

Original Paper

A Three-Dimensional Transformation Analysis of the English Subtitles of *Ne Zha 2* from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

Yuyan Dang¹

¹ School of Foreign Languages, China University of Petroleum, Beijing, China

Received: May 22, 2026

Accepted: July 09, 2026

Online Published: July 23, 2026

doi:10.22158/eltls.v8n4p31

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/eltls.v8n4p31>

Abstract

Grounded in the “three-dimensional” transformation framework of Eco-Translatology, and drawing on the Bilibili-release English subtitles of Ne Zha 2 as the corpus, this study examined the translator’s mechanisms of adaptation and selection across the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. The findings indicate that the linguistic dimension saw the translator restructuring Chinese paratactic flowing sentences through syntactic reorganization and colloquial transposition, though the regional markers of the dialect were not retained; the cultural dimension witnessed the translator adopting literal translation with a foreignizing orientation for core terminologies and employing contextual replacement for culture-loaded expressions, yet with a partial diminishment of the philosophical depth of the ethics of spiritual cultivation (xiuxian); and the communicative dimension involved the translator transforming Chinese philosophical discourse into an action logic of “individual survival—self-actualization—world-changing,” thereby achieving cross-cultural emotional resonance. The three dimensions demonstrate a coordinated relationship, with communicative intent taking precedence when conflicts arise. This study offered a methodological reference for the subtitling of Chinese animated films from the perspective of Eco-Translatology.

Keywords

Eco-Translatology, three-dimensional transformation, subtitling, Ne Zha 2, cross-cultural communication

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Against the backdrop of the ongoing advancement of China’s “Culture Going Global” strategy, domestic films and television works are gradually becoming important vehicles for international communication. In recent years, domestic animated films such as *Chang An San Wan Li* (30,000 Miles

to *Changan*) and *Ne Zha 2* (full title: *Ne Zha: The Devil Boy Churns the Sea*) have achieved favorable responses in overseas markets, effectively promoting the cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese cultural elements. As an important medium for film and television communication, subtitling not only undertakes the function of linguistic conversion but also concerns the accurate transmission of cultural information and the reception effects of overseas audiences. As a landmark case of Chinese animated films going global, the quality of the English subtitling of *Ne Zha 2* directly affects the film's communication effects in target-language markets, and also provides a representative sample for exploring translation strategies for Chinese audiovisual works in cross-cultural contexts.

1.2 Research Significance

At the academic level, this study adopts the “three-dimensional” transformation theory of Eco-Translatology as its analytical framework to systematically examine the transformation strategies and adaptive mechanisms of the English subtitles of *Ne Zha 2* across the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions, with a view to extending the application boundaries of the “three-dimensional” transformation theory in audiovisual subtitling research and enriching theoretical perspectives on the outward translation of Chinese animation. At the practical level, by revealing the translator's multi-dimensional adaptive pathways in achieving linguistic formal conversion, cultural connotation transmission, and communicative intent realization under the dual constraints of time and space, this study can provide strategic references for the overseas dissemination of Chinese animated films and promote the effective communication of Chinese audiovisual works in cross-cultural contexts.

1.3 Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions: What adaptive transformation characteristics are manifested in the English subtitling of *Ne Zha 2* at the linguistic dimension? What eco-adaptive strategies are predominantly employed in the translation of culture-loaded terms? How do the three dimensions synergistically achieve the film's cross-cultural communication effects?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Current Studies on Eco-Translatology

The work *Translation as Adaptation and Selection* first systematically articulated the theoretical prototype, proceeding from Darwin's theory of “adaptation and selection” to propose a “translator-centered” theoretical framework for translation (Hu, 2004). In the application and expansion phase, Eco-Translatology has been widely applied to various translation practices. Zheng (2014) conducted a systematic analysis of “three-dimensional” transformation in film subtitle translation; Wang (2016) examined the “three-dimensional” transformation strategies and intersecting translation models in literary translation using the three-dimensional transformation approach; and Yuan (2021) explored the manifestation of translator subjectivity in the translation of political-theoretical texts from the perspective of Eco-Translatology. In the interdisciplinary integration phase, scholars have started to

