faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance” should be achieved in film translation, of which expressiveness is the most important (Qian, 2000).

In addition, Zhang Chunbai and Li Yunxing are the representatives of translation practices and strategies. Zhang Chunbai has been engaged in translation practice and theoretical research for a long time and has translated nearly 300 episodes of films and TV dramas. According to his personal experience in translation, he provides a comprehensive overview of the methods and skills required for film and television translation, examines the influence of cultural factors on film translation, and also discusses the translation skills of puns (Zhang, 1998). Li Yunxing studied subtitle translation from the angle of text translation. In his paper “Strategies for Translating Subtitles” published in 2001, he proposed to limit the space occupied by subtitle in translation based on specific examples. By analyzing the functions and characteristics of subtitle, he put forward corresponding translation strategies, believing that subtitle translation should follow the principle of providing the most effective information in a limited time and space (Li, 2001).

Apart from that, other scholars also conducted exploration and research on film translation. However, in general, China lags behind western countries in both the practice and theoretical research of film and television translation

3. Theoretical Basis

3.1 An Overview of Adaptation and Selection Theory

In the 1960s, the concept of “ecology” was introduced into various academic research fields. Scholars in translation circles also began to study translation theories from an ecological perspective. In 2001, Hu Gengshen first proposed the concept of “eco-translatology” which can provide better guidance for translation under the guidance of natural science. It also demonstrates that translatology can be organically combined with natural science. The Adaptation and Selection Theory is the core theory of eco-translatology.

Eco-environment refers to the environment composed of ecological relations. Thus, Hu Gengshen put forward the concept of “translational eco-environment”, which refers to the interaction between translation agents and the external environment. On this premise, based on the principle of Darwin’s “the survival of the fittest”, Hu Gengshen put forward “the Adaptation and Selection Theory in translation” to discuss specific translation problems.

The Adaptation and Selection Theory defines translation as a translator’s selective activity of adapting to the translational eco-environment to transplant text, according to the principles of translator as lead, text as base and cross-cultural information conversion as the purpose (Hu, 2004). The process of translation is similar to that of natural selection. All elements and agents in the translational ecosystem

must constantly adjust themselves to conform to the requirements of the eco-environment, or they will only be eliminated. This theory of translation emphasizes the translator-centredness and guides translators to “adapt” to the translational eco-environment of the source text first, and then “select” the most appropriate translation according to their own translational eco-environment.

3.2 Rules of Adaptation and Selection Theory

The rules of the Adaptation and Selection Theory in translation involves the following three aspects: adaptation and selection, translator-centredness and the transformations from the three dimensions.

3.2.1 Adaptation and Selection

The languages and cultures of the source and target text are different. Translators cannot simply translate the text word for word, which will produce awkward and incomprehensible translations and completely lose the cultural communication function of translation. Therefore, during the translation process, translators need to ensure a harmonious equilibrium between the two languages in terms of grammar, discourse, and linguistic style.

The process of translation is a translator’s choice activity consciously or unconsciously influenced by the translational eco-environment (Hu, 2003). There are many factors in translational eco-environment, which can be summarized as source text, translator and translated text. According to the Adaptation and Selection Theory, the translation process can be divided into two stages. In the initial stage, the translational eco-environment of the source text will “select” the translator, which is the translator’s “adaptation” to the source text. Thus, this stage is similar to the “natural selection” in the evolution theory. In the second stage, the translator will consider himself as the translational eco-environment to “select” the optimal translation based on appropriate translation skills and strategies.

A good example to illustrate the applicability and efficacy of this theory is the acknowledgement of the translation of a Chinese writer’s works by the Nobel prize in literature. The Chinese writer Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize in Literature, which is largely attributed to Howard Goldblatt’s “translation with transformations”. This example reflects that, according to independent judgment, translators need to make adaptive choices in a specific translational eco-environment.

3.2.2 Translator-centredness

The Adaptation and Selection Theory in eco-translatology focuses on the translator. When it comes to this, the “translation community” represented by translators should be mentioned first. In brief, the term “translation community” denotes the collection comprising diverse organisms engaged in translation procedures and associated with translation activities. The parties in the “translation community” will interact with each other, which determines the final translation (Hu, 2004). However, it is the translator that can carry out translation act and have a significant impact on translation. So the translator-centredness is obvious.

