In Search of Principles for Chinese Subtitling: the Application of Lu Xun’s ‘Hard Translation’ in Modern Media

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I declare that this thesis is my own work, and that all the references to the relevant sources have been acknowledged.
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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the practice and reception of Chinese subtitling by focusing on the Chinese subtitles of English-language films and TV series. The present study explores two different scenarios of subtitling in Mainland China – authorised translation (i.e. the subtitles shown in cinema and those included in officially distributed DVDs) and fansubs (i.e. subtitles made by fans for free online dissemination of audiovisual products) – in order to: demonstrate differences between Chinese subtitling and subtitling into other languages; describe the different subtitling norms and procedures applied to authorized translation and fan-subtitling; and justify Chinese fan-subtitlers’ influence on the practice of Chinese subtitling and their contribution to the audience’s access to foreign originals in Mainland China. In light of prior studies related to subtitling and translation strategies, relevance is given to Chinese subtitlers’ solutions to particular subjects, namely: discourse markers, swearing and humour. This is to highlight the contrast between Chinese subtitlers’ compliance with the traditional tendency to domesticate in Chinese translation and Chinese subtitling researchers’ reliance on major Western translation theories which rarely shed light on the most urging issue arising from the current practice of Chinese subtitling – over-domestication. Against this background, a theoretical proposal relating to the notion of cultural representation is advanced. The proposal stems from the theoretical approach giving prominence to the faithfulness in translation, as propounded by the prominent Chinese writer and translator, Lu Xun, in his practice of “ying-yi” (“Hard Translation”), and thus allows a set of norms to be developed for the future practice of Chinese subtitling.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

Literature on the topic of subtitling has largely neglected the Chinese context, in spite of a growth of interest in subtitling worldwide and the soaring production of Chinese subtitling. In response to the increasing demand of Chinese audiences, hundreds of the latest products of world cinema are subtitled in Chinese every day. In this dissertation, I use “the Chinese context” to refer to the linguistic and cultural entity of various dialects of Mandarin Chinese, which is used in daily and official communications in the People’s Republic of China (the PRC) and its special autonomous regions Hong Kong and Macau, and in Taiwan (or the Republic of China). “The Chinese language” and “Chinese” will refer to Mandarin Chinese as used in the PRC. I will also adopt alternative terms such as “Mainland China” and “China” in referring to the PRC, which is the location of the subtitling that is the main focus of this dissertation. Similarly, I will use “Chinese audiences” to refer to viewers in the Chinese context and “the Chinese audience” and “Chinese viewers” to denote viewers from Mainland China.

In contrast to the spread of the practice and production of audiovisual translation (AVT), studies in this field have rarely:

- addressed the practice of Chinese subtitling and its current status in detail;
- comprehensively examined the current strategies of subtitling in the Chinese context;
- explained the challenges the Chinese language presents to subtitling; and
- explored the solutions Chinese translators have used to solve the challenges of translation into Chinese.

This dissertation will attempt to address these lacunae, beginning by contextualising these issues in three stages. First, I will discuss the nature of subtitling
in Section 1.1, the present circumstances of subtitling in Section 1.2, and how subtitling can be distinguished from other forms of translation in Section 1.3. The second stage (Section 1.4) will discuss subtitling in the Chinese context, with a particular focus on the issues that make Chinese subtitling an essential component of the research on subtitling. In Section 1.5, I will point out problems in Chinese subtitling at present, and over-doemstication in particularly, and propose possible solutions for it (Section 1.5). Finally, an outline of the present dissertation, explaining the approach adopted, will be provided in Section 1.6.

1.1 What is Subtitling?

Díaz-Cintas (2009: 5) describes subtitling in the following terms:

Subtitling involves presenting a written text, usually along the bottom of the screen, which gives an account of the original dialogue exchanges of the speakers as well as other linguistic elements which form part of the visual image (inserts, letters, graffiti, banners and the like) or of the soundtrack (songs, voices off).