examine translation ecology in new contexts such as artificial intelligence translation and digital dissemination. Wang (2025) analyzed translation ethics in the age of artificial intelligence and proposed dynamic adaptive optimization strategies for AI translation, while Hu Gengshen (2025) pointed out that AI technology is driving a paradigm shift in translation studies from “theory guiding practice” to “theory-practice symbiosis,” with artificial intelligence having become a new dimension that cannot be ignored in the translation ecology. In contrast to the vigorous development of domestic research, international research on Eco-Translatology remains in the early stages of dissemination and theoretical reception abroad. The research community is predominantly composed of Chinese scholars, with international scholars such as Dollerup (2017) introducing the core tenets and development of Eco-Translatology, and Cronin (2017) engaging in discussions on “translation ecology and global governance”. Research topics remain concentrated at the macro level of theoretical comparison and paradigmatic positioning, while empirical and applied research grounded in the Eco-Translatological framework remains scarce internationally.

2.2 Current Studies on Audiovisual Subtitling

Audiovisual subtitling research is an important field within applied translation studies, having developed primarily along functionalist, cognitive-pragmatic, multi-modal discourse, and Eco-Translatological approaches. Among these, Eco-Translatology, with its emphasis on the translator’s adaptation and selection within linguistic, cultural, and communicative environments, has gradually become a significant perspective for studying the outward translation of Chinese audiovisual productions. In terms of research orientation, early domestic studies predominantly focused on the analysis of translations from English to Chinese, with case studies centering primarily on the Chinese subtitling of imported films and television works. Liu (2015), for instance, analyzed the subtitle translation strategies of *Ice Age 3* based on Relevance Theory. In the past two years, propelled by the advancement of China’s “Culture Going Global” strategy and the accelerated overseas dissemination of domestic audiovisual works, research objects have expanded from Western classic works to include domestic blockbuster works. Liang and Fan (2025) proposed a “film translation and adaptation” strategy, analyzing the subtitling and overseas reception of *Joy of Life*, while Niu (2025) applied multi-modal discourse analysis to examine subtitle translation strategies of *30,000 Miles to Changan* across cultural, contextual, content, and expressive levels. International research, owing to the dominance of English in the global film market, has long centered on translations with English as the target language, paying comparatively less attention to translation directions with source languages other than English. The research objects encompass a diverse range of multilingual film and television works from Europe, Asia, and Latin America translated into English. Díaz-Cintas and Hayes (2023) systematically reviewed the long-standing “English-as-source-language” default paradigm in audiovisual translation studies, while Valdez et al. (2023) empirically investigated language hierarchies in subtitling workflows on streaming platforms, revealing the dominant role of English as a “hypercentral language” in subtitle translation.

2.3 Research on the Subtitle Translation of *Ne Zha 2*

Existing studies on the subtitle translation of *Ne Zha 2* are predominantly concentrated in domestic academia, with preliminary explorations from multiple theoretical perspectives. Si Yu (2025) examined the domestication and foreignization strategies for mythological terminology and philosophical allusions from the perspective of Skopos Theory. Chen (2025) deconstructed the comprehension, expression, and adaptation pathways for culture-loaded terms using the CEA framework. Wang (2025) explored subtitle translation strategies across cultural, contextual, content, and expressive dimensions through multi-modal discourse analysis. In contrast, at the international academic level, no specialized research findings on the English subtitle translation of *Ne Zha 2* have been identified to date. This situation is directly related to the film's relatively recent release as well as the long-established overall paradigm in international audiovisual translation studies that prioritizes English-source works. However, while domestic studies encompass a variety of theoretical approaches, their focus remains largely at the level of strategic description, lacking a systematic analysis of whether the translation truly achieves its cross-cultural communication purposes and whether it attains adaptation and balance across the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. International academia has yet to conduct targeted research on the film, indicating clear room for further empirical exploration.