During the translation process, the translator plays a crucial role in facilitating communication between the source and target text (Hu, 2004). For the translator, the source text and the translation become the object, while the translator becomes the agent. The translator must adapt to the requirements and

constraints of the translation ecological environment, and then make ecological rational judgments on all the problems, so as to select the optimal translation.

This is different from the “transversion-centered” theory influenced by structuralism. Translators are no longer submitting to “source text” or “translated text”, nor are they “invisible”, but are placed at the center of the process. The significance of translators has been significantly heightened like never before. The Adaptation and Selection Theory pushes the “translator-centredness” to the forefront of translation research and meanwhile stimulates translators’ creative enthusiasm.

3.2.3 Transformations from Three Dimensions

There are many agents involved in the translation process. The complexity leads to the “multi-dimension” of the translation, so the method to select appropriate translated text is the “multi-dimensional transformations”. The extent of multi-dimensional transformations relies on the translator’s ability to adjust to the translational eco-environment from the multi-dimensional perspective, as well as their capacity to safeguard the eco-environments of both the source text and target text. Therefore, the Adaptation and Selection Theory summarizes specific translation methods as transformations from the three dimensions which are the linguistic dimension, the cultural dimension and the communicative dimension.

The “transformation from the linguistic dimension” refers to the translator’s selection and transformation of the language form of the translated text from the aspects of vocabulary, sentence pattern and rhetoric. It involves the transformations of words’ meanings and sentences, the style and other language expressions. The “transformation from the cultural dimension” requires the translator to be culturally aware in the process of translation, familiarize themselves with the entire cultural framework of the language, and ensure accurate conveyance of bilingual cultural connotations, so as to select and transform from this dimension. Translators should possess an extensive understanding of both cultures. The “transformation from the communicative dimension” implies that translators should also prioritize the communicative element of translation in order to achieve the intended communication of the source text.

These three often interweave and interact with each other, and in this process, the quality of translation is improved.

3.3 Applicability of Adaptation and Selection Theory to Subtitle Translation

As Metzger Morgan, the subtitle translation expert of Channel 4 Television, said, “a good subtitle can’t save a bad film, but a bad subtitle can certainly ruin a good film” (Morgan, 2001). So, it is of utmost importance to ensure the high standard of subtitle translation. To enhance the quality of film subtitle translation, translators should possess a comprehensive comprehension regarding the distinctive characteristics associated with this particular form of translation. Film subtitles transcend the traditional “binary text”, break the original presentation form, and rise to the “multi-text” composed of subtitles, pictures, sounds and other elements. It often embodies the following specific features.

The first feature is colloquial. Most films are close to daily life and the audience is the public.

Therefore, the translator should combine the characteristics of Chinese, which is colloquial, to make the subtitle conform to Chinese language habits and easy to understand and meet the aesthetic needs of the public.

The second feature is individuality. Subtitle translation mainly involves dialogue between characters, so it will be affected by the protagonist's personality, living environment and psychological changes, which reflects the feature of individuality. Considering that, the translator needs to bring himself into the context of the film and then really experiences the characters' characteristics.

The third feature is simplicity. As the auxiliary of picture and sound, movie subtitles usually only occupy a very small space of the overall picture in order not to affect the beauty of the picture. From the perspective of audiences, too long subtitles will make them unable to accurately capture all the words, and even make them pay too much attention to the subtitles instead of the picture. Hence, it is crucial for film subtitle translations to be simple and concise. The original dialogue must be omitted and modified, which it is not arbitrary deletion. Since some information in the film can be understood through the screen and sound, unnecessary words can be omitted in the subtitle to ensure the simplicity of subtitle translation (Zhu, 2016).

These features of film subtitle translation constitute a translational eco-environment. When translating movie subtitles, translators should always keep such eco-environment firmly in mind and then try to choose the translation best conforming to this eco-environment, so as to achieve natural consistency and integration between the eco-environment of the translated text and the source text. In consequence, Hu Gengshen's Adaptation and Selection Theory is a rather suitable theory to support the practice of film subtitle translation. The assessment of three-dimensional transformations is employed to determine the extent to which the linguistic, cultural, and communicative aspects of the source text are effectively retained and adapted within the translated text's eco-environment. The highest degree of holistic adaptation and selection can be created only when the translation is suitable in all dimensions.