As a mode of AVT, subtitling caters to those viewers of a film who have insufficient knowledge of the source language (SL) and its culture but are willing to listen to the original soundtrack. Subtitles help create a different version of that original, one that has not been experienced by any audience from the SL culture.

Subtitling is the most popular mode of AVT. It is relatively easy to do, given that the need for language conversion in film and media industries is growing, while offering the audience an experience of the original more faithful than other AVT modes such as dubbing. However, such translation is usually unacknowledged by filmmakers, even though it has significant bearings on a film's success in the international market (Nornes 2007: 242-243). In addition, widespread misgivings as to the suitability of subtitling for the translation of film dialogue once impeded its
development. Despite this, subtitling has been recognised as a unique form of translation, intended to replicate the style and intent of the original soundtrack in textual form. It is now widely used in AVT and welcomed by audiences around the world.

1.2 How is Subtitling Currently Practised?

Subtitling is a growing market worldwide. Its increasing prominence is reflected in the proliferation of subtitling on television broadcasts, academic interest in media studies, the DVD’s ability to provide subtitles in multiple languages, and the rising accessibility of the technology required to digitise audio and video material. The popularity of YouTube and the practice of podcasting around the world are proof of the success of Internet broadcasting. Subtitling further increases accessibility of Internet broadcasting to audiences from different linguistic backgrounds. Recent technological developments have also enabled subtitles to be presented in more creative ways. One of the successful examples of creative subtitling is the insertion of written information and symbols in the BBC series *Sherlock*. The translations of these “inserts” (Molerov 2012) usually appear on the screen with special graphic effects, mimicking the style of the original text.

In addition, globalisation has made subtitling increasingly dominant in transnational cinema and cross-cultural communication more generally. In subtitling a film made in more than one SL, additional information is needed in order to signify the language being spoken, if there is enough space on the screen. Translators may be hired to translate each of the source languages in the original into a particular target language (TL). When this strategy is inapplicable, English may be used as the pivot language for the translation of the original into other target languages. The latter
strategy seems to be more frequently adopted, particularly in international film festivals and also in translation from minority languages. Yet translators are tasked with more than just the elimination of language barriers for the TL audience. In translating audiovisual materials, they face a more complex problem of synthesising information. Thus, subtitling and textual translation should not be understood to be one and the same thing.

1.3 What Distinguishes Subtitling from Textual Translation?

In subtitling, the source text (ST) is multi-dimensional rather than single-dimensional. This poses a problem in translating audiovisual materials. Just as a script is different from a written text intended for silent reading (Windle 2010: 154), the relationship between an audiovisual text and the audience is very different from that between writer and reader (Steiner 2004: 363). Subtitles convey the meaning of the SL verbal information (e.g. dialogue), the meaning of which is often complemented through other cues (e.g. facial expressions, body language and intonation). These additional cues are sometimes essential to the meaning of the SL dialogue but can be difficult to be included in subtitles. Hence, new strategies of translation are needed to deal with audiovisual multimodality. Considering this, the practice of AVT, subtitling included, becomes a patent instrument of cross-cultural communication.

Effective subtitling requires more alteration of the ST than a textual translation. As in textual translation, translators working on subtitling have to consider the local standards of the TL society and the features of the TL itself. However, the choices of subtitlers are also constrained by the content and length of the SL information. Such constraints are often more obvious when an audiovisual text is translated into Chinese than where the TL is a European language. Such changes also correspond with the
complex multimodal systems of audiovisual media. For example, if in the SL a
close-up character says “Get out of the car!”, the Chinese subtitle can simply show 出来 (come out) which condenses the SL speech to “Come out!”. The word 出来 would not confuse the TL audiences as the visual elements of the text would relay to the viewers who the speaker was addressing and from where they were speaking. However, by using 出来, the translation makes something implicit to the SL audience explicit to the TL audience, as the character 来 specifies the direction in which the speaker wants the other person to move (e.g. to the point where the speaker is standing). The English sentence does not convey this information.