2.4 Summary and Research Gap

In summary, while existing research has explored audiovisual subtitling and Eco-Translatology to a considerable extent, the following gaps remain. With respect to research objects, the English subtitling of Chinese animated films has received insufficient attention, and research on the subtitling of *Ne Zha 2* is still in its initial stage. With respect to research perspectives, most studies proceed from singular frameworks such as Skopos Theory or Relevance Theory, remaining at the level of strategic description and lacking a systematic investigation of the translator's adaptive and selective mechanisms from the integrated "three-dimensional transformation" perspective of Eco-Translatology. With respect to research depth, there is insufficient exploration of whether subtitle translation truly realizes its cross-cultural communication purposes under spatio-temporal constraints and whether it achieves adaptation and balance across the three dimensions of language, culture, and communication. Therefore, this study, grounded in the three-dimensional transformation theory of Eco-Translatology, conducts a systematic analysis of the English subtitles of *Ne Zha 2* across the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions, examining the translator's mechanisms of adaptation and selection.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Eco-Translatology

Eco-Translatology defines translation as "a selective activity of the translator in adapting to the translational eco-environment by transplanting the text". The "translational eco-environment" is the multi-dimensional complex of language, culture, communication, and other dimensions, and is the multi-dimensional space for the translator's adaptive selections (Hu, 2013). The translator's task is not

mechanical linguistic conversion but rather the performance of adaptive selections within the multi-dimensional eco-environment to achieve the “survival” and “growth” of the target text in the target-language ecology.

3.2 The “Three-Dimensional” Transformation Theory

The “three-dimensional” transformation is the core methodological instrument of Eco-Translatology, requiring the translator to make adaptive selections and transformations along the following three dimensions during the translation process:

The linguistic dimension of adaptation and transformation refers to the translator’s adaptive selections concerning linguistic forms, focusing on the structural differences between the two languages at the lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical levels. It requires that the target text, while accurately conveying meaning, conforms to the linguistic norms and expressive conventions of the target language.

The cultural dimension of adaptation and transformation refers to the transmission and interpretation of the bilingual cultural connotations by the translator. It requires that the translator possess cross-cultural awareness, conveying source cultural information while averting comprehension barriers stemming from cultural differences, thereby ensuring the target text’s acceptability within the target cultural ecology.

The communicative dimension of adaptation and transformation refers to the transmission and realization of the source text’s communicative intent. It requires that the target text not only convey linguistic information and cultural connotations but also trigger cognitive and emotional responses in the target-language readers that are analogous to those of the source-language readers.

The three dimensions are not linearly arranged; rather, they are interwoven and operate synergistically as an organic whole, collectively constituting the evaluative criteria for translational eco-balance. The interrelationship among the three dimensions is illustrated in Figure 1.

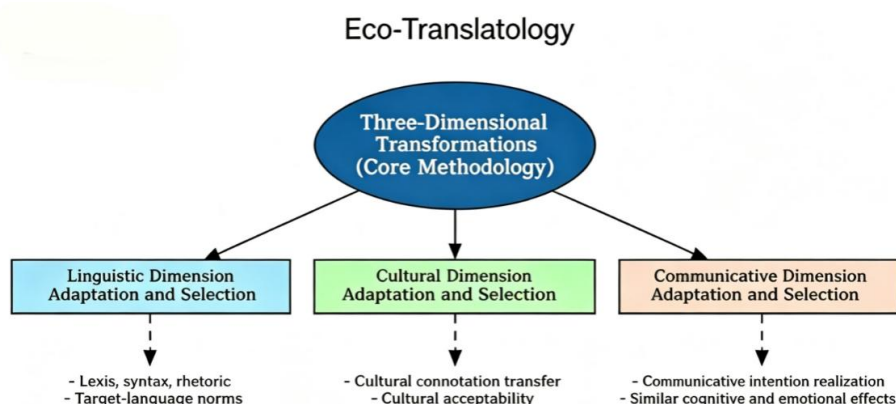


Figure 1. Relationship Diagram of the Three-Dimensional Transformation

3.3 Applicability of the Three-Dimensional Transformation Theory

Audiovisual subtitle translation faces a unique “translational eco-environment”: spatio-temporal constraints demand concision and clarity in the target text (corresponding to the linguistic dimension); Chinese cultural characteristics require effective transmission within a culturally heterogeneous context (corresponding to the cultural dimension); and the film’s narrative intent and emotional resonance must transcend the language barrier (corresponding to the communicative dimension). The three-dimensional transformation theory offers an integrated analytical framework that simultaneously addresses these three levels, providing methodological support for systematically examining the translator’s adaptation and selection mechanisms in subtitling. Therefore, applying this theory to the analysis of the subtitle translation of *Ne Zha 2* demonstrates strong theoretical relevance and practical explanatory power.

4. Case Analysis

4.1 Data Source and Analytical Method

This study adopts the English subtitles of the Bilibili-release version of *Ne Zha 2* as its analytical corpus. As the production company has not publicly released an official standard subtitle, this version is uniformly employed to ensure corpus consistency and traceability.