To sum up, in film subtitle translation, translators should try to adapt to the translational eco-environment of the film, and then transform the translation from the three dimensions, so as to select the most suitable translation.

4. Analysis of Subtitle Translation of *Kung Fu Panda 2* under Adaptation and Selection Theory

4.1 A Brief Introduction to *Kung Fu Panda 2*

The film and television industry springing up has accelerated cultural exchanges and spread among countries around the world. Numerous outstanding international movies and TV productions have made their way into China, garnering great adoration from the Chinese populace.

Kung Fu Panda series are the American animated comedy films with the background of ancient China and the theme of Chinese Kung Fu. It tells the story of "Po", a panda who worships Kung Fu and finally realizes his dream with the help of his master and the Furious Five. *Kung Fu Panda 2* takes the image of panda Po and the Furious Five from the first film, and meanwhile adds new characters to the

plot. Compared with the previous one, its content contains more Chinese elements, and the plot development is also more and more close to China. The main plot is that Po and the Furious Five lived a peaceful life. However, the evil Lord Shen invented unstoppable artillery weapons to conquer China and destroy Kung Fu. Po accidentally revealed the mystery of his birth while defending Kung Fu, and finally defeated Shen. With the panoramic display of Chinese elements, *Kung Fu Panda 2* shows Chinese culture to the fullest. Everywhere in the film is full of strong Chinese characteristics, such as landscapes, costumes, props, Chinese Kung Fu, Chinese snacks, or the erhu.

It is well known that the *Kung Fu Panda* series enjoy a high popularity in China. The high quality of subtitle translation is an important factor. These subtitles are more carefully handled to cater to audiences' needs and be oriented to the Chinese market. For Chinese audiences, the quality of subtitle translation of dialogue in movies is particularly important to heighten the characters and understand the plot.

In view of this, this thesis selects the subtitle translations of *Kung Fu Panda 2* as the research object and analyzes specific translation examples from the perspective of the Adaptation and Selection Theory to explain how translators choose appropriate translation strategies and methods, as well as how to transform from the three dimensions.

4.2 Subtitle Translation of Kung Fu Panda 2 from the Perspective of Transformations from Three Dimensions

4.2.1 Adaptation and Selection from Linguistic Dimension

English and Chinese are classified under distinct language families, Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan respectively, resulting in numerous dissimilarities between the two. For example, English is more passive, while Chinese is more active; English emphasizes subject, while Chinese emphasizes theme; English is more ellipsis, while Chinese is more repetition; English is multi-object, while Chinese is multi-person and so on.

The transformation from the linguistic dimension refers that the translator, on the basis of being familiar with both English and Chinese language systems, should correctly understand the idea of the source text, and then make appropriate language choices in various aspects, so as to ensure an accurate expression of the language information contained in the original text. In addition, it is crucial to take account of the language habits of the target language and the receptivity of the audience (Jin, 2013).

This transformation is reflected in vocabulary, grammatical structure, rhetorical style and so on (Chen, 2013). In this film's translation, there are many adaptive selections and conversions of language forms, which have produced extraordinary translation effects.

Example 1

Source Text: Well done.

Target Text: 给力。

Example 2

Source Text: It's cute.

Target Text: 好萌呀。

Example 3

Source Text: So sad!

Target Text: 真悲催!

Example 4

Source Text: OK, keep it cool.

Target Text: 好的，淡定。

During the 2010 World Cup, “给力” became a hot word on the Internet, widely used by netizens and also frequently used in people’s daily life. It means “good”, “awesome”, “exciting”, “cool”, “interesting”, etc. The word “给力” was listed as one of the top 10 Internet buzzwords of 2010 and appeared on the front page of People’s Daily, which shows Chinese people’s acceptance of “给力”. The word “萌”, like “给力”, is an indispensable buzzword among Chinese young people. The word is derived from Japanese and means “cute”.

In addition, the word “悲催” was also popular on the Internet at that time. Generally, it means frustrated, failed, regretful, miserable and so on. The translation of “sad” into “悲催” is somewhat humorous and playful. The same effect can be seen in the example 4, where instead of literal translation, the translator translates it into the most popular language of the day, with hilarious results.