A more convincing example is as follows. Consider a scene in which two travellers emerging from a forest see a mountain. One says, “We need to go up there”, while pointing at the mountain. This could be translated in each of the following ways:

(we-need to-climb up-mountain)
(we-need to-walk to-that-upside-go)
(we-need to-climb-up-that-mountain)

However, a subtitler would most likely prefer the former, so as to match the manner and meaning of the speaker while ensuring the conciseness of the subtitle. The SL speech does not contain the meaning of “mountain” (山); the visual delivers the actual reference to it. However, the translation does not make this explicit because it does not contain the definitive 那 (that) and the quantitative 座 (the unit used to
represent lifeless objects such as buildings, hills and mountains) before the character 山 (mountain): by using 那座山 (that mountain), the Chinese sentence clarifies the message that the speaker intends to convey. Therefore, this Chinese translation aligns with the visual combined with the SL dialogue. In comparison, 我们得走到那上面去 is too long. As for 我们得爬上那座山, it represents an unnecessary effort to convey all elements of the SL meaning. This demonstrates the choices a subtitler must make when translating an audiovisual text. It also point to the importance of studying Chinese subtitling in the wider field of AVT research.

1.4 Why is the Study of Chinese Subtitling Worthwhile?

This dissertation deals with the Chinese subtitling of English-language originals for the following reasons. Firstly, although there has been increasing research into the field of AVT, Chinese subtitling still attracts relatively little attention. Scholars have approached subtitling from the perspectives of translation and linguistic analysis, and have managed to answer questions on the technical aspects of subtitling. However, most progress has been made in subjects related to translation between European languages. The neglect of Chinese subtitling in academic circles contrasts starkly with the number of foreign audiovisual programmes that are subtitled for the Chinese audience.

Secondly, the landscape of AVT in China has changed dramatically in the last two decades. China’s participation in transnational cinema in recent years has made the country the second largest film market in the world. According to the China Daily, imported films earned 8.8 billion yuan (approximately 1.3 billion US dollars) in 2012. This figure constitutes 51.54% of the year’s box office sales in Chinese
cinemas. Translation, and subtitling in particular, is unarguably essential to this success.

In recent years, subtitled versions of films have become more acceptable to the Chinese audience. Dubbing, which was formerly used as the single mode of AVT in China, still occurs but has passed its “golden age” (from the 1950s to the 1990s) in China due to both the expense of this mode of translation and the absence of voice actors with good performance skills. Films and TV series are also subtitled for online broadcasts – whether officially sanctioned or otherwise. The Chinese Central Television (CCTV) network has channels broadcasting in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, and provides Chinese produced content subtitled into each of these languages. Other domestic TV channels have sessions for foreign-language programmes. These programmes are mostly subtitled and sometimes dubbed for the Chinese audience. For these reasons academics in Translation Studies (TS) should be aware of subtitling in the Chinese context, and its influence on the proliferation of foreign films and popular entertainment media in China.

In addition to official subtitles, fansubbing groups in China have made a significant contribution to the promotion of subtitling as a more effective mode of AVT than dubbing to Chinese audiences. They have also successfully introduced more authentic foreign cultural products into the daily life of Chinese people. Like their counterparts elsewhere, fans in China gather and form not-for-profit groups and clubs online. Then these fansubbing groups share their subtitled versions of foreign originals through organised channels. Although remaining controversial, fansubbing sheds light on and raises questions about theoretical and practical aspects of subtitling. It is necessary to study this amateur activity in order to understand the complete landscape of the contemporary practice of Chinese subtitling.
Thirdly, the unique characteristics of the Chinese language present a number of obstacles to subtitling. Further research in Chinese subtitling will help professionals find more ways to neutralise the inter-lingual differences in the audiovisual medium. Each Chinese character is semantically independent but can also form words, phrases and sentences with other characters. Chinese subtitlers usually use simpler or even some dialect terms in order to condense the target text (TT). For example, the northern Chinese dialect term 嘻 can be used to represent the meaning of “what”, instead of the standard word 什麼 (Shu 2009). A translation should always appear in the most concise form that corresponds with the original meaning in the SL. However, no matter which format a subtitler chooses, a Chinese character takes more space than an individual letter in, say, English. In addition, there are no capital and lower cases in Chinese, and no different forms of characters assigned to print and handwriting either. However, different layouts may be applied to both the traditional Chinese characters and the simplified ones. Most of the traditional characters have a more complex form, so the subtitles in traditional Chinese have to be presented in larger print in order to be recognisable. Chinese subtitlers therefore seek the most concise and accurate solution in order to fit the translation into the audiovisual medium.