The case selection follows the principle of covering three representative types of examples: expressions involving linguistic structural differences, culture-loaded terms, and communicative intent transmission. Two cases are selected for in-depth analysis in each dimension. The analytical methodology is primarily qualitative, applying the “three-dimensional” transformation framework of Eco-Translatology to examine specific subtitle instances and the translator’s mechanisms of adaptation and selection across the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions.

4.2 Linguistic Dimension

Case 1

Source text: 搞快嚟你魂儿都要散了。

Target text: Time’s a-wasting. Would you rather die?

4.2.1 Analysis of Linguistic Features and Translation Strategies

This excerpt is taken from the scene where Taiyi Zhenren (a Daoist immortal and master of *Ne Zha* in Chinese mythology) is re-creating physical bodies for *Ne Zha* and *Ao Bing*. The source text is a paratactic causal complex sentence: “魂儿都要散了” (your soul is about to scatter) functions as the reason, while “搞快嚟” (hurry up) is the result, with no explicit connectives between the two, relying on semantic logic for natural cohesion. The particle “嚟” is a sentence-final modal particle from the Sichuan dialect, simultaneously serving a prompting function and a regional identity marker. “魂儿都要散了” is a conceptual expression from the Chinese mythological system signifying “the dissolution of the soul from the body and consequent death.” The translator renders the Source text into two independent sentences, reconfiguring the implicit causal relationship into one of choice and provocation. The dialectal imperative is rendered as the colloquial English fixed expression “Time’s

a-wasting,” while the complex concept of “soul scattering” is summarized with the core lexical item “die”.

4.2.2 Evaluation of Linguistic-Dimensional Transformation

The translator recasts the original declarative sentence as a rhetorical question. The introduction of rhetorical questioning significantly intensifies the illocutionary force, using the underlying implication of “Would you rather die?” to exert psychological pressure, thereby upgrading the prompting function from informative to provocative. The dialect’s regional identity function is not retained; however, a degree of equivalence is achieved in terms of the pragmatic function of urging.

Case 2

Source text: 五湖四海，云漫苍穹。神符命汝，降雨行风。

Target text: Hmph! Lakes and seas, clouds and sky, by this talisman in my hand. Rain shall cover all the land!

4.2.1 Analysis of Linguistic Features and Translation Strategies

This excerpt is taken from the scene where Ao Bing uses a divine talisman to summon rain. The source text, stylized as a Daoist incantation, employs a four-character meter with symmetrical parallelism and a solemn, archaic register. “五湖四海” (five lakes and four seas) is a generalizing idiom referring to “all waters under heaven,” while “苍穹” is a classical Chinese term for sky. “神符命汝，降雨行风” is a paratactic predicate structure: “神符” (divine talisman) serves as the subject, “命” (commands) as the predicate, “汝” (you) as the object, and “降雨行风” (summon rain and wind) as the content of the command. The translator abandons the four-character rhythm and parallel structure, converting them into English prose. The translation opens with the coordinate noun phrase “Lakes and seas, clouds and sky,” introduces the medium of the spell with the prepositional phrase “by this talisman in my hand,” and concludes with the subject-predicate-object structure “Rain shall cover all the land!” thereby constructing a complete semantic chain of caster-medium- effect.

4.2.2 Evaluation of Linguistic-Dimensional Transformation

The translator partially compensates for the source text’s rhythmic features by employing a common English poetic rhyming pattern and a parallel structure in syllable count, thereby creating a rhythmic parallelism through the repetition of “and”. Moreover, the translator replaces the condensed Chinese idiomatic expression with the English convention of enumerating two representative members, and employs core vocabulary for classical terms to reduce comprehension load in rapid subtitle reading. Syntactically, the Chinese paratactic predicate structure is restructured into an English sentence with an initial adverbial of manner followed by a subject-predicate-object core, and the second-person address structure is converted into a third-person event description, shifting the translation from a directive utterance to a declaration of effect, which aligns more closely with the English convention of presenting a spell’s power through the declaration of its consequences. The translator, prioritizing the target audience’s comprehension efficiency under the spatio-temporal constraints of subtitling,

undertakes a systematic ecological adaptive restructuring of the source language form, ensuring the effective transmission of substantive meaning and informational focus.