In the above four examples, the translator adopts domestication to translate “well done”, “cute”, “sad”, and “keep it cool” into Chinese buzzwords “给力”, “萌”, “悲催”, and “淡定” respectively, which conform to the language habits of the target language, thus achieving the transformation from the linguistic dimension.

Example 5

Source Text: So, all I need to do is just get this things going.

Target Text: 只要把神马都当成浮云。

When Po asked the master how to run water droplets in the palm of his hand, the master said the inner peace, while Po said this sentence above. “神马都是浮云” is a popular phrase on the Internet, which is a homonym of “什么都是浮云”. It means nothing is worth mentioning and has the meaning of complaining and sighing, becoming the catchphrase of countless netizens. This kind of saying expresses more a kind of life realm which is detached from the material.

Through domestication, translator translates “get this things going” into “把神马都当成浮云”, which shows the popular words in Chinese at that time, achieving the transformation from the linguistic dimension.

Example 6

Source Text: Awesome. How did you do that?

Target Text: 太牛了。你是怎么做到的?

Example 7

Source Text: These are “the” best cuffs.

Target Text: 这是”最”牛的锁了。

Example 8

Source Text: False avatar.

Target Text: 山寨阿凡达。

The catchwords in the above examples, such as “牛” and “山寨”, are intended to achieve humorous effects and interaction with the audience. In general, “awesome” can be used as an interjection to express joy or praise, meaning “so great”. The word accurately captures Po’s admiration when he discovered that his master can play with water drops with effortless concentration and no distractions. In China, if people want to express admiration or excellence, they often use the expression “很牛”. The same is true of example 7.

In the example 8, “阿凡达” is the Chinese name of “Avatar” which is the character in the American blockbuster *Avatar*. Unlike humans, Avatars have blue skin and strange looks. When Po first saw the Soothsayer, her strange look with beard made Po can’t help but think of Avatar. In real life, Chinese people call the pirated and imitation products “山寨”. As a result, “山寨阿凡达” can quickly draw their attentions.

With some common idiomatic expressions in Chinese, the translator adopts domestication to translate “awesome”, “the best” and “false” into “太牛了”, “最牛” and “山寨” respectively, which is close to the language form of Chinese. The transformation from the linguistic dimension is realized.

Example 9

Source Text: Hey! Stop that costume.

Target Text: 嘿！拦住那个披着龙皮的家伙。

This sentence comes from a scene that Po and the Furious Five hide themselves under the dragon’s skin which is a costume, trying to infiltrate the Gongmen City in order to destroy weapons made by Lord Shen. Synecdoche, a figure of speech, is used in this sentence. It means that the “costume” which is a part of a person is used to represent the person as a whole. Due to differences in language habits, this kind of rhetoric is commonly used in English conversation, but not in Chinese. Therefore, the translator adopts addition to perfect the translation of “costume”, translating it into “披着龙皮的家伙” which means “the guy in that costume”. In some cases, if the translator does not add meaning to the source text when translating, the target language audience will be affected by their own language thinking and cannot understand the contents and ideas expressed in the film to a large extent.

Example 10

Source Text: It’s time to stop this madness.

Target Text: 现在是悬崖勒马的时候了。

This sentence describes the Soothsayer advising Lord Shen to stop his crazy plan. However, Shen decided to go out at night to complete his madness, but before that, the Soothsayer had predicted that Shen would be defeated, so she advised Shen to “stop this madness”, otherwise it would not end well for Shen. “Madness” means “发疯、疯狂” in Chinese. Instead of literal translation, the translator adopts

free translation to translate “stop this madness” into “悬崖勒马”, a Chinese four character phrase which is often used due to the language habits of Chinese, achieving the transformation from the linguistic dimension. Such translation is closer to the language use form of Chinese audience.

All the above are typical examples of the translator’s selective adaptation and adaptive selection from the linguistic dimension in the process of subtitle translation. They are well adapted to the linguistic dimension of the target language, especially achieving the adaptive selection of Chinese popular words and common expressions, and resonating with the audiences’ daily spoken habits, so that the translations achieve the best effect and are widely loved by moviegoers.

4.2.2 Adaptation and Selection from Cultural Dimension

Language and culture are closely intertwined, which also applies to the translation of movie subtitles. Given that the source language and target language exist within distinct cultural contexts, translators should not overlook cultural elements. It is crucial for them to focus on effectively conveying and interpreting bilingual cultural connotations (Li, 2013).

