

武汉理工大学

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硕士学位论文

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从文化角度研究英文电影片名的翻译

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## 摘要

电影是当今最有影响力的大众文化传媒之一，已经成为现代生活不可或缺的一部分，它既紧随又反映人类的生活。电影以其独特特色、语言和丰富的文化含义比其它的艺术形式更直接。

随着中国的改革开放，与国外的联系日益加强。中国与外国国家开展了更多文化，经济和政治上的交往。因此大量的英文电影被引进到了中国电影市场，中国与外国的文化交流越来越常见。英文电影的翻译成为促进文化交流的一个重要活动。在翻译过程中文化因素扮演着非常重要的角色。由于中英文的文化差异，电影翻译并不是想象中的简单。翻译人员不仅要考虑电影的本来意思与内容还要考虑原电影蕴含的文化信息。虽然有一些有文学作品与科学文献的翻译，但是很少有文章是关于电影翻译的，更不用说是电影片名的翻译。电影片名，作为语言的一部分，是电影具有启发性的部分，与时代同行，承载着丰富的文化印记。本文从文化的角度分析电影片名，分析了文化因素在电影片名中的体现。由此得出，在翻译电影片名的过程中，不仅要讲究翻译方法，更要考虑文化因素。如果一个翻译不考虑文化背景的差异，就有可能无法理解的危险。所以在电影片名翻译中，语言学与文化因素都要被严谨的考虑。

**关键词：**英文电影片名；文化因素；翻译

## Abstract

Film, an integral part of the modern life, is the one of most influential contemporary mass culture media, which follows and reflects the human life. It is more direct than other forms of art with its own unique characteristics, language and rich cultural connotations.

With China's reform and opening-up, the contact with foreign countries has been continuously strengthened. China conducts more and more cultural, economic and political exchanges with foreign countries, so a large number of English films have been introduced into China's film market .Chinese and English culture exchanges have become increasingly common. And translating foreign films has become a significant activity in promoting cultural exchange, during which cultural factors play a very important role in the translation process. Due to cultural differences between Chinese and English, the translation of the film is not as simple as imagined. Translators not only have to consider the original meaning, the contents of the original film, but also to consider the original language and translated into the language, the implication of cultural information. Although there are numbers of articles dealing with the translation of literary works or scientific literature, few essays are written concerning the translation of films, let alone film titles. Film titles, as part of language is the enlightening part of films that keeps up with times, bear rich culture imprints. This paper adopts a cultural perspective to explore film titles, analyzing the cultural factors reflected in film titles. Accordingly, most of the difficulties posed in the process of film title translation are due to the vastness of cultural diversity. A translation, which disregards the differences between cultural backgrounds, runs the risk of being unintelligible. Therefore, in film title translation, both the linguistic and cultural factors should be taken into serious consideration.

**Key words:** English film titles, cultural factors, translation

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## **Chapter One Introduction**

### **1.1 Introducing the Motivation and Objectives**

With the development of Chinese economy, China imports many English films. so translators need to translate these film into Chinese. But the translations of film titles are always faced with the problem of incongruity. At first glance, it seems like a question of personal opinion or the language proficiency of the translators. However, after thinking it over, people find that cultural factors play a very important role in the translation process. Although there are numbers of articles dealing with the translation of literary works or scientific literature, few essays are written concerning the translation of films, let alone film titles. The paper looks at the translation process of film titles from the point view of culture, analyzing the various cultural factors reflected in film titles and then speculating on some tentative approaches to deal with the problems of cultural difference. After the exploration of cultural factors and investigation of translation approaches, it becomes clear that English film title translation is much of a labor of solving cultural discrepancies and translators are to look beyond the confines of linguistically-oriented translation.

### **1.2 Literature Review**

Contrastive study of cultural differences in translation is often related to or included under cross-cultural studies. So this part begins from the very beginning and starts with an examination of the concept of cross-cultural communication and the relations between translation and culture, which serve as the basis of the analysis in this paper.

### **1.2.1 Cross-cultural Communication**

Cross-cultural communication (also frequently referred to as intercultural communication) is a field of study that looks at how people from differing cultural backgrounds endeavor to communicate.

Communication is a process of interpretation and interaction affected by all the participants in the communication between individuals or groups from different cultures is affected by the differences in attitudes, resources, history and many other factors, and therefore communication is culture bound. The way an individual communicates emanates his or her culture. Cross-cultural communication, as an independent science, began in the late 1950s with the publishing of Edward Hall's *The Silent Language*, and has witnessed prosperous development during the past fifty years. Simply speaking, cross-cultural communication refers to "communication between people from different cultures" In Samovars's book; he defines cross-cultural communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event."(Samovar, 2000:48).After the presentation of a conceptual framework by Hall in his *The Silent Language* in 1959, the events of the 1960s provided a rich practical research environment in which to test the ideas. Starting in the 1970s specialized Cross-cultural communication courses, societies and journals were established, signaling the field's reception of a first paradigm .In the late 1970s scholars sought greater understanding of what Cross-cultural communication is and what the field should include in its study. The field quickly matured by the early 1980s as scholars such as Gudykunst began organizing and developing intercultural communication theories in order to push the field forward. Now theory construction and testing continue. Cross-cultural studies cover a wide range of topics, and translation, which is interaction between two or more languages, is inevitably included in its research areas.

### **1.2.2 Culture and Translation**

This thesis will discuss English film title translation mainly from a cultural

perspective, thus the relation between culture and translation must be reviewed.

Culture (from the Latin cultural, meaning "to cultivate") generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance. Cultures can be "understood as systems of symbols and meanings that even their creators contest, that lack fixed boundaries, that are constantly in flux, and that interact and compete with one another". Culture can be defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population those are passed down from generation to generation. Culture has been called "the way of life for an entire society." As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, norms of behavior such as law and morality, and systems of belief as well as the art.

Translation is the exploration of an unbridgeable gap between cultures, changing according to the historical time and the socio-economic motivations. "Its function is to develop cross-cultural constructions while at the same time bridging and underlining the differences."(Lance Hewson&Jacky Martin, 1991:25) Intercultural translation is the indispensable factor in demonstrating the cultural difference.

As an act of cultural-specific communication, "translation is not a matter of words only, but a matter of making intelligible a whole culture" (Schaffner, 1995: 4). So translation should be studied within specific cultural context.

## Chapter Two Profile of English Film Titles

The film title delivers the most important information about the film to the audience and serves as a promotion of the film. It contributes to the success of a film and has a say in box office. A good film title not only attracts eyeballs, but also helps the film win an everlasting fame. Film titles usually contain very few words and are not of complex sentence structure. Film title translation seems to be a simple and easy task, but actually it is a complicated and problematic matter, not as easy as some think it to be. It has its own linguistic, aesthetic and cultural features. Film title, as an important part of film, has its unique functions. All these aspects deserve the translator's attention. It is necessary to make a brief survey of the English film titles because the acquaintance with the research subject provides the foremost guarantee of a fruitful research.

### 2.1 Film Genres

Film title always seems very short, just a few word. So translation of film title seems a simple and easy task, actually these titles have their own unique features. Film, or motion picture, is the "most completely explicit of the media of communication that address the eye, primary organ of perception" (Grolier, 1997: 513). Motion pictures have become as complex as varied in their application to contemporary civilization. Just like literary genres, there are many types of motion pictures, but the most significant categories are documentary movies, science and educational movies, and feature movies. The present paper is dealing with the title translation of feature movies which normally fall into five sub-categories: adventure movies, fantasy movies, comedy movies, tragedy movie and lyric movies.



## 2.2 Naming Approach of Film Titles

A movie title sums up what will be going on in the movie, thus helping the audience to get its general idea easily. To have a better understanding of the nature of English movie titles, it is necessary for us to know the sources of English movie titles, or, in other words, to know how English movies are named. According to Fang Zhenping, the title of a Chinese movie may give hint to such clues as its hero or heroine, theme, background and so on. An English movie title is of a similar case. Generally, it may indicate the background, theme, plot, main characters, or thread of the movie. On the basis of which the films could be named from the following angles.

### 2.2.1 Naming by background

The background, which plays a very important part in characterization, the development of the plot as well as in the conveyance of the theme, could also serve as one of the chief sources. As far as background is concerned, it consists of several aspects, such as time, place and environment in which the story happens. A host of film titles of this kind could be got, *Philadelphia*, 《费城故事》, *titanic* 《泰坦尼克》, and *Casablanca* 《卡萨布兰卡》.

Some films are named by the time or historical background when the story happens. Time could be a specific moment, a day, a month, a year, a period in history, or the historical background as a whole. For example: *An Autumn Afternoon* 《夏日午后》, *Born on the Fourth of July* 《生于七月四日》, *Late Autumn* 《晚秋》, *Best Years of Our Lives* 《黄金时代》

### 2.2.2 Naming by theme

Some of the films are named in the hope of manifesting the theme lying behind the story. Undoubtedly, they are very thought-provoking, profound and far-reaching in mood. It may not only arouse the audience's great curiosity and their longing for seeing the film, but also leave on their minds a lingering

aftertaste. Such effect could be felt, to be more exact, have been well achieved in the following successful naming, such as *Brave Heart* 《勇敢者的心》, *Indecent Proposal* 《不道德的交易》 and the *Beautiful Mind* 《美丽思想》) *Mei Shi Tou Zhe Le* 《没事偷着乐》, and *Ai Qing Ma La Tang* 《爱情麻辣烫》.

### 2.2.3 Naming by plot

The plot of the film, upon which the naming is based, is one of the chief sources. There is no exaggerating in saying that it ranks as the first important source, such as: *Around the World in 80 Days* 《环游地球八十天》; *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* 《飞跃疯人院》; *Dances with Wolves* 《与狼共舞》; *Save Private Ryne* 《拯救大兵瑞恩》; *Death on the Nile* 《尼罗河上的惨案》 and *Cheng Nan Jiu Shi* 《(城南旧事)》)

### 2.2.4 Naming by main character(s)

Here main character is used to refer to the hero or the heroine in the film. In many cases there is one leading role while in some cases there are two or more. Such as *Hamlet* 《哈姆雷特》, *Forrest Gum* 《阿甘正传》, *Ben Hur* 《宾虚》, *Cinderella* 《灰姑娘》, *Liao Zhongkai* 《廖仲凯》, *Kong Fansen* 《孔繁森》.