4.3 Cultural Dimension

Case 1

Source text: 从来生死都看淡，专和老天对着干。我命由我不由天，小爷非要当神仙。

Target text: Life or death, of none I'm scared. What fate says, I've never cared. My fate is mine, not heaven's plan. This boy will be an immortal man!

4.3.1 Analysis of Linguistic Features and Translation Strategies

This passage consists of verses chanted by Ne Zha during a training scene. The source text is a seven-character folk verse, rhyming on “淡/干/天/仙,” with a colloquial and straightforward register. The first three lines move in escalating sequence—from scorning death, to defying heaven, to seizing control of fate—and the final line concludes in the first person with a firm pledge to attain immortality. “天” is a core category in traditional Chinese philosophy, encompassing multiple connotations of the natural, the sovereign, and the moral. “看淡” embodies a value orientation of transcending the fear of death and embracing a philosophical detachment. “小爷” is a self-appellation marked by audacious pride. The translator abandons the rhyme scheme, converting the text into English free verse with four lines corresponding to the Source text four lines, while employing inversion to retain a poetic quality.

4.3.2 Evaluation of Cultural-Dimensional Transformation

The translator renders the first “老天” as “fate” and the second “天” as “heaven”. The former emphasizes the role of “Tian” as an uncontrollable external force; the latter harnesses the familiar religious concept of “heaven's plan” in English-speaking cultures to carry the normative connotations of “Tian,” but the moral dimension of “Tian” within the Confucian tradition is not reflected. “看淡” is rendered as “of none I'm scared,” transforming detachment to fearlessness. This conveys Ne Zha's heroic spirit, but the connotation of philosophical detachment is somewhat diminished. “小爷” is converted into “this boy,” creating a defamiliarizing effect of third-person self-reference that adds interest and distinctive character to the verse. The translator, while preserving the core spirit of “self-determination of fate,” makes adjustments and substitutions to specific cultural concepts within the boundaries of target-language acceptability, allowing overseas audiences to perceive Ne Zha's rebellious spirit and assertion of agency on the basis of basic semantic comprehension.

Case 2

Source text: 若残害生灵，错上加错，就算瞒天过海，也心障难除。

Target text: If this path you walk hurts more people, you can fool the world, but you will be the only fool.

4.3.1 Analysis of Linguistic Features and Translation Strategies

This dialogue occurs when Li Jing advises Shen Gongbao to abandon his plan to massacre a city. The source text constructs an “就算……也……” (even if... still...) structure to construct a progressive argument. “瞒天过海” (deceive heaven and cross the sea) is one of the Thirty-Six Stratagems (a classic

Chinese military text) of ancient Chinese military strategy, metaphorically signifying the deception of one's opponent through concealment, where “天” again carries the multiple connotations of the natural, the sovereign, and the moral. “心障” (spiritual hindrance) is a cultivation term shared by Chinese Buddhism and Daoism, referring to an internal hindrance that obstructs enlightenment and progress on the spiritual path. Its underlying logic is that transgression not only harms others but fundamentally destroys the cultivator's spiritual foundation. “错上加错” (one mistake compounded by another) emphasizes the gravity of the situation through repetition. The translator renders “瞒天过海” as “fool the world” and “心障” as “you will be the only fool.”

4.3.2 Evaluation of Cultural-Dimensional Transformation

The translator simplifies “瞒天过海” to “fool the world,” substituting “world” for the religio-philosophical dimension of “heaven”, thereby failing to convey the particular gravity of “deceiving heaven” as a challenge to the supreme cosmic order. In handling “心障”, the translator replaces the self-damaging cognition within the religious cultivation context with a secular moral mockery, thus failing to manifest the cultivation logic inherent in “心障”—namely, that the transgression fundamentally destroys the Daoist foundation of the cultivator. In terms of argumentative structure, the translator omits the logical hierarchy constructed by the “就算……也……” framework in the source text, weakening the intrinsic connection between “deceiving heaven” and “the lingering spiritual obstruction” in the translation, and thereby diminishing the philosophical depth of the ethics of spiritual cultivation (xiuxian) through universalizing adaptation. Operating on the principle of “prioritizing communicative intent over cultural details,” the translator succeeds in conveying the basic moral injunction of exhorting good and prohibiting evil, yet involves certain trade-offs in restoring the cosmic order and the logic of cultivation.