Cultural context plays a crucial role in the translational eco-environment. Hence, translators need to consider the variances in nature and substance between the source culture and target culture, which enables them to prevent any misinterpretation of the source text from the viewpoint of the target culture and select the optimal translation.

Example 11

Source Text: Someday he would return, and all of China would bow at his feet.

Target Text: 总有一天，它会回来报仇，届时整个中原都将俯首称臣。

Example 12

Source Text: China will be mine

Target Text: 整个中原将会是我的。

“China” appears many times in the film. However, it is not translated into “中国”, but freely translated as “中原” for the reason that the story took place in the ancient China which refers to the Dynasty established by the Han nationality in the Central Plains (中原 in Chinese). As a result, the translator, through free translation, translates “China” into “中原” which means “the whole of China” at the ancient time, according with Chinese culture of the history. This translation realizes the transformation from the cultural dimension, making the time period of the story clear to the Chinese audience.

Example 13

Source Text: Tigress, double dance strike.

Target Text: 悍娇虎，双剑合璧。

“双剑合璧” is a Chinese martial arts move, which can bring out strong power. This martial art combines the advantages of two people and makes up for each other’s shortcomings, so that it can be played perfectly. Through domestication, “double dance strike” is translated into “双剑合璧”, the professional term from the culture of martial arts, which makes the audiences of the major country of martial arts better feel the power of Po and Tigress uniting together. The transformation from the

cultural dimension is realized.

Example 14

Source Text: Feet of fury.

Target Text: 无影脚。

“无影脚” is the Chinese name of a unique skill of Wong Fei-hung, a famous martial artist in modern times. It requires people to sell the dummy, which means attacking the enemy with their legs after disrupting his target. This translation effect is the same as example 13. The translator adopts domestication to translate “feet of fury” into “无影脚”, achieving the transformation from the cultural dimension.

Example 15

Source Text: Monkey, Crane, Viper, Tigress, and Mantis.

Target Text: 猴王、灵鹤、俏小龙、悍娇虎、快螳螂。

In English culture, the crane is just a common bird without any special cultural meaning, while in Chinese culture, the crane is considered to bring happiness and prosperity. The translation of “crane” into “灵鹤” conforms to the image with transcendent power and elegant fighting style in the film. Furthermore, Tigress in this film is a mighty South China tiger who keeps peace in the Valley of Peace. If the translator uses literal translation to translate it into a “female tiger” which stands for the virulent shrew in Chinese, it will lead to the dislocation of cultural image. As a result, the translator translated it into “悍娇虎”. “悍” means brave and capable, and “娇” means beautiful and lovely, which also indirectly indicates her gender. Such translation successfully depicts a character of fighting spirit and chivalrousness, achieving the consistency of language information and cultural connotation.

Monkey, Crane, Viper, Tigress, Mantis in this film all originated from Chinese Kung Fu. The literal translation will lose the vivid characteristics of these characters and their own cultural imagery will also disappear. Therefore, the translator does not stick to the superficial form, but adopts the translation strategy of free translation, translating them into “猴王”、“灵鹤”、“俏小龙”、“悍娇虎” and “快螳螂”, respectively. Such translation not only conforms to the expression habits of Chinese, but also transforms the implied meaning that Chinese audiences cannot deduce from these words due to cultural differences into explicit meaning, showing these characters’ features to audiences. These translations realize the transformation from the cultural dimension.

Example 16

Source Text: Lord Shen

Target Text: 沈王爷

Example 17

Source Text: the Gongmen city

Target Text: 宫门城

In ancient Chinese society, “王爷” meant a title which was equivalent to the the governor of a place, and his fief was called “城”. According to ancient Chinese culture, the translator adopts the

domestication to translate “lord” into “王爷” and “city” into “城”, which conforms to the connotation of the source language and reflects the cultural background of the target language, achieving the transformation from the cultural dimension.

Example 18

Source Text: No snack stops this time.

Target Text: 这回可不是过家家。

Example 19

Source Text: The cup you choose to fill has no bottom.