## 2.3 Features of Film Titles

Movie is a unique art, has unique features. Movie title is the same. Generally, movie titles are always short and concise so that they will be pleasant to read and easy to remember for audience. To know the features of film title can help us understand and conduct our translation activity better. The features of film title will be clarified from aesthetic, expressive and informative function as follows:

### 2.3.1 The Aesthetic feature

Aesthetic function is an important function of movie. The Aesthetic function deals with lingual features and cultural values. It can be obtained by

various ways. Such aesthetic features can be well reflected at the level of film titles. Generally speaking, the aesthetic characteristics of film titles are closely related to the employment of rhetorical devices. Before we concern to the aesthetic features of film titles, we should first understand what the rhetorical devices are. Rhetorical devices add elegance, power, humor, or other artistic effects to the title. The application of rhetoric devices to film titles has been proved effective and powerful. With the novel design of rhetoric devices in the respective film titles, twice the result could be achieved with half the effort. Besides, the audience could be fully aesthetically moved and entertained. So the use of rhetorical devices in movie title aims at either achieving beauty in sound or vividness in image depiction so as to make the audience aesthetically moved and amused by the titles. It concludes simile, metaphor, alliteration, repetition, contrast and oxymoron etc. have been widely adopted in English film titles. Such as *Sense and Sensibility* 《理智与情感》 with the adoption of alliteration, *Tiger! Tiger! Tiger!* 《虎, 虎, 虎》 by means of rhetorical repetition, *gloomy Sunday* 《灰色星期天》 by personification and *True lies* 《真实的谎言》 by Oxymoron. There are more examples as follows:

Alliteration:	<i>The Big Blue</i>	碧海蓝天
Oxymoron:	<i>Eye Wide Shut</i>	大开眼界
Simile & Metaphor:	<i>Crystal Heart</i>	水晶的心
Contrast:	<i>Boyfriends and Girlfriends</i>	男朋友与女朋友
Irony:	<i>The Great Lie</i>	弥天大谎
Personification:	<i>Dances with Wolves</i>	与狼共舞

Figures of speech clarify, expand and express feelings and judgment. In addition, they also entertain. Furthermore, five beauties could be well achieved by the flexible use of the above-mentioned figures of speech, that is, beauty in association (simile), beauty in change (irony), beauty in balance (contrast), beauty in emphasis (repetition) and beauty in sound (alliteration). There are still other rhetoric devices applied in movie titles. The author won't elaborate on them for the limited space.

## 2.3.2 The Linguistic Feature

General speaking, English film title features conciseness and briefness in its structure. A lot of film titles only have one word, most film titles are no more than four words, and phrases enjoy great popularity. More often, they are noun phrases *Ghost* 《人鬼情未了》, verb phrases *Neverland* 《寻找梦幻岛》 and prepositional phrases *On Golden Pond* 《金色池塘》 or highly concise sentences *Chicken Run* 《小鸡快跑》. There is no denying that still sometimes some long film titles, maybe a sentence, would meet our eyes, such as *When a Man Loves a Woman* 《当男人爱上女人》 and *It Happened One Night* 《一夜风流》, *Gu Jin Da Zhan Qin Yong Qing* 《古今大战秦俑情》, *Zhe Li De Li Ming Jing Qiao Qiao* 《这里的黎明静悄悄》. However, we may safely say that such lengthy titles are very sporadic and quite few in number.

## 2.3.3 The Culture Feature

Film is of course a product of culture. Culture deals with the way people live. Movie as a special form of art is also a cultural product. English movie title, as the name of movie, is a part of this cultural product, elements in many ways. All good films are social products of cultural phenomena and ideological trend of certain times. Such cultural features can be well reflected at the level of the film titles. More often than not, the cultural features of film titles are closely related to the quotation of allusions. Indeed, allusions enjoy great popularity for naming. The cultural of English movie contains title are reflected in the following aspects:

### 2.3.3.1 Application of idioms

Besides allusions, the audience may find in the movie titles many images out of English idioms and slang. They are rich in cultural connotations and unique in English-speaking countries. For instance, *The First Blood* 《第一滴血》 is the story about a mentally unstable Vietnam War veteran, when abused by a small town's police force, begins a one-man guerrilla war in the mountains. "The first blood" originally means the first victory in the battle in English and here it vividly portrays the hero of the movie, John Rambo, who is fighting for his life.

### 2.3.3.2 Application of cultural images

Cultural images are also frequently found in movie titles. *Killing Field* 《杀人场》 is applied to all places where men are slaughtered. It originates from a horrible period of genocide and carnages holding Cambodia when a large number of people were of different political opinion with that of the Khmer killed due to their Rouge government. This phrase has become popular since 1985 when the movie *The Killing Field* was showed to the public.

### 2.3.3.3 Application of Allusion

Applying allusion is very frequent and popular in movie titles. Allusions mainly originated from Bible, legend and fairy tales, and they have a relatively large share in movie titles.

As we all know, Christianity is the most common religious belief in the west, which has exercised great impact on the film titles. Actually, allusions, mainly originating from the bible, the religious and legendary tales, have a relatively great part in the formation of the film titles. A case in point is the film title *Seven* 《七宗罪》. Christian holds that God created the whole world in seven days and Eve was built with the seventh rib of Adam's. Therefore the number "seven" is frequently used to regulate people's morals or to generate historical heritage, social communities and religious rituals. It comes from the Bible, referring to the seven deadly sins, namely pride, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, avarice and sloth. Meanwhile, a host of other examples delight the viewer's eyes: *Adam's Rib* 《亚当的肋骨》, *Silence of the Lamb* 《沉默的羔羊》, *Original Sin* 《原罪》 and so on. All the examples mentioned above clearly unfold the great influence upon English film titles exerted by western religious culture.

## 2.4 Functions of Film Titles

Different scholars have different analyses of the functions of movie titles. A movie title has four functions which are informative, expressive, aesthetic and vocative functions respectively.

### **2.4.1 The Aesthetic Function**

This is the language designed to please the senses, firstly through its actual or imagined sound and secondly through its figures of speech. The rhythm, balance and contrasts of sentences, clauses and words also play their part. Their sound-effects consist of onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, meter, intonation, stress...

### **2.4.2 The Expressive Function**

The core of the expressive function is to set the feeling-tone for the whole film, which is the key to its communicative effectiveness, and accordingly draws the audience to be infected with strong lyric flavor, heart-stirring or comic atmosphere.

### **2.4.3 The Informative Function**

The core of the informative function is the facts of a topic and reality outside language. It is supposed to shed light on the message of the film; to give hint to what is going on in the society, thus helps the audience to understand the film more readily.

### **2.4.4 The Vocative Function**

The core of the vocative function of language is the audience, the moviegoers. The term "vocative" is used in the sense of "calling upon" the audience to act, think or feel, in fact to "react" in the way intended by the text. A title with the vocative function must be written in a language that is immediately comprehensible to the audience so as to attract their attention, to trigger them into enjoying themselves in the darkness and consequently end up with a box-office hit.

## Chapter Three Exploring English Film Title Translation

### 3.1 Methods of Film Title Translation

Film title translation seems to be a simple and easy task, but in fact it is a very complicated and problematic matter, not so easy as some non-professionals think it to be. It has its own stylistic, linguistic and cultural features, all of which merit our attention while doing translation. Before we probe into the heart of the topic, it is necessary for us to make a brief survey of film titles translation.

Because the relative lack of instances of the translation of Chinese film titles into English, the following analysis puts emphasis on English film title translation into Chinese.

#### 3.1.1 Literal Translation

Literal translation strives to reproduce both form and content of the original according to the respective characteristics of English and Chinese and retains as much as possible the figurers of speech.

In the actual process of translation, this method proves very simple and feasible when its title reflects almost exactly the content of a film. These titles could almost be translated word for word. For instance, *Gentleman's Agreement* 《君子协定》, *Chinatown* 《唐人街》, *The Age of Innocence* 《纯真年代》 *Human Factors* 《人性因素》 and *Dances with Wolves* as 《与狼共舞》.

Literal translation, in the process of E-C film title translation, has the advantage of retaining a unity of the form and information between the translated version and the original. The method of transliteration mentioned previously can be regarded as a form of literal translation. Similar to transliteration, the literal approach, in the particular case of film title translation, keeps the surface structure and original flavor of the text to a large extent. The audience can find a perfect

match between the content and the film title and are interested in the foreign elements in the title and go to the cinema. The title that has been literally rendered retains the exotic flavor of the original. Under this circumstance, literal translation serves the vocative function of the title well to attract eyeballs. If such titles are translated freely or renamed according to the content of the film, it may miss the mysteriousness compared with the literally rendered ones. Take *Rain Man* 《雨人》 as an example, this film tells a touching story between brothers. The title“雨人”is so interestingly weird that the moviegoers may be eager to watch and check out.

Nevertheless, literal translation also poses problems in film title translation, such as ambiguity in meaning, incompatibility between the form of the version and the original content, cultural elements involved, unacceptable to the Chinese language, and so on. Apart from the above-mentioned, it is noticed that adjustment of the word order and omission make themselves two indispensable techniques in doing literal translation so that the expressions could be more concise and idiomatic.

#### **3.1.1.1 Adjustment of Word Order**

Word-for-word translation of some English titles may violate Chinese idiomatic ways of expressions and their aesthetic taste, therefore the word order or structure of the English title has to be slightly altered. The following serves as convincing examples: *Man in Black* 《黑衣人》; *The River Wild* 《狂野之河》; *A Walk in the Clouds* 《云中漫步》; *A Cry in the Dark* 《在黑暗中哭泣》; *A Streetcar Named Desire* 《欲望号街车》; *Young Doctors in Love* 《热恋中的年轻医生》 and so on.