It is also impossible for Chinese to imitate the morphological structure and variations that are present in English. This is less of a problem when translating between English and other European languages. English is hypotactic while Chinese is paratactic. English sentences can be organised and connected by cohesive ties such as coordinative, correlative and subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns, adverbs and prepositions. Hence English sentences can maintain a complex structure that often consists of a main clause and several subordinate clauses. In contrast, a Chinese sentence rarely involves a connective to maintain the logical relation with
other sentences. Hence whereas English sentences are compact, stressing cohesion built on morphological and syntactic principles, Chinese sentences are diffusive, relying on a particular context to maintain the coherence between them.

For this reason, "dynamic equivalence" (Nida 1993) is what translators working on language pairs such as English and Chinese strive to achieve, partly by resorting to the preconceived function of a Chinese-subtitled version. As Nida (1993: 30) pointed out, the greater the difference between the SL and the TL, and between the relevant cultures, the greater the adjustment. In addition, the more distinctive the SL style is, or the more a translation takes account of the accompanying codes in the ST, the greater the adjustment will be.

Thus the translation has to be concise, accurate and, in many cases, creative in order to conform to the meaning and purpose of the original. On the syntactic level, a Chinese subtitler normally prefers conciseness of translation to literal fidelity to the ST. The differences in the syntactic structures of Chinese and English often compel the subtitler to change the word order or even the sentence order of the ST. Thus, a Chinese audience may read the subtitle of one part of an SL sentence while hearing another. They may or may not be aware of the change of SL sentence order in the translation. In choosing objectives of translation, Chinese subtitlers tend to focus on the meaning of the narrative, while intentionally ignoring the SL word categories. Consequently, the translation may explain the most basic meaning of the original while losing the original intention of the speech act.

Finally, I believe that creative Chinese subtitling should be a further point of interest, as research has begun to explore progress in the technical aspects of subtitling. The creative strategies adopted by Chinese subtitlers embed the superimposed Chinese text further into the original. The translation functions as another
character in the original, rather than being a secondary increment to it. Creative subtitling becomes more important when the original applies the same kind of creativity to visualise the verbal or non-verbal information. For example, the textual insertions in BBC's *Sherlock* are used in the original series to demonstrate the thoughts of Sherlock Holmes. Traditionally, such information is delivered through voiceover rather than superimposed text. A subtitled version should maintain such creativity in order to be as entertaining to the TL audience as the original is to its SL audience.

The issues mentioned above make Chinese subtitling a unique subject and an indispensable component of research into subtitling. In this dissertation, I will show how Chinese subtitles influence the reception of the English originals. I will compare the authorised translation (when available) with amateur translations (i.e. fansubs) from the same source materials. These comparisons will lead to an understanding of the different strategies applied in the production of the different versions.