Target Text: 你选择这条路是没有尽头的。

In the film, the Furious Five must try their best to fight against Lord Shen who has a secret weapon. Originating from western culture, the word “snack” means the refreshment that westerners eat between meals to regain their energy and vitality. A mechanical translation of “no snack this time” into “这次不要吃零食” would miss the true meaning for Chinese viewers. The image embodied by the word “snack” refers to the easy task, which is unfamiliar to Chinese audiences. In Chinese, “过家家” refers to children’s leisure activities, which is very similar to the meaning of this image. Therefore, the translator uses domestication techniques to translate “snack” into “过家家”, which reconstructs the essence of the source text and deeply describes the urgency of the situation.

This sentence in example 19 is a typical English slang sentence. Its true meaning cannot be expressed through literal translation. Therefore, the translator adopts domestication to translate this sentence into “你选择这条路是没有尽头的”, which conveys the cultural connotation of the source language.

In the above two examples, the transformation from the cultural dimension is achieved by adopting domestication.

In summary, the above examples are the translator’s adaptation and selection from cultural dimension, especially the adaptation to Chinese Kung Fu culture, more highlighting the Chinese martial arts of which Chinese audiences feel proud.

4.2.3 Adaptation and Selection from Communicative Dimension

Translation is the conversion between languages, mainly for the purpose of information exchange, and subtitle translation is a way of cross-cultural communication activity which contains a certain communicative intention. The adaptive selection and transformation from the communicative dimension require translators to take account of the bilingual communicative intention.

For film subtitle translation, the primary objective is to ensure that the target language audience experience the same visual and auditory impact as the source language audience. As a result, the translator should reconstruct the main idea and communicative intention of the source text, and consider whether the subtitle translation can be accepted by the target audience (Song, 2017).

Example 20

Source Text: My son saved China. You, too, can save.

Target Text: 我儿子拯救了中原，你们也可以省钱啦。

It is well known that the word “save” has many meanings, including “攒钱”, “节约”, “拯救” and so on. In order to pursue the concise and interesting language, the rhetorical device of pun in the dialogue is used. So, the translator must consider whether the translation can embody the wit of the pun in the sentence and dig out the plot and emotion behind it as much as possible.

In the film, this sentence appears on a new sign Po’s father made especially for his noodle shop in order to celebrate Po’s defeat of Lord Shen. The translation of the two word “save” into “拯救” and “省钱” respectively reflects the translator’s accurate understanding of the word and the film’s plot, so that the humorous and kind father of Po, who is a small businessman on a tight budget, was cleverly showed. It not only completes transformation at the language level, but also achieves the communicative intention of making the target audience understand. Through free translation, the translator translates the second “save” into “省钱”, which makes Chinese audiences understand the plot more easily and quickly, achieving the transformation from the communicative dimension.

Example 21

Source Text: Whatever it is I will take them down. ‘Cause I’m in the mood.

Target Text: 不管是什么都会把他们干掉，因为我很有状态。

Example 22

Source Text: Skadoosh.

Target Text: 拿命来吧。

In the example 21, instead of translating “I’m in the mood” into “我很有心情” directly, the translator freely translates “in the mood” into “有状态”, which accurately expresses the meaning of the film to the audience, realizing the communicative intention.

In the example 22, the word “Skadoosh” appears in the film along with Po’s move. Without Chinese equivalent, the word is actually a term coined by Jack Black which is the dubber of Po in the film. Audiences would not understand with transliteration. Therefore, the translator adopts free translation to translate “Skadoosh” into “拿命来吧” according to the plot of the movie and the character’s feeling, which completely fits the plot of the movie, achieving the communicative intention to make the target audience understand.

In the above two examples, through free translation, the transformation from the communicative dimension is achieved.

Example 23

Source Text: Would you guys spill the beans?

Target Text: 你们能不能有话直说啊?

“Spill the beans” is a phrase from ancient Greek culture that in English means “泄密”. The audience will be confused if the sentence is translated into “你们会泄密吗”. So, the translator uses domestication to translate this sentence into “你们能不能有话直说” which is easy for Chinese audience to understand, realizing the communicative intention of the subtitle. The transformation from the communicative dimension is achieved.

Example 24

Source Text: We've gonna free you from those bonds of injustice.