#### **3.1.1.2 Omission**

Apart from adjustment of the word order, omission also deserves due attention. True, a translator has no right to subtract any meaning from the original. But it does not follow that he should refrain from omitting any words at all in translation. In fact, the disparity between English and Chinese really calls for omission in the process of English-Chinese film title translation. What is regarded as a natural or indispensable element in the English titles may be regarded as



superfluous or even 'a stumbling block' in their Chinese counterpart. Generally speaking, omission in E-C film title translation is to deal with the excessive use of English pronouns, and such functional word as articles, propositions and so on. Look at the two examples: *My Fair Lady* 《窈窕淑女》 and *A Walk in the Clouds* 《云中漫步》. Here 'my', 'a', 'the' and 'in' are omitted in the translation. Comparatively speaking, pronouns are more frequently used in English than in Chinese. When translated into Chinese, many English pronouns may be omitted so as to conform to the accustomed usage of Chinese expressions. This is also true of omission of the articles and propositions. Given the disparity of English and Chinese, the redundant part in the two English titles are all omitted so that the Chinese versions could be natural, lucid, idiomatic and eventually accepted by our Chinese audience.

Judging from the above discussion, we may safely say that literal translation has its own strong points and is well worth employing in the E-C film title translation. Nevertheless, it also poses problems in the process of translation, such as the incompatibility between the form of the translated version with the content of the film; the ambiguity caused by the different characteristics of the two languages and allusions cultures involved in translation; the elusive meaning of the idioms and so on. All those factors call for free translation so audience four basic could be better informed of the connotation of the original title that the values could be fully reproduced:

### 3.1.2 Liberal Translation

Liberal translation is used in film title translation mainly to convey the meaning and the spirit of the original title without sticking mechanically to the form. This method is most frequently applied when it is really impossible for the translator to use the methods previously discussed. Or, if it is literally translated, the version will be incomprehensible to the audience or highly ambiguous, dry and awkward.

Here is a good example Bao Huinan once used in 《文化语境与语言翻译》 (Cultural Context and Translation)(2001:100-101). The American movie

*Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex but Afraid to Ask*, which has been mentioned in Chapter 3, indeed has an amazingly lengthy title. If it is translated into 《你所有想要知道但又不敢开口问的性爱问题》, the version will be redundant and tedious. Furthermore, such a lengthy title does not conform to the habit of Chinese language which is featured by conciseness. The title was translated into 《性爱宝典》 during its debut in Taiwan. Compared with literal translation, the latter version is appropriate and concise, and easy to remember for the audience.

Take the following four titles as further examples. *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* 《飞越疯人院》, *Terms Of Endearment* 《母女情深》, *Reds* 《烽火赤焰万里情》 ((Taiwan)), *Traffic* 《毒网》. If these titles are translated literally or even with liberal translation partly combined, most probably the audience will still be confused by the clueless or awkward versions. Then the translation fails its functions as a film title. So the translator should turn to the method of liberal translation. As for the four titles, the audience will only be better informed and entertained by the approach of liberal translation. Several versions to them are listed for the reader's reference.

Apart from the above cases, it occurs that the literal translation for certain title is acceptable in form and conforms to the target language but misleading and ambiguous in meaning. Here is an example. The literal translation for *Waterloo Bridge* 《魂断蓝桥》 is 《滑铁卢桥》. The real Waterloo Bridge is a bridge over River Thames in London. It was built in 1817 by the British Government to commemorate the British Army, commanded by Duke of Wellington, defeated Napoleon in The Battle of Waterloo. If the title is translated into “滑铁卢桥”, the audience who have never seen this movie before would probably associate this movie with the bloody war, the defeat of Napoleon, or just a simple image of a bridge. They may guess this is a war movie or a documentary of bridge construction rather than a deeply touching love story. Therefore, 《滑铁卢桥》 is neither expressive, nor vocative to the audience. Even worse, it misleads filmgoers. But the version 《魂断蓝桥》 is warmly applauded by the audience since it conveys the content of the film well and at the same time it is beautiful, elegant and

eye-catching. On seeing this title, the audience may feel strong aesthetic pleasure and great interest in watching this film.

On the other hand, the sense of propriety in the actual translation deserves due attention of the translator. Liberal translation is by no means rendering at the translator's own will. The translators can never totally shake off the original title and film to make groundless creation only for the pursuit of box-office result. As has been discussed before, the translators should distinguish liberal translation from random translation, because the former aims to retain and better the original meanings and artistic features of the film, whereas the latter is subjective and irresponsible for the original title and film as well as the audience.

### **3.1.3 Transliteration**

Transliteration is to seek phonetic correspondence in terms of the translation of proper names, the name of persons and places in particular in the film titles. It relates to the conversion of different alphabets in different language systems. Although not widely used in the translation of English film titles, it turns out to be indispensable.

When the name of the person or address involved in the title is very familiar to the Chinese viewers or possessive of latent historical and cultural connotations, they should be preserved and handled by means of transliteration. In particular, the names in the titles of the films adapted from world-famous novels tend to be kept, for the characters are all the crystallization by which the author could reveal the typical characterization under typical environment. As pointed by English famous novelist Charles Dickens when he named the great literary work *David Copperfield*: "To name this book, I feel an upsurge of thoughts and emotions, just like the sea with roaring wave."(包惠南, 2001: 82) Such titles would be unquestioningly worth cherishing to each of their creators. If they are translated in other ways, the viewers may take it for an ordinary film and might well miss a good opportunity of appreciation. Then it is not only a great pity in artistic reproduction, but also a huge loss in box-office appeal, both of which are exceedingly significant to film industry. Many good translations of transliteration

have ever come onto the screen, such as *Titanic* 《泰坦尼克号》, *Casablanca* 《卡萨布兰卡》, *Romeo and Juliet* 《罗密欧与朱丽叶》, *Jane Eyre* 《简爱》 and so on.

As a coin with two sides, transliteration has its own advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it keeps the rhythm of the original title and attracts the audience's attention with strong exotic flavor. On the other hand, transliteration is characterized by phonetic correspondence, that is, to describe the English syllables through the corresponding Chinese syllables. Nevertheless, Chinese has twenty-one initial consonants, thirty-one simple or compound vowels and four tones, and especially features the trinity of the three. All these contribute to the difficulties of appropriate phonetic correspondence between English and Chinese.

### 3.1.4 Adaptation

Adaptation is the last resort so far as the translation of English film titles is concerned. Once the translator sets his pen to paper, obstacles are there in the work he is going to deal with. It often occurs to the translator that neither literal translation nor free translation works in some cases. Only handled by virtue of the two stock methods, some renderings become obscure and hard to understand, others turn out to be flat and pedestrian. Faced with this dilemma, the cornered translator has to develop his initiative and creation to crack the hard nut, hence creative translation or adaptation.

Adaptation is very creative in that it totally shakes off the yoke of the original title and makes a fresh start based on the content of the film. This creative treason lies in betraying the 'letter' of the original title so as to be loyal to its latent meaning and the art and style of the film. Creative translation is to a great extent a process of generalization and summarization of the content of the film, a process of reproduction and recreation. It aims at not only transferring the informative value, but also touching the chord of the audience and reproducing the aesthetic value of the film. Therefore, the translator must first understand the content and the cinema genres of the original thoroughly and profoundly, and then creatively and accurately reproduce it with the aid of his outstanding art of translation.

In the practice of English film title translation, many successful creative and appropriate Chinese versions meet the audience's eyes, in which the diction is carefully weighted, the thematic meaning deeply explored, the artistic effect vividly reproduced and great interest and desire from the audience conjured up accordingly. The American science fiction film *The Day After Tomorrow* tells a story of the relation between human beings and the natural environment. Global warming melts the polar ice caps, which makes the oceans rise and disrupts the Gulf Stream. A climate shift occurs, sending the Earth into an ice age. Millions die and the world is changed forever, but the planet has "cleansed" itself. The translators in Mainland China and Taiwan give the version 《后天》 and 《明天过后》 respectively, both of which are literal translations. The Kong Hong version 《末日浩劫》 is an adaptation. For such a grand scene and a shocking and alarming movie, the Hong Kong version is apparently preferable than the slavishly translated versions. In 《后天》 and 《明天过后》, the real meaning of the title has gone, the panic atmosphere and alarm bell effect have been ignored and the artistic appeal has been reduced to a large extent.

So is the case with the translation of *The Shawshank Redemption*, a movie about a prisoner who is wrongly put in jail and strives for his freedom. Andy, the hero of the movie escapes by digging through his cell wall in Shawshank Prison with his rock hammer in 20 years and then crawling 500 yards through dirty sewage pipe towards freedom in a stormy night. 《肖申克的救赎》 is its Mainland Cinema version, which is strictly word for word translation but brings confusion and ambiguity. The audience may at the first sight take "肖申克" as the name of the main character. Besides, "……的救赎" sounds awkward and at odds in Chinese. 《刺激 1995》 is the Taiwan version, which is by no means related to the title or the film. Many of the filmgoers criticize that this version is "ridiculous" and "makes no sense" and it shouldn't be called a translation. (source: DRAKKAR.bbs@bbs.cs.nthu). Comparatively, the Hong Kong version 《月黑高飞》 is more creative and faithful to the story. It vividly echoes the plot. Meaning while, this version is better in the aesthetic appeal. It borrows an allusion from a Chinese poem 《塞下曲》 by Lu Lun(卢纶), in which a sentence describes

a general escaping in a dark and windy night(“月黑雁飞高，单于夜遁逃”) .Such a genius borrowing matches the film well and arouses association from the audience.

From the above discussion we can see that the technique of adaptation works well in many cases in film title translation due to its particularity. But it is a controversial issue. Some people are against this approach since they regard it as a "renaming" and it sometimes goes too far as a translation. This paper suggests that it cannot be overused for the pursuit of sensational effect and box office hit. If the literal translation and liberal translation is good and adequate for the functions of film title, the approach of adaptation should be forgotten by the translator. For instance, *The Sun Also Rises*, a movie adapted from the 1926 Ernest Hemingway novel is "creatively" translated into 《妾似朝阳又照君》 in Taiwan rather than 《旭日依旧东升》. This kind of adaptation is totally unnecessary because 《旭日依旧东升》 has been well-known in Taiwan as a novel. The version 《妾似朝阳又照君》 violates the content and the thematic meaning of the title, and spoils the aesthetic value of the film. It sounds vulgar and seems to cater to the low taste of some people. Such technique should not be divorced with the content of the film.