4.4 Communicative Dimension

Case 1

Source text: 和你度过的每一天，娘都很开心。娘从没在乎过，你是仙是魔。娘只知道，你是娘的儿。

Target text: Every moment I spent with you, I was so happy. None of it mattered. Immortal or demon. All I know is that you are my son.

4.4.1 Analysis of Linguistic Features and Translation Strategies

This excerpt is taken from Lady Yin's deathbed dialogue with Ne Zha. The source text employs the archaic, self-referential term “娘” (an affectionate form of “mother,” evoking tender devotion and maternal sacrifice distinct from the modern “mama”) three times, reinforcing the speaker's maternal identity. The negative structure “从不在乎过” (never cared about) emphasizes the mother's unconditional acceptance. The combination of “每一天” (every day) and “都” (all) emphasizes the continuity of the experience of happiness. The restrictive adverb “只知道” (only know) conveys the purity of the mother's perception. The translator uniformly converts “娘” into the first-person pronoun “I” and the possessive “my,” condenses “从不在乎过” into the English idiomatic “None of it

mattered,” retains the binary opposition with “Immortal or demon,” renders “每一天” as “Every moment” to convey a sense of cherished time, and translates “只知道” as “All I know is” to mirror the source’s restrictive semantics.

4.4.2 Evaluation of Communicative-Dimensional Transformation

The source text’s communicative intent is to convey maternal love transcending identity labels and the enduring bond of kinship unto death. “None of it mattered,” an English idiom for expressing that everything is of no consequence, achieves the conveyance of unconditional acceptance more concisely and forcefully than the original’s “没在乎过.” “You are my son,” though abandoning the cultural identifier of “娘” as a self-appellation, constitutes in English culture an utterance of ultimate confirmation of the parent-child relationship, with an emotional weight highly equivalent to the Source text. “All I know is” transmits a mother’s cognitive purity through a common English structure. The translation replaces the source’s emotional intensification achieved through repetition and negation with conventional English structures for emotional expression. The concluding simple copula structure “you are my son” enhances the directness and emotional impact in English, enabling the target audience to achieve an emotional experience similar to that of the source audience.

Case 2

Source text: 若前方无路，我就踏出一条路；若天地不容，我就扭转这乾坤。

Target text: If there’s no place that’s safe, I’ll just have to make one myself! And if I can’t be who I am, I’ll just have to change the world!

4.4.1 Analysis of Linguistic Features and Translation Strategies

This excerpt is taken from Ne Zha’s declaration during the climactic battle against the Wuliang Xianzun (the Immortal Infinite, the primary antagonist). The original features a two-tiered parallel structure “若……就……” (if... then...) , progressing from the defiant resolve to “carve a path of my own” to the ultimate act of “overturning the cosmos”. “前方无路” (no road ahead) refers to the lack of living space, while “天地不容” (heaven and earth do not tolerate) escalates the predicament from the physical space to the existential level. “乾坤” (the cosmic duality of heaven and earth, a core concept in Chinese philosophy embodying the fundamental order of the universe), a core concept in Chinese philosophy denoting the cosmic order, carrying the profound implication of overturning the established world. The translator preserves the rhythmic progression of the parallel structure with two corresponding conditional-consequence clauses, while recontextualizing “no road ahead” as the existential condition of “no place that’s safe”.

4.4.2 Evaluation of Communicative-Dimensional Transformation

The source text’s communicative intent is to trace Ne Zha’s emotional ascent from existential plight to transformative agency—casting him as both master of fate and rebel against the celestial order. The translator converts the physical space predicament into an existential threat, more directly evoking the target audience’s empathy for individual survival crises. The addition of “myself” intensifies the independent spirit of self-forging. The external antagonism implied in “天地不容” is recreated as the

inner predicament of “can’t be who I am”. This rendering directly zeroes in on Ne Zha’s core identity crisis, enabling English-speaking audiences to grasp the essence of his predicament across cultural divides. While “change the world” relinquishes the philosophical connotations of “乾坤,” it carries the positive connotations of individual endeavor and societal transformation in English-speaking cultures. The translation completes its cross-cultural transfer through the action-logic progression of “individual survival → self-realization → world-transformation,” fully preserving the emotional arc while effectively establishing Ne Zha’s role as “master of fate” in the target cultural context.