Target Text: 我们会砸烂这些镣铐。

This plot is that Po and his friends go to rescue Master Storming Ox and Master Croc who are locked in the dungeon by Lord Shen. When seeing them in chains, Po is very excited and wants to free them immediately. The word “injustice” shows that Master Storming Ox and Master Croc are being treated unfairly. Instead of directly translating this sentence into “我们会把你们从不公正中解救出去”, the translator adopts domestication to translate it into “我们会砸烂这些镣铐”, which is perfectly integrated into the plot and achieves the communicative intention of audiences' understanding to the plot. Through the strategy of domestication, the translator realizes the transformation from the communicative dimension.

Example 25

Source Text: Po, incoming...

Target Text: 阿宝，有箭来...

This sentence appears in such a plot that Lord Shen ordered his men to go to the village to rob the metal due to the lack of it when making weapons. When Po and his friends heard about this, they came to stop the robbers and had a fierce fight with them. “Po, incoming” in the subtitles of the film is very succinct, fully illustrating the intensity and urgency of the fight process, which fits the situation. But for a Chinese audience, it's a little confusing. Therefore, adding a word “箭”, the translator completely translates “Po, incoming...” into “阿宝，有箭来...”, which conveys the complete message to the audience and achieves the communicative intention in the source text. The transformation from the communicative dimension is achieved through the strategy of addition.

Example 26

Source Text: Tell those musicians to start playing some action music, because it is on.

Target Text: 告诉那些乐师们演奏些动感的音乐，因为我们要开打了。

Example 27

Source Text: I like to squash you.

Target Text: 我会将你像壁球一样打。

Example 28

Source Text: Let's finish this.

Target Text: 让我们收拾完这烂摊子吧。

At the beginning of the film, a large group of bandits invade the village, but Po doesn't show a hint of panic and shouts the sentence in example 26 out loud. If the translator translates “it is on” into “要开始了”, the audience will feel somewhat difficult to understand. Therefore, the translator adopts the translation strategy of addition, adding the verb “打”, to translate the sentence into “我们要开打了”, which fully reveals Po's humorous characteristics and chivalrous style.

In example 27, instead of directly translating the word “squash” into “挤压”, the translator uses an

additive translation strategy to translate it into “像壁球一样打”, fully embodying the meaning of the verb “squash”. The audience can more directly obtain the plot and understand the emotion expressed by the characters, which realizing the communicative intention in the source text.

In example 28, If the translator directly translates the sentence into “让我们把它做完吧”, the audience would be a little bit behind the plot. Thus, the translator translates “finish this” into “收拾这烂摊子” through the strategy of addition, which makes the meaning of this sentence completer and easier for the audience to understand and resonate, achieving communicative intention.

In the above three examples, the translator adopts addition to reconstruct the main idea and communicative intention of the source text, thus achieving the transformation from the communicative dimension.

Example 29

Source Text: The beard threw me. It's kind of misleading.

Target Text: 是胡须误导了我。

Example 30

Source Text: That's everything. Let's get out of here.

Target Text: 都在这了。走吧。

Po mistook Soothsayer for a man. After being corrected, he awkwardly quibbles that her beard misled him. In English, the word “throw” means “投、抛、扔”. “Throw me” is used in this sentence to express Po's shock at the fact that Soothsayer is a lady. The translator reduces the original subtitle as necessary and translated it into one sentence “是胡须误导了我” through the strategy of omission, which makes subtitle translation much clearer for Chinese audiences to understand the plot easily and follow the pace of the film.

In the example 30, the translator uses the translation strategy of omission to translate the five words “let's get out of here” into two concise words “走吧”, contributing to conveying the exact meaning of the source text and the vivid scene portrayal. Due to omitting unnecessary expressions, audiences can get a better sense of the severity and urgency of the situation at that time.

In the above two examples, the transformation from the communicative dimension is realized through the translation strategy of omission.

4.3 Assessment of *Kung Fu Panda 2's* Subtitle Translation

In brief, according to the Adaptation and Selection Theory, the higher the degree of holistic adaptation and selection is, the better the quality of translation is. The degree of holistic adaptation and selection refers to the sum of the degree of translators' “selective adaptation” in the linguistic dimension, the cultural dimension and the communicative dimension, plus “adaptive selection” of taking account of other translational eco-environment factors (Hu, 2003). From all the above examples, it can be seen that the translator constantly realizes the “selective adaptation” and “adaptive selection” in the translation process, and exerts influence of centrality in order to retain and convey the multi-dimensional information of original ecosystem. Such behaviors make these translations survive

and persist in the translational ecosystem of the translated text.