In summary, taking all translation methods into consideration, which one gets the upper hand and thus is preferable in English film title translation? As demonstrated above that each one has pros and cons. It is unrealistic to advocate literal translation or liberal translation or even adaptation as the sole recommended method of E-C title translation. It can be found from the previous analysis and examples that there is no definite contradiction among the methods. For many versions, it is hard to tell exactly what specific method is employed. Actually, all the methods are indispensable and supplementary to each other. No single method can always solve all the problems in title translation. Whenever one method does not work well for linguistic, customary, and cultural or other factors, naturally the translator should turn to the supplementary methods for help so that s/he can accomplish his/her task. The informative, expressive and vocative or commercial function of the film title should be taken into his/her consideration. The most important requirement for English film title translation is that the translator must

have a comprehensive understanding of the whole film including plot, theme, and cultural background and so on. To read a title needs only a few seconds, whereas to understand the entire film takes at least tens of minutes. Again it proves that film title translation is not an easy task. In addition, the translator should have a deep understanding of the essence of each method and make the best use of them in a flexible and appropriate way.

### **3.2 Suggested Theories on Film Title Translation**

It is generally held that an equivalent is a word or phrase that, in a specific context, exactly corresponds to the smallest unit in the original. But this definition is rather vague and ambiguous. Linguistic facts prove that a full equivalence can never be established between two languages, for language is not mathematics. If a full equivalence is impossible to obtain, then it is natural to ask to what extent translation equivalence can be achieved.

Eugene A. Nida claims that "despite the fact that absolute communication is impossible between persons, whether within the same speech community or in different communities, a high degree of effective communication is possible among all peoples, because of the similarity of mental processes, semantic responses, range of cultural experience, and capacity for adjustment to the behavior patterns of other", and he has made the statement that "anything that can be said in one language can be said in another." (Nida, 1982:4). The history of communication and cultural exchanges between people has shown the validity of Nida's theory, and these communications and exchanges can only occur where equivalence is established. The standard of translation equivalence requires effective communication. Translation equivalence is set up if the purpose of communication has been fulfilled. If a word or expression of the target language is considered appropriate to the same speech situation, it can be taken as a substitute for the corresponding item in the original text.

To achieve the purpose of functional equivalence, Newmark has also developed his correlative approach: semantic translation and communicative

translation. Though the latter always draws more attention, we should never forget that semantic translation can enable the translation to achieve equivalence as well, and communicative translation only becomes prominent when semantic translation fails to act.

### 3.2.1 Nida's Functional Equivalence

Nida believes that the adequacy of a translation depends on a great many different factors: the reliability of the text itself, the discourse types (from lyric poetry to grocery lists), the intended audience, the manner in which the translated text is to be used (e.g. read in the quiet of one's study or acted on the stage), and the purpose for which the translation has been made, e.g. to inform, to change behavior, to amuse, or to sell a product. These same factors apply not only to the translated text, but also to the original, a fact which only complicates any evaluation of a translation.

In general it is best to speak of "functional equivalence" in terms of a range of adequacy, since no translation is ever completely equivalent to the original. A number of different translations can in fact represent varying degrees of equivalence. This means that "equivalence" cannot be understood in its mathematical meaning of identity, but only in terms of proximity, i.e. on the basis of degrees of closeness to functional identity.

Such a view of functional equivalence implies different degrees of adequacy from minimal to maximal effectiveness on the basis of both cognitive and experiential factors. A minimal, realistic definition of functional equivalence could be stated as "The readers of a translated text should be able to comprehend it to the point that they can conceive of how the original readers of the text must have understood and appreciated it." (Nida, 1993:118) Anything less than this degree of equivalence should be judged as unacceptable.

A maximal, ideal definition could be stated as "The readers of a translated text should be able to understand and appreciate it in essentially the same manner as the original readers did." (Nida, 1993:118) .The maximal definition implies a high degree of language-culture correspondence between the source and target



languages and an usually effective translation so as to produce in receptors the capacity for a response very close to what the original readers experienced. This maximal level of equivalence is rarely, if ever, achieved, except for texts having little or no aesthetic value and involving only routine information.(Nida, 1993:117-118).

Since films titles are never with little or no aesthetic value but with uncountable aesthetic value, and film titles are always creating enough surprises and suspensions to catch the receptors' attention, the maximal definition of "functional equivalence" does not apply to films. And the translators aim at bringing to intended audience translated film titles that are closest in effect to the original ones. The minimal definition of "functional equivalence" is just what they could adopt in their process of translating.

Because "There is always some loss and distortion in verbal communication since no two interlocutors ever have exactly the same designative and associative meanings for the same phonological, lexical, grammatical, and discourse features"(Nida, 1993:118), film titles translators have enough reason to adjust their translation to achieve functional equivalence.

However, their adjustment should never be conducted at random. Nida suggests some principles for producing functional equivalence.

### **3.2.1.1 Principles for Producing Functional Equivalence**

Principle 1. If a close, formal translation is likely to result in a misunderstanding of the designative meaning, then, (a) certain changes must be introduced into the text of the translation or (b) the literal translation may be retained and a footnote against possible misunderstanding must be added. In film-title translating, the translators have no such luxury of adding footnotes. Thus their only alternative is to rewrite the text to avoid the likely misunderstanding.

Principle 2. If a close, formal translation is likely to result in serious misunderstanding of the associative meaning of the source text or in a significant loss in appreciation of the stylistic values of the source text, it is important to make such adjustments as are necessary to reflect the associative values of the source text.

Principle 3. The fact that a source text must be translated in certain ways in the target texts requires a number of adjustments on all levels: phonology, lexicon, syntax, and discourse.

The translation of film titles involves even more serious difficulties, since the words must fit the music and also the greatest rewards synchronization for the action. "The greatest number of adjustments in translating (and for success in doing so) occurs in preparing texts involving lip cinema and television utterances are adjusted, but the sounds of the performances. Not only must the length of translated text must correspond with the facial movements of the picture track, especially insofar as lip movements are concerned." (Nida, 1993:129)

### **3.2.1.2 Practical Implications of Those Principles**

These principles for the production of functionally equivalent translations have a number of very practical implications:

1) The greater the differences between the source and target cultures, the greater the need for adjustments.

2) The more distinctive (whether idiosyncratic or elevated) the style of the source text, the greater the number of adjustments.

3) The greater the differences in social and educational level of the source and target audiences, the greater the number of adjustments.

4) The more a translated text is dependent on an accompanying code, the greater the number and variety of adjustments. (Nida, 1993:i29 — i30)

Chinese and English belong to different language families and have quite distinct cultures, and the source and target audience of films differ largely in social and educational levels. Therefore, the translators of films are bound to make a great number of adjustments in their translating.

## **3.2.2 Newmark's Correlative Approach**

Another contemporary theorist, Peter Newmark, has developed a theory which echoes Nida in some way. Newmark proposes a correlative approach to translation which consists of two major methods: semantic translation and communicative translation.

Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership. Semantic translation attempts to render the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the target language grammatical structures, and meanwhile it should be faithful to the intentions of the source language writer.

In general, a semantic translation is written at the author's linguistic level; a communicative translation at the readership's. Semantic translation is often used for "expressive" texts; communicative for "informative" and "vocative" texts. Semantic translation is personal and individual, follows the thought processes of the author, tends to over-translate, pursues nuances of meaning, yet aims to reproduce pragmatic impact. Communicative translation is social, concentrates on the message and the main force of the text, tends to under-translate, to be simple, clear and brief, and is always written in a natural and resourceful style. (Newmark, 1988:46-48) However, though the two types of translation have distinctive focuses, Newmark adds that semantic translation and communicative translation should be seen as wholes in the process of translating. From this we could learn that his theory of translation is text-centered. The approach the translator adopts varies according to the characteristics of the text the intended receptors.

Since film titles aim more at the response of the receptors rather than the original author, it is advisable that the film title translator adopt a simple, clear, brief and natural style to convey the message more fully. And due to the constraints of the film (space and time), the translator is not encouraged to over-translate the source text. In subtitle translating, sometimes under-translation is unavoidable and justifiable so long as the main message is transmitted. In most cases, perhaps communicative translation could serve the film's purposes better compared with semantic translation. Therefore equivalence of effect is also Newmark's greatest concern, just like Nida, especially in the case of film-translating. The film title translators are justified to rewrite and adjust the translation according to Nida and Newmark.

As Newmark says, "In communicative translation the translator is trying in

his own language to write a little better than the original, unless he is reproducing the well-established formula of notices or correspondence. author assumes that in communicative translation one has the right to correct or improve the logic; to replace clumsy with elegant, or at least functional, syntactic structures; to remove obscurities; to eliminate repetition and tautology; to exclude the less likely interpretations of an ambiguity; to modify and clarify jargon (i.e. reduce loose generic terms to rather more concrete components), and to normalize bizarreries of idiolect, i.e. wayward uses of language. Further, one has right to correct mistakes of fact and slips, normally stating what one has done in a footnote. (All such corrections and improvements are usually inadmissible in semantic translation.)"(Newmark, 2001:42).

The disparities between language and culture cause the contradictory relationship between the form and meaning of a language. No two words, either intra-lingual or inter-lingual, bear exactly the same form and meaning. This puts film title translators into a rather difficult situation, because film title-translating, like other translating, is expressing meanings and ideas which have already been expressed in another language. To pay unduly detailed attention to formal or literal equivalence would result in an artificial, awkward and even misleading version in the target language, which fails to achieve the objective of film-translating, that is, communication. But if the attempt to bring out the meaning in the target language goes to an extreme, the distance between the target language version and the original would be equally unbearable. Yet film title-translating is a process of re-creation, presenting what has already been created in a different language. So, to a certain degree, film title translators should also take the effect of form into consideration.