5. Conclusion

Positioned within the framework of Eco-Translatology’s “three-dimensional” transformation theory, this study undertakes a systematic analysis of the English subtitles of *Ne Zha 2*. The translation strategy operates across three levels: at the linguistic level, spatio-temporal constraints are addressed through syntactic restructuring and colloquialization; at the cultural level, culture-specific concepts are modulated to enhance target-language acceptability while the core spirit is retained; and at the communicative level, Chinese philosophical discourse is reconfigured into the Anglophone cultural logic of “individual survival → self-actualization → world-changing.” These three levels form an integrated hierarchy in which the linguistic serves as the foundation, the cultural as the conduit, and the communicative as the ultimate end. In cases of tension among them, the translator accords priority to communicative intent over linguistic fidelity or cultural equivalence. That said, the translation entails certain unavoidable compromises: the regional identity encoded in the dialect, the philosophical depth of the cultivation ethics, and the religious dimensions of cultivation-related concepts are all attenuated to varying degrees.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the study is based solely on the Bilibili-release English subtitles as the analytical corpus, without involving comparative analysis of other language versions. Second, the analytical method is primarily qualitative in nature, meaning that it is not supported by quantitative data. Third, the discussion of strategies for handling “untranslatable” elements in subtitle translation is not sufficiently comprehensive. Future research may extend to comparative analyses of multilingual subtitles, integrate audience reception surveys to verify the actual communication effects of translation strategies, and also explore the application prospects and practical challenges of AI-assisted translation in subtitling.

References

- Chen, D. (2025). A CEA framework-based study on Chinese-English translation of culture-loaded words in film subtitles: A case study of the English subtitle translation of *Ne Zha 2*. *Chinese Character Culture*, (21), 110-112.
- Cronin, M. (2017). *Eco-translation: Translation and ecology in the age of the Anthropocene*. Routledge.

- Díaz-Cintas, J., & Hayes, L. (2023). *Role reversal: An overview of audiovisual translation into English*. Íkala: Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura.
- Dollerup, C. (2017). Chinese eco-translatology in translation theory contexts. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*.
- Hu, G. S. (2004). *Translation as Adaptation and Selection*. Wuhan: Hubei Education Press.
- Hu, G. S. (2013). *Eco-Translatology: The Present and the Insight*. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Hu, G. S. (2025). On the sustainable development of eco-translatology: An introduction to the new work Eco-Translatology: Translation as Adaptation and Selection and Translation as Eco-balance. *Journal of Beijing International Studies University*, 47(3), 1-16.
- Liang, L. S., & Fan, R. E. (2025). Digital translation and creation and the overseas reception of English-translated Chinese TV dramas: A case study of *Joy of Life*. *Translation Research and Teaching*, (2), 60-69.
- Liu, Z. R. (2015). A relevance-theoretic approach to film subtitle translation: A case study of *Ice Age 3*. *Movie Review*, (16), 46-48.
- Niu, Q. (2025). Subtitle translation of the film *30,000 Miles to Changan* from the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis: Experience and implications. *Movie Literature*, (5), 145-149.
- Si, Y. (2025). A skopos theory-based analysis of subtitle translation strategies in the Chinese animated film *Ne Zha 2*. *English Square*, (20), 37-40.
- Valdez, S., Pięta, H., Torres-Simón, E., & Menezes, R. (2023). Subtitlers' beliefs about pivot templates: What do they tell us about language hierarchies and translation quality in streaming service platforms? Target: *International Journal of Translation Studies*.
- Wang, F. F. (2016). An eco-translatological study of the Chinese translation of *The Call of the Wild*. *Language Construction*, (26), 95-96.
- Wang, F. H. (2025). A multimodal discourse analysis of English subtitle translation: A case study of *Ne Zha 2*. *English Square*, (26), 8-12.
- Wang, J. (2025). Ecological ethics and optimization strategies for AI translation of political discourse. *Shanghai Journal of Translators*, (6), 20-24.
- Yuan, X. (2021). An eco-translatological study of English translation of political theory texts: A case study of *What Can China's Road Offer to the World*. *Chinese Translators Journal*, 42(6), 134-140.
- Zheng, L. (2014). An ecological perspective on subtitle translation: A case study of *Titanic*. *Movie Literature*, (8), 161-162.