1.5 Aims of This Dissertation

Dong Qiusi, the first to formally address translation as a science in China, considers two tasks of Chinese translation scholars: one is the historiography of translation, and the other is the theorisation about translation into Chinese (in Luo and Lei 2004). This dissertation approaches the practice of subtitling in contemporary China by exploring two issues of focus. First, it will investigate into two scenarios in which Chinese subtitles of English-language films and TV are produced; these are authorised translation, which is mainly used in the cinema, TV broadcasting, home videos and licensed online video-streaming services; and fansubbing, used mostly to provide the unauthorised access to and translation of foreign films and TV on the
Internet. The purpose here is to describe the background, against which subtitling is adopted as a means to enhance audiovisual accessibility for the Chinese audience, and thereby show subtitling as a new wave of translation, corresponding to its current socio-cultural and political contexts in China. Secondly, I will look into the application of translation techniques in Chinese subtitling by analysing examples of translation in authorised translation and fansubs collected from subhd.com. The website provides textual files of subtitles in Chinese and the SL in original films and TV series, which can be used for the analysis conducted in this dissertation. In this way, I seek to demonstrate the novelty and the problems in the versions produced by Chinese subtitlers.

Among those problems, I intend to highlight those associated with the inappropriate application of the strategy of domestication, as they have been of major concern to the Chinese audience. This is evident in the unfavourable reviews of such domesticated translation in the state-sponsored translation of several Hollywood blockbusters, according to Liu (2013). These reviews by the audience contrast with the initial purpose of the subtitler who may have sought to make the SL information easier to understand and more appealing to the audience. Despite this, the problem has not drawn substantial scholarly attention in the research into Chinese subtitling. In my view, these translations represent attempts by subtitlers to produce a re-contextualised foreign original by adopting a strategy of over-domestication. However, any assimilation into the domestic context may contrast with the otherness represented by the foreign originals, which is obvious to the Chinese audience whose experience of foreign cultural products is increasing. Further, the subtitlers’ compliance with the Chinese context has in many cases caused the translation to become inaccurate. Such inaccuracy is associated with yi-yi (意译, sense-translation; sense translation), which
is in contrast with zhí-yì (直译, straight-translation; straightforward translation). There has been a long-running debate over these two strategies in Chinese Translation Studies. It is my hope that a set of norms can be developed to help subtitlers produce accurate translations by considering the key ideas proposed by two figures at the centre of this debate; namely, Yan Fu, whose principles (xin [信, faithfulness], dá [达, intelligibility] and yǎ [雅, refinement]) have been canonised, and Lu Xun, whose ideas on the practice of yìng-yì (硬译, hard-translation; “Hard Translation”) have been controversial and in many cases misinterpreted.

I observe that, on the one hand, studies of Chinese subtitling have relied on major translation theories developed in the West, while on the other hand, Chinese subtitlers have been associated firmly, and perhaps even excessively, with a traditional tendency to domesticate, a phenomenon which acknowledged Western theories scarcely shed light on. Hence, one needs to draw insight from the ideas propounded in light of the Chinese context in making attempts to theorise Chinese subtitling, in order to seek solutions to the problems in the current practice. Lu Xun’s practice of, and his thoughts on, yìng-yì (硬译, hard-translation; “Hard Translation”) in light of translation in the audiovisual context may help support the two general guidelines for accuracy, which I intend to propose as follows: 1) the subtitles should accurately convey the original information which they serve to explain, and be compatible with its genre, and thus be appropriate and thorough in reflecting its style; 2) the subtitler needs to make the TL textual lines imposed on the screen concise in form and comprehensive in representing the foreignness of the original.

1.6 Structure of This Dissertation
Part 1 of the ensuing discussion reviews the literature on subtitling in detail by looking at works most relevant to this project. This is to indicate the current state of research into Chinese subtitling by comparing the progress in research in Chinese subtitling with that focusing on other languages. This comparative review will also show the neglect of Chinese language in the research of AVT and help identify some shortcomings in contemporary subtitling research in the Chinese context. These include a lack of communication between research in China and that elsewhere in the world, self-censorship by Chinese researchers, and the absence of substantial scholarly attention to the inaccuracy caused by over-domestication.