According to author's own evaluation, there is a certain degree of similarity between Newmark's communicative translation and Nida's functional equivalence (or the same response from the target language reader). Still, author prefers to discuss both theories for the following reasons. Nida's theory of functional equivalence provides people with a simple, direct, and effective criterion to judge the validity of a piece of translation. Other theoretical formulations seem to be less

direct or transparent. However, the theory of functional equivalence is not without its problems. At the present stage of its development, most translation theorists and practitioners emphasize the free-translation aspect of the equivalence, somewhat to the neglect of the literal-translation aspect, though Nida has time and again mentioned the "closest possible" natural equivalence. This lopsided emphasis on free translation is certainly misleading, but is unfortunately evidenced by the numerous articles published in authoritative journals such as the Chinese Translators' journal. On the other hand, Newmark's correlative approach, which puts equal emphasis on semantic and communicative translation, seems to be more balanced. Following this theory, while people stress the necessity of communicative translation in rendering a film title, people will not lose sight of the necessity of semantic translation where appropriate.

Nida and Newmark have provided theoretical support for the translators to adjust their translated texts to achieve functional equivalence and realize communicative purposes. On the basis of equivalence, film title translators and film title-translating theorists have to make a compromise to set up equivalence at the most appropriate point between form and meaning.

## Chapter Four Relationship between Culture and Film Title

### 4.1 Film's contribution to culture

What is more significant is that cultural impacts of film have already been recognized progressively.

#### 4.1.1 A Mark to the Cultural Turn

According to Chen Xiaoyun's comments, world culture has already taken a significant turn from written language culture into audiovisual language culture. In some sense, the influence and value of the turn is nothing less than that of the invention of written characters for the development of human culture. And film is one of the major representatives of audiovisual language culture, and it has already ascended as one of the cultural forms that take leading place in modern society (1999:1) It short, film, leading other audiovisual cultures, brought a momentous transition cultural pattern.

#### 4.1.2 A New Platform for Other Arts

In the age of information and speed, film can attract people with its changing sounds, shadows and lights. Arts and cultures, especially with its unique form, it provides a new stage for other literature, dramas and plays. Many classic films are adapted from some famous or popular novels, and plays, for example All *Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) from Erich Maria Remarque's ant-war novel, *Gone with the Wind* (1939) from Margaret Mitchell's novel of the same name, *My Fair Lady* (1964) from George Bernard's play *Pygmalion*, *Oliver* (1968) from Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, and *Out of Africa* (1985) from Karen Blixen's autobiographic novel. It provides a new expressive way, and enables other forms

of arts find a brand-new channel to enlarge their influential scale and to deepen their influential depth.

### **4.1.3 A Carrier of Culture**

Warshow states his point of view about mass culture including film that "mass culture is the screen through which we see reality and the mirror in which we see ourselves" (2002: 8-9). So, through film "not only can the audience see an attractive story and several handsome stars, but also various local conditions and customs, cultures and tastes. It would be able to become the most intuitional and expansive and at the same time, the most detailed carrier for information" (Gu Haiyan, tr. CY)

In fact, film reflects and carries culture covering literature, politics, economics, customs, and etc (Chen Xiaoyun and Chen Yuxin, 1999: 1). Changes in them can directly bring changes in film, both in form and content.

### **4.1.4 A Promoter for Cultural Exchange**

Once culture exists, interactions between different branches in one culture and nations with different cultural background happen immediately. As a carrier of culture, film naturally becomes a channel and a promoter of cultural exchanges.

The appreciation of film, in fact, is a kind of communication between the creator and the audience. Information and values about religion, politics, economics and etc are reflected and transferred. Furthermore, film has permeated into every corner of people's life and the whole social structure. To an individual, film can influence one's language, apparel and etc; to a society, it even can influence cultural values. "It influences people's ways of living, talking and thinking, and the whole human life is under its influence and control" (Chen Xiaoyun and Chen Yuxin, 1999:1, tr. CY)

In this way, film advances communications between people, nations and countries, and the common culture of the whole world has been enriched. At the same time, film's contributions to exchanges in cinematic and language cannot be

neglected, which are picked out here for their importance in film translation including title translation. Since films have various artistic expressions with personal characteristics and national features, exchanges of films certainly will bring artistic exchanges among nations, and bring shifts in lexis and expressions in one language by the influence of another.

## **4.2 Cultural Factors Reflected in Film Titles**

Language is part of culture and plays a very important role in it. Some social scientists consider it the keystone of culture. Without language, they maintain, culture would not be possible. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture and reflects culture. In the broadest sense, language is symbolic of a people; it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approach to life and their ways of thinking and living. Film titles, as the keystone to films, which are part of culture, are also carriers of culture, as can also be seen from the introduction of film histories, where the change of times alter the film themes and film titles as well.

### **4.2.1 Psychological Cultural Factors**

#### **4.2.1.1 Perception**

The process of perception includes two stages. The first is the physical mechanism of recognition or identification which is accomplished through sensory organs. At the second stage, interpretation and evaluation take place, the results of which are not the same for all people and are influenced by all the past experiences. By exposing a large group of people to similar experiences, culture generates similar meanings. "Perceptions of the world are representations we make from both the nerve impulses that reach our brain and our unique set of experiences supplied to us as members of a particular culture." (Samovar, 2000:57)

There exist various kinds of theories as for the different ways of perceiving the world between Chinese and western cultures. One common portrait of the



difference posits a radical incommensurability on the very nature of philosophical inquiry. Chinese philosophy is "wisdom" literature, composed primarily of stories and sayings designed to move the audience to adopt a way of life or to confirm its adoption of that way of life. Western philosophy is systematic argumentation and theory. One reason to think so is the fairly widespread wariness in Chinese philosophy of a seemingly discursive rationality that operates by deduction of conclusions about the particular from high-level generalizations. Confucians articulate their teachings in the form of principles, but such principles seem to function as designators of values or general considerations that ought to be given weight in judgments about what to do. Never lost is recognition of the necessity for the exercise of discretion in judgment according to the particular circumstances at hand. The best rules lose applicability in unusual circumstances. Rules and values conflict in many circumstances, and there are no "super-principles" to supply real answers. The appropriate resolution to each conflict depends very much on the situation. When we encounter situations that pose similar-looking conflicts in stories we have heard before, we will use the story as a resource and a model. That model is not the same as a general principle that would deductively yield a judgment about what to do in the present situation. We must exercise judgment in determining what to do. In such ways, Chinese thinkers draw a picture of the world that must in the end be evaluated by explanatory power in some very broad sense. So then, it is right to say that Chinese philosophy is invitational while Western philosophy is argumentative. It is true that much Western philosophy, especially of the late modern variety, and most especially emanating from the United Kingdom and North America, attempts to establish its claims through argumentation that is more rigorous than appeals to experience and explanatory power in the broad sense.

This vague or allusive characteristic of Chinese perception is well displayed in a great many film titles such as *Bo Li Zhi Cheng* 《玻璃之城》, *Chun Guang Zha Xie* 《春光乍泻》, *Si Shui Liu Nian* 《似水流年》, *Chun Tian De Kuang Xiang* 《春天的狂想》, *Ting Yuan Shen Shen* 《庭院深深》, *Liu Lian Piao Piao* 《榴莲飘飘》 which either create an atmosphere for the film or use a symbol to symbolize the

theme of the film. By contrast, most English film titles are more direct and straightforward. They either refer to the leading role of the film or indicate the main plot or setting of the film: *Ghost* 《人鬼情未了》, *Gladzator* 《角斗士》, *The Graduator* 《毕业生》, *Home Alone* 《小鬼当家》, etc. The perceptive difference between the two is also reflected in the Chinese translation works of English films titles: *Rebecca* as *Hu Die Meng*《蝴蝶梦》, *Waterloo Bridge* as *Hun Duan Lan Qiao* 《魂断蓝桥》. These translation works turned the originally plain and straight film titles into allusive ones, which are more favorable in Chinese culture

#### 4.2.1.2 Values

Values refer to the enduring belief that a specific mode of act or end-state existence is personally or socially preferred to another. According to Rokeach, values are "a learned organization of rules for making decisions and for resolving conflicts" (Rokeach. 1973:161). These rules and guideposts are normative and teach us what is useful, good, right, wrong, what to strive for, how to live our lives and even what to die for. As Albert says, a value system "represents what is expected or hoped for, required or forbidden. It is not a report of actual conduct but is the system of criteria by which conduct is judged and sanctions applied." (E. Albert. 1968: 32). While each of us has a unique set of individual values, here values are used to refer to those permeating a culture, that is, cultural values.

#### A. Family life

In Western values, there is no parallel to Chinese value for the centrality of family life in the Confucian conception of good life. The reason for this lies in the Confucian appreciation for the family as the first arena, in which care, respect, and deference to legitimate authority are learned. The members of a Chinese family are more closely linked than those of Western countries and there exists a strict hierarchical order within a family. *Wo De Fu Qin Mu Qin* 《我的父亲母亲》, *Piao Liang Mam* 《漂亮妈妈》, *Wu Nu Bai Shou* 《五女拜寿》, *Wo De Xiong Di Jie Mei* 《我的兄弟姐妹》, *Qiao Zhe Yi Jia Zi* 《瞧这一家子》. Such film titles show us the great concern for family members in Chinese culture and the word Bai(拜) in *Wu Nu Bai Shou* 《五女拜寿》 reveals the young's respect for the old.

## B. Individualism and Collectivism

Another potential contrast arises from the focus in modern Western moralities on individual rights to liberty and to other goods. Individualism is one of the most important culture patterns in American culture. As is true with most cultural patterns, the origin of this value has had a long history. Two hundred years before Christ, the Latin Poet Quintus Ennis offered the following advice that clearly spelled out the independence nature of the individual "Do not expect strangers to do for you what you can do for yourself". Centuries later, Benjamin Franklin mentioned much the same thing when he wrote that "God helps those who help themselves". Individualism manifests itself in individual initiative (Pull yourself up by your own boot straps), independence (Do your own thing), individual expression (The squeaky wheel gets the grease), and privacy (A man's home is his castle). Broadly speaking, individualism refers to the doctrine, spelled out in detail by the seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke, that each individual is unique, special, and completely different from all other individuals and "the basic unit of nature". Through literature, art or history, the individualism message is passed on: individual achievement, sovereignty and freedom are the virtues most glorified and canonized. The cowboys of the Old West or action heroes in today's movies are all portrayed as independent agents who accomplish their goals with little or no assistance, as can also be seen in film titles such as *Die Hard* 《虎胆龙威》, *Minority Report* 《少数派报告》, which make eminent the role of one person in critical times rather than that of the public and emphasize the individual character of the hero.