According to Adaptation and Selection Theory, the author thinks that most of the subtitle translations of *Kung Fu Panda 2* have achieved a high degree of holistic adaptation and selection.

First of all, on the premise of being faithful to the plot, connotation, and culture of the original work, translators try to make this American commercial film more consistent with Chinese audiences' logical thinking, aesthetic taste and understanding to Chinese traditional culture. In order to minimize the estrangement and collision between Chinese and Western cultures, translators flexibly use some translation strategy, such as domestication, addition, omission and free translation, to carry out the transformations from the three dimensions.

Moreover, judging from market feedback, *Kung Fu Panda 2* has been a huge success in China. It attracts millions of domestic audiences and earns a high box office profit, becoming one of the most popular Hollywood animated films introduced in China, which proves that domestic audiences have a high recognition and acceptance of this film's Chinese subtitle. The faithful, authentic, natural and fluent translation is integrated with the whole film, making *Kung Fu Panda 2* an audio-visual feast.

Last but not least, from the perspective of subtitle itself, the translator carries out the cycle of "selective adaptation" and "adaptive selection" alternately, which better conveys the information of the source text in these three dimensions, and maintains the balance and harmony between the translational eco-environments of source text and translated text. Also, the subtitle translation fully shows the plot, scene and cultural connotation of the story, contributing to the maximum enjoyment of the audience.

On the whole, the Chinese subtitle translation of *Kung Fu Panda 2* achieves a high degree of holistic adaptation and selection.

5. Conclusion

In order to improve the degree of holistic adaptation and selection of translation, translators should actively adapt to the translational eco-environment to select appropriate translation strategies and methods, achieving transformations from the linguistic, cultural and communicative dimension. Owing to the introduction of a large number of foreign films, subtitle translation becomes a new research field. Western scholars started their studies on the translation of film works earlier, while China's studies on it started relatively late and there was no mature translation theory.

Hu Gengshen creatively combines Darwin's theory of biological evolution with translation studies, putting forward the Adaptation and Selection Theory, which provides better guidance and a new vision for subtitle translation studies. The rules of the Adaptation and Selection Theory in translation involves the following three aspects: adaptation and selection, translator-centredness, and the transformations from the three dimensions. This theory emphasizes that the translator, a leader in translation, needs to "adapt" to the translational eco-environment of the source text, and then "select" the most appropriate translation through the transformations from linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions. The quality of film subtitle translation largely depends on whether the translator could to maintain the

translational eco-environment of the source text. Therefore, Hu Gengshen's Adaptation and Selection Theory is a theoretical support rather suitable for the practice of film's subtitle translation.

It's excellent subtitle translations that make *Kung Fu Panda 2* gain much affection of the audience, so this thesis analyzes it from the perspective of the Adaptation and Selection Theory to explore how to obtain optimal translations through the three-dimensional transformations. Firstly, in these examples, most network buzzwords and colloquial words are used to achieve the adaptation and selection from the linguistic dimension, which resonates with the audience's daily spoken habits, so that the translation achieves the best result and is widely loved by moviegoers. Secondly, Chinese common expressions and Chinese four-character words are used in the film to adapt to Chinese martial arts culture, so as to achieve the adaptation and selection from the cultural dimension. Thirdly, the strategy of addition is often used to convey the information to the audience completely, realizing the communicative intention in the source text. From these examples, it can be seen that the translator constantly realizes the "selective adaptation" and "adaptive selection" in the translation process, and exerts influence of centrality. The translator mainly uses the translation strategy of domestication, addition, omission and free translation to realize the transformations from the three dimensions, maintaining the balance and harmony between the translational eco-environments of source text and translated text.

Film subtitle translation is a kind of intercultural communication activity. By analyzing the examples in *Kung Fu Panda 2*, this thesis has illustrated the applicability of the Adaptation and Selection Theory to film subtitle translation, hoping to provide useful guidance and reference for the practice, and to supply a new perspective for related researches. The author hopes that more translators can embrace the Adaptation and Selection Theory and constantly strengthen exchanges with foreign scholars, promoting the film subtitle translation.

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