Confucianism lacks a comparable concept, given its assumption that the ethical life of responsibility to others and individual flourishing are inextricably intertwined. In Chinese culture, emphasis is put on collectivism: the interests of the public are superior to those of the individual and wherever necessary, individual interests should be sacrificed for the sake of the public. Therefore, there are fewer Chinese films than American films that are named after the heroes or heroines. Even if there are films named in this way, the film titles do not provoke images of individual talents, but demonstrate the heroes' sacrifice to the public or

the country and call for us to learn from them. The point is clearly made in the following examples: Jiao Yulu 《焦裕禄》, Kong Fansen 《孔繁森》.

Seen from the above analysis, the contrast between individualism and collectivism is clearly demonstrated in film titles. While American films are abundant of such film titles that feature the name of heroes or heroines and that emphasize the personal activity and praise personal struggles, Chinese films are seldom named in the same way. The Chinese film *Mei Shi Tou Zhe Le* 《没事偷着乐》 is also a story about the struggle of an individual, but it fails to employ the name of the hero Zhang Damin 《张大民》 as its title. Instead, it adopts the theme as its title. As a result, individual is ignored, leaving its theme—the optimistic attitude toward life—in a prominent place.

Culture is generated by a people's geography, history, and the need to solve life's problems and challenges, and the contrast of collectivism and individualism also has its origins. In America, culture is formed primarily through two processes. First, those who originally arrived on the Atlantic coast brought many English values, the English system of law and the basic organization of commerce that was prevalent during the sixteen century. Second, these settlers were immediately confronted with a wave of new citizens who arrived through migration. This produced what is sometimes referred to as the "melting pot". Cultural integration did not come about easily. The shared, desperate desire of the American people to be separated from what was known as the Crown and Divine Right, as well as from the Church of England, provided the impetus to seek unity. This impetus led, in part, to the binding of Germans, Irish and English together in a social fabric ample enough to contain Catholic, Congregationalists, and Methodists and to unit North, South, East and West within a national framework. Americans wanted to separate alienable rights, those that could be voluntarily surrendered to the government, from inalienable rights, those that could not be surrendered even to a government of the people. The fundamental American proposition became "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for each individual, whose liberties had to be secured against the potentially abusive power of the government. This great value on individuality can be attributed to the character of the people who immigrated to

this new world to stake out a fresh life. Settling a new, undeveloped land required a great deal of attention to be paid to the daily activities of surviving, a situation that did not lend itself to formality or dependency. There was no time to waste on what was perceived by the rigid European and British rules as formality. Only the independent survived. These environmental factors also had psychological effects on the settlers: after developing habits of survival based on individualism, a lack of formality, and efficiency, they soon also developed thought patterns, beliefs, values and attitudes attuned to that environment. In this way, individualism becomes even more important for the American culture. Anything is considered morally wrong that violates the right to think for oneself, judge for oneself, make one's own decisions or live one's own life as one sees fit. China, in spite of its immense land stretch and various minorities, is a far more homogeneous country partly due the "natural barriers" mentioned by Samovar (Samovar, 2000:116). This geographical separation also contributes to the formation of many Chinese characteristics. Two thousand years of feudal society with little outside interference have created strict social structures and emphasized unity and stability. Maintaining the unity and stability breeds the spirit of thinking about collective interests prior to individual interests.

#### 4.2.2 Material Cultural Factors

Material culture includes all the tangible things created in a culture, such as buildings, streets, meals, etc. The differences in material culture can be easily seen in language, whose main function is to denote the things present in a culture. For example, the absence of such sweets as chocolate in traditional Chinese culture results in the lack of equivalent expression in Chinese language. That is why we have to translate chocolate into Qiaokeli which has almost the same pronunciation with the original text. Film titles, part of culture, are no exception in the reflecting of material culture. For instance, the following Chinese film titles *Miao Jie Huang Hou* 《庙街皇后》, *Gu Jin Da Zhan Qin Yong Qing* 《古今大战秦俑情》, *Gang Tie Chang Cheng* 《钢铁长城》 and *AI Qing Ma La Tang* 《爱情麻辣烫》 mention such things as Miao Street, Warrior Statue of Qin Dynasty, and Hot

Pot which are peculiar to Chinese culture, while the following English film Titles *Air Force One* 《空军一号》, *American Pie* 《美国派》, *Apollo 13* 《阿波罗十三号》, *Chocolate* 《浓情巧克力》 refer to something peculiar to its own culture.

### 4.2.3 Institutional Cultural Factors

Different tracks of development lead to different regulations and systems. As a result of the vast gap in the tracks of development between United States of America and China, their political system, economical system, medical system as well as law system inevitably make a great difference. The habitual practice in the same situation may vary a great deal. As is seen such film titles as *Wu Er Ge Qing Shen* 《吴二哥请神》, *Gua Sha* 《刮痧》 and *X files* 《X-档案》, a god could be "invited" into the home of the mortal in Chinese tradition, the customary treatment of a cold in some parts of China is Guasha and the cases that can not be solved in FBI are entitled X-files, etc.

## 4.3 Other Factors

### 4.3.1 Aesthetics

As mentioned in the second chapter, one of the most important features of film titles is the aesthetics reflected in them. Chinese language attaches great importance to form, pronunciation and meaning of an expression, while English puts its emphasis mainly on pronunciation and meaning. From the above analysis, it is concluded that most Chinese film titles are allusive while English titles are more plain and straightforward. The titles of Chinese films tend to establish an atmosphere for the film and traditional aesthetics prefer those expressions that are symmetrical in structure and rich in meanings. That is why numbers of four-character idioms are used in film titles.

Comparatively speaking, the titles of English films do not care so much about rich meanings and symmetry in structure, and they care more about the pronunciation (the sound effect) of the film titles. A host of examples can be found

to verify this point, such as *Joesle and the Pussycats* 《猫女乐队》, *Sleepless In Seattle* 《西雅图不眠夜》, *Sugar and Spice* 《甜与辣》, and *Water World* 《未来水世界》.

### **4.3.2 Commerce**

There is no doubt that commercial factors play a very important role in the naming of films. Film, as a popular art, has to attract the audience into the cinema and box-office also functions as an important indicator of whether a film is successful. Therefore, when naming a film, film makers must take into consideration whether a title appeals to the audience.

## **4.4 Film Title Translation Influenced by cultural Factors**

As a popular art, film is just the social product of cultural phenomena and ideological trend. Film titles are inevitably branded by the typical national characteristics and culture values. It is a common practice for the screenwriters to present such film titles cluttered up with cultural-loaded words, typically idioms, slang and allusions. Accordingly, most of the difficulties posed in the process of film title translation are due to the vastness of cultural diversity. A translation, which disregards the differences between cultural backgrounds, runs the risk of being unintelligible. Therefore, in film title translation, both the linguistic and cultural factors should be taken into serious consideration so that the cultural value of the title could be well reproduced in the target text. The realization of the cultural factors is reflected in both macroscopic and microscopic aspects.

### **4.4.1 from the Micro Perspective**

From the micro perspective, the realization of cultural factor lies in fully understanding and transmitting the cultural information and emotion carried by the original titles, avoiding misunderstandings and misinterpretations. In the process of translating, the culture-loaded items often turn into impediments in the

reception process. A translator of film titles should cultivate considerable cultural sensitivity so that unintelligibility that is caused by cultural differences is carefully avoided, similar pragmatic meaning is transferred and finally receptivity of the target audience is ensured.

Firstly, when cultural diversity and cultural individuality are reflected in the vocabulary, they may give rise to semantic zero. This really poses problem to the translation of film titles and baffles the translators. As demonstrated in the foregoing discussion, the “Bird-keeper” labels a prisoner who has been sentenced to life imprisonment, while to the Chinese counterpart, a bird-keeper is very likely person who loves birds and has formed the habit of keeping birds at home. Thus the translator flexibly translates the title into 《终身犯》.

Secondly, two words similar in form may well give rise to semantic conflict. The film *the Third Man* was first translated into 《第三者》. At the sight of such translation, the Chinese audience may take it for a family moral film, to be more exact, an account of affair. Virtually, the film is about a car accident and the third man here refers to the third witness on the spot, accordingly the translation is naturally misleading. It is better to be translated into 《目击者》. *You are a Big Boy Now* can also serve as a good example for illustration. In English “big boy” is little less than a man, while in Chinese though a boy has to “man-child” grown up, yet he is still “大男孩” bears the meaning that somewhat childlike, quite similar in English. It is preferable to translate “Big Boy” into “男子汉” instead of “大男孩”

Thirdly, due to different cultural cognition, the associative meaning of the same word in different cultures may differentiate form each other. A tactful translation of such kind of titles really entails a good command of their specific meaning in their respective given cultures. Just for the sake of this, the film *Dragon Heart* is not literally translated into 《龙的心》. The connotations of “dragon” in English and “龙” in Chinese are diametrically opposed. In English-speaking countries, “dragons” is a kind of low-grade reptile, a terrible symbol of evil. Quite on the contrary, “龙” is the symbol of emperor and nobleness in Chinese culture. Given the negative associative meaning of dragon in English



and Chinese people's high esteem for it, the title is flexibly rendered into 《魔龙传奇》.

Fourthly, different from general English collocations, allusions in the film titles are by no means easy to be perceived by the translators. The use of allusions presupposes a kind of special reader participation. The words of the allusions function as a clue to the meaning, but the meaning can usually be understood only if the receiver can connect the clue with an earlier use of the same or similar words in other sources. Therefore, the film titles embedded with allusions are imbued with strong national color, grounded in profound and rich cultural connotations, and should be carefully weighed and dealt with. Now let us have a look at *Salt of Earth*. The Chinese counterpart is“地球的盐”, which does not seem to make much sense. Actually, salt of earth is drawn from New Testament (Matthew, Chg., V.13), which means any person or persons regarded as the finest, noblest. Its translation version 《社会中坚》 has better reproduced the original intention of the source text. Look at another example *Seven*: if it is literally translated into 《七》, our Chinese audience might be totally confused as to what the film is driving at. As is demonstrated in the foregoing discussion, Seven here refers to the seven deadly sins listed in Bible, so the translation 《七宗罪》 turns out to be more intelligent and readily accessible.

#### 4.4.2 from Macro Perspective

Seen from the macro perspective, the realization of cultural value in the process of film title translation consists of the following aspects:

On the one hand, the translation of film titles is conditioned by the target language culture. A translation always takes place in a continuum, never in a void, and there are all kinds of textual and extra textual constraints upon the translation. The target language culture may select, regulate, intensify, reject or even depreciate the corresponding source language culture, and in this respect the translation is likely enveloped in the color of the target language culture. Now let us examine the following examples. *Love with My Father*, *Who Comes to Dinner*, *the Misfits*, *the Wedding Night*, *Story of Abye Dachin* and *Rebecca* are respectively

translated into 《天伦乐》, 《金龟婿》, 《乱点鸳鸯谱》, 《洞房花烛夜》, 《红楼情》 and 《蝴蝶梦天》.

On the other hand, translators with cultural awareness should bear in mind that translation is a dynamic process of culture exchange; hence the appreciation and assessment of the translation of English film titles should be done in the light of history. Some versions considered being smooth, natural and easily remembered in given times and areas may well not turn out to be equally good as expected. That is why an English film title may have several alternatives of its Chinese translation in Mainland, Taiwan and HongKong crowned with different regional flavor, which are intended to serve people with different tastes and horizon of expectation. The source text and the target text are not seen simply as examples of linguistic material. Instead, they occur in a given situation of a given culture in the world, and each has a specific function and audience of its own. The translator should approach the text as if from a helicopter: seeing first the cultural context, then the situation context and finally the text itself.

In addition, seen from the diachronic perspective, more excellent translation close to the sentiment and style of the original film titles will be presented for the audience as the process of cultural assimilation continues and deepens. For instance, 《卡萨布兰卡》 has already replaced 《北非谍影》 and enjoyed great popularity with Chinese moviegoers. This strategy in dealing with the proper names in the process of film title translation is quite progressive and future-oriented with the development of international communication on an equal footing, though it takes time to be completely put into practice.

#### **4.5 Comparison of English Film Title Translation Works between Chinese Mainland, Hongkong and Taiwan**

Since culture has an impact on all aspects of a person's life and no translator can isolate himself from the culture to which he belongs, regional culture naturally casts some distinctive features on a local translator. A local translator's way of thinking arising from those features, to a large extent,

determines the principles he chooses in doing translation. Hence, there are different styles of translation.

The same English film often has different versions of titles in mainland, Hongkong and Taiwan. There is no denying that they do sometimes achieve unity on translated film titles.

#### **4.5.1 An overview of English film title translation in China**

The film, as an art with integration of culture and commercialization, has been enjoying great popularity since its birth in 1895 in France. It is welcomed in almost every corner of the world. According to data from The China Film Dictionary and other industry source, China started to make film since the year 1905 and introduced foreign films into China in the early 20 century. During 1920s to 1930s, Hollywood movies experienced fast development and incredible prosperity, but due to the social system and historical reasons, foreign films were introduced and shown in Mainland China but not at a large scale. This phenomenon in the mainland lasted for so long until the late 20 century, to be precise, when China adopted its reform and opening up policy. Differently, introducing foreign movies began to gaining popularity in Hong Kong and Taiwan since mid-20 century. In recent decades, with the frequent cultural exchanges between China and the western world, more and more foreign films enter (legally and illegally) the Chinese market and are translated into Chinese to reach the huge group of audience. The introduction of foreign films plays an important role in promoting cultural exchanges and enriching the Chinese people's recreational life, but generally, the film title translation remains a problematic issue in the current time.

##### **4.5.1.1 One title vs. many versions**

Due to historical and social reasons, as to the same title, it is often the case that several different translations mainly Mainland China version, HongKong version and Taiwan version simultaneously before the audience's eyes. The three versions could hardly achieve unity in most cases, causing confusion and inconvenience for the audience. The versions from the three regions often vary a

lot in form and content. For example:

English Title	Mainland	Hong kong	Taiwan
Singing in the rain	雨中曲	万花戏春	万花戏春
Ghost	幽灵	人鬼情未了	第六感生死恋
The Rock	勇闯夺命岛	石破天惊	夺命任务
Roman Holiday	罗马假日	金枝玉叶	罗马假日
Platnoon	野战排	杀戮战场	前进高棉
Fatal Attraction	致命诱惑	孽恋	致命的吸引力
Rain Man	雨人	手足情深	雨人
Home Alone	独自在家	宝贝智多星	小鬼当家
Pretty Woman	漂亮女人	风月俏佳人	麻雀变凤凰
Lord of Ring	魔戒	指环王	指环王
Saving Private Rayn	拯救大兵瑞恩	营救士兵莱恩	营救士兵赖恩
A Fish Called Wanda	一条名叫旺达的鱼	情女大贼神仙鱼	笨贼一箩筐
A Walk in the Cloud	云中漫步	真爱的风采	漫步在云端
The Sound of Music	音乐之声	仙乐飘飘处处闻	真善美

It often happens that the moviegoers buy two different DVDs home but find they are exactly the same movie and the only difference is in the Chinese titles.

According to the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, China imports 50 to 60 foreign films each year, among which 1/3 are American films, 1/3 are European films and the rest come from other countries. It is not until middle of 1990s that China started importing each year around 10 so-called "blockbusters", popular films with high box-office profit. That number increased to 20 in the year 2004. The SARFT recently staged a regulation that among the 20 blockbusters, there should be no more than 14 American movies. It can be roughly inferred that

the officially imported English films are at most several dozen in number. On the other hand, hundreds of English films flood into the domestic market through Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and other regions. For the Films that have not been officially imported into Mainland China, the translated titles are either borrowed from Hong Kong and Taiwan, or translated by non-official individuals such as domestic VCD/DVD distributors, entertainment magazines, newspapers, and websites and so on. Some VCD/DVD distributors, for the pursuit of profit, even introduce the film again in disguise of a new version. Different versions of titles co-exist in the market, accessible to the audience, causing great trouble and confusion to the filmgoers.

#### **4.5.1.2 Loose regulation**

The mass media are important channels for the audience to know about the foreign films. Due to inefficient management, the disunity in film title translation remains a serious problem in Mainland China. In some cases, many of the entertainment media just follow the versions available to them without weighing the quality of the versions. In other cases the titles by themselves and stick to their own versions. It always occurs that once a blockbuster is produced, various media are enthusiastic and strive to report the new film. They just grab a translation for the title in a hurry without giving it a second thought. Consequently, multifarious versions are produced. For instance, *Eyes Wide Shut*, a 1999 hot movie was given the translated titles liked 《睁大双眼》, 《紧闭双眼》, 《大开眼戒》 and 《大开眼界》 by different magazines. Facing this chaotic situation, no official administration or institution takes measures or imposes regulatory rules and suggestions, which worsens the current disunity.

#### **4.5.1.3 A mixed picture**

Apart from the above problems, the quality of the film title translation is another hard nut to crack. Among the various versions of the film titles, good renderings and poor or even terrible translations come hand in hand. Take *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* as an example. This 1995 black comedy, adapted from a famous drama with the same title by Edward Albee, reflects the deep-rooted problems in marriage relation, family relation and social ethnics in American

society. One of its versions is a literal translation, 《谁怕弗吉尼亚·沃尔夫》. A Hong Kong newspaper gives the version of 《谁怕又贞又淫的女人》, and another Hong Kong magazine renders it as 《灵欲春宵》, both of which are somewhat vulgar. The most ridiculous version is from Taiwan: 《谁怕弗吉尼亚州的狼》, which only shows the translator's ignorance. If the Taiwan translator would have taken several minutes to do some research, he could have easily found that Virginia Woolf is a major British novelist, essayist, critic, one of the leaders in the literary movement of modernism and also a feminist, but not a real wolf! Actually, the original title is adapted from a song "Who is afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf", in the Walt Disney animate cartoon version of "The Three Little Pigs". In this film, Martha, the female leading role, sings a jingle that is "who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf". The parody substitutes the similar sounding "Virginia Woolf" in place of the animal's name. According to the playwright Edward Albee, this jingle here means "who's afraid of living life without false illusions" (source:

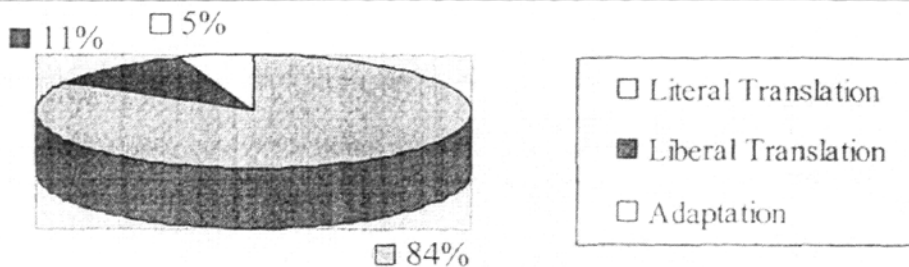
<http://dest.travelocity.com/DestGuides/0,1840,NETCENTER%7C4540%7C%7C%7C0021020033%7CF%7CN,OO.html>). Obviously, the latter Chinese versions twist the original meaning of the title. Similar cases are not rare in film title translation practice.

The coexistence of high and low quality title translations invites negative results. Once the mistranslated and poor ones landing first in the market, the audience may take it for granted subconsciously even though they come across better versions later. Since the first impressions are the strongest, it is hard to avoid the negative influence of the poor translations which brings barrier to cultural exchanges.

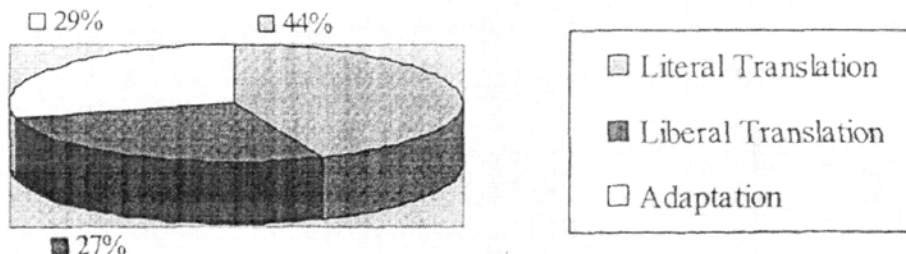
#### 4.5.2 Different Translation Methods and Strategies

The translation methods and strategies applied in the three regions vary a lot. In order to have a clearer comparison, qualitative analysis and graphs are employed to assist discussion in this part. And the translation methods are divided into three main categories according to the very nature of each method:

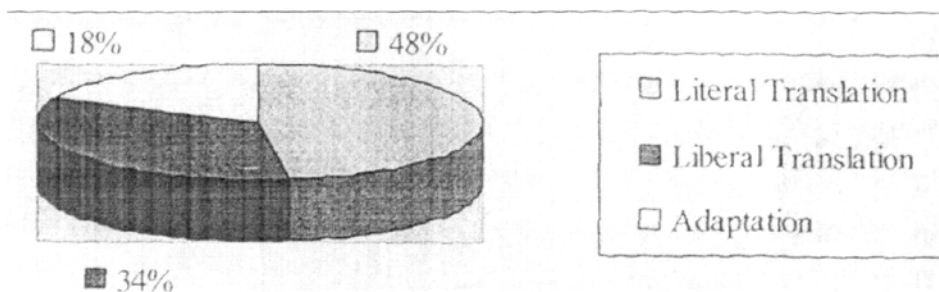
- ◇ Literal translation (including transliteration, literal translation and literal translation with amplification)
- ◇ Liberal translation (including combination of literal and liberal translation, and liberal translation)
- ◇ Adaptation



As is shown in the diagram above, in the mainland, the translators prefer literal translation, an overwhelming advantage among the methods. That is, 84% of the original titles are rendered with the literal approach. Liberal translation, is also applied but not commonly used in film title translation. Adaptation is the most unfavorable method in the mainland.



The translation method preference in Hong Kong is obvious that the Hong Kong translators deal with film titles in a flexible way. Literal approach is still the basic method because 44% of the original film titles are dealt with literally. liberal approach and adaptation methods are much favored in Hong Kong compared with that in the mainland.



Taiwan translators are similar to their Hong Kong counterparts in terms of translation method preference. Literal translations still the most frequently applied method. Meanwhile liberal translation and adaptation are well favored.

### 4.5.3 The Potential Reasons

It is evident that the translators in HK and Taiwan favor free translation. They give full play to their creativeness and conduct translation in a flexible way, mainly sacrificing the form for meaning(‘得意忘形’). In addition, a lot of sensational words are employed. Usually, the translations are imbued with strong regional flavor. For example, *Space Jam* is translated into 《太空也入樽》 in HK ‘入樽’ probably does not make any sense to the spectators in mainland; While in HK it means ‘shooting the ball’. This rendition is quite to the liking and taste of the local moviegoers.

Furthermore, ever since 1960s, more and more western films, especially American films have entered the Taiwan market. Most of them are about violence and sex. The translation works in Taiwan have their own peculiar characteristics. The first is the preference of the words “大” and “血”. “大” is a very expressive Chinese character. The translators in Taiwan tend to play a game of bluff by the overuse of “大” so as to solicit the moviegoers, for example: *Battle Truck* was translated into 《闪电大战车》; *Dog* into 《万里大逃亡》; *Honky Tonk Free way* into 《高速公路大疯狂》 and so on. This character is little less than the additive of claptrap and its original charm fades out with time. Besides, the translators in Taiwan deliberately bring the word “血” into the translation with the purpose of solicitation in mind, such as the *House Shadow* 《血宅狂凶》, *Air Force* 《血战九



重天》, the *Brute Force* 《血溅虎门关》 etc. The indiscriminate application of the stock translation comes second. The American film *Waterloo Bridge*. enjoyed great popularity when it was successfully translated into《魂断蓝桥》in 1940 s. The title is so impressive and popular that the translators take great advantage of the audience's psychology and apply the two enchanting characters “魂断” indiscriminately. For instance, *The last time I Saw Paris* 《魂断巴黎》, *Mayer Ling* 《魂断梅耶林》, *Legend of Tom Dooley* 《魂断奈何大》, *Nation Spirit* 《魂断白崖》. “遗恨” is no exception. In 1940s, the American film *White Sister* was translated into 《空门遗恨》. Later on, there are many followers, like the *Goodbye Columbus* 《花落遗恨大》, and *A Bridge is Far* 《红楼遗恨》, etc. The same is true with many other expression such as “闺门”, “江湖”, “乌龙”. It is obvious that those translations mainly adopt the language employed by Lin Shu when he translated the foreign novels in late Qing Dynasty. Next comes the application seven-character combination. The seven-character sentences in Chinese traditional poems and in traditional opera are a common occurrence. This combination has been put into translation practice as early as in 1940 s. This method is also prevalent in HK. In 1967, *Camelot* was translated into 《英雄肝胆美人心》. In Taiwan, this combination is widely applied to the translation of farce: *By Design* 《花俏采凤处处飞》, *All that Heaven Allows* 《深锁春光一院愁》, *Things are Tough All Over* 《糊涂宝贝害错羞》. The last is the avoidance of “的” and the application of Chinese idioms in Translation. The word “的” is often avoided for the sake of conciseness, such as *Blood Wedding* 《血婚》, *Flesh Dance* 《闪舞》. Besides, the idioms are also frequently referred to in translation. The following serves as good examples: *Shoot First*, 《先发制人》, *Moonlight* 《披星戴月》, *Who Shall Live and Who Shall Die* 《生杀大权》 and *Night Kill* 《来者不善》.

#### 4.5.4 Influence of Cultural Factors

When we look back into history, we find that literature of HK and Taiwan in ancient times was characterized by floridity and informality. This is because the literature itself was deeply rooted in China's southern culture. It is no wonder that

translation of HK and Taiwan, as the works of literature, turns out to be florid and informal in modern times. Geographically far away from the Central Plains and somewhat isolated from the political uproar, people in HK and Taiwan seemed to be more concerned about their daily life and economic development. By contrast, people in the Mainland were largely politically conscious. Having found its way into modern times, this consciousness coupled with consecutive political movements after 1949 contributed a great deal to the currently available styles of translation, literature, art etc.

The orthodoxy of Mainland culture requires its translators to translate in a relatively formal and plain style, which consequently forces them to employ a literal approach more frequently. The commercial flavor and closer association with ordinary people and their real life that exist in the HK and Taiwan culture require HK translators to do their translation in a more florid style so as to make their works more appealing. In order to make their works better understood, HK and Taiwan translators do not hesitate to make some additions or omission from the original. And aiming at a good sale of the artistic works, the HK and Taiwan translators are ready to use eye-catching words in their works. That explains the high frequency of “大” (big/greatly), “血” (blood) and “情” (love) in the translated movie titles in HK and Taiwan.

Moreover, different regional dialects may have the same effect on the final translation text. It may greatly influence the specific choice made by the translators. For example, the author finds that Hong Kongese and Taiwanese use the Chinese character with [h] in mandarin Chinese to express the English syllable of [f]. Without considering the regional dialect, people would be puzzled at the usage. Yet, in Cantonese, [hua] is pronounced as [fa]. Therefore, "sofa" is “梳化” in HK and Taiwan. In transliterating, the Hong Kongese and Taiwanese refer to the phonic system of the regional dialect rather than to that of the mandarin Chinese, which is more popular in Mainland.

In addition, given the English influences over the past century, Hong Kongese are much willing to speak English to show their good education. They are "notorious" for speaking English words and expressions here and there as they

converse in Cantonese. That will explain why there are so many English words and expressions in HK Chinese.

Based on the above analysis, the author believes that the style differences between Mainland translation, HK translation and Taiwan translation are the reflection of the cultural differences between the three regions in the field of translation, because no translator can seal himself off from the culture to which he belongs.

## Chapter Five Conclusion

Nowadays, the communication between each countries become more and more frequently. So culture exchange becomes more common. Translation, as an important means of cross-cultural communication, builds the bridge over gulfs between two different cultures as well as two languages. This paper is an attempt to study film title translation from cultural perspective. The thesis sets out to give a general idea of film titles, analyzing its naming approach, features as well as functions. Then by comparing English and Chinese film titles, the paper explores the cultural factors reflected in film titles, and investigates the common techniques of film title translation. After the exploration of cultural factors and investigation of translation approaches, it becomes clear that film naming translation is much of a labor of solving cultural discrepancies and translators are to look beyond the confines of linguistically-oriented translation.

This thesis in evidently has some limitations, both in terms of quantitative analysis and specific explanations. Regarding quantitative analysis, the analysis could be more accurate if the samples could be more comprehensive, that is, having more titles and versions included. Besides, most of the translated versions are collected from the Internet. Due to the various reasons, many titles don't have official translation in the mainland. The lack of mainland versions reduces the material that can be added to the database for quantitative analysis. As far as specific analysis is concerned, the author may have more or less her personal judgment. Inevitably, different readers may have different evaluation toward cultural factors on film title translation. And like any other effort in cross-cultural studies, the attempt to seek differences in cultures would inevitably lead to overgeneralization and stereotyping because of limited time and energy, the author could not conduct a public survey on the effectiveness of the versions in discussion. With the promotion of cross-cultural communication, film importing and exporting will become more prosperous. The task of English film title

translation will at the same time become more and more important. This paper is only a tentative study on English film title translation from a cross-cultural point of view. Translation can be viewed from different angles, and hopefully this paper will be of some value in developing English film title translation. The author, considering the limitations of this thesis, hopes that in the future, researchers equipped with more theoretical competence could achieve more.

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# 从文化角度研究英文电影片名的翻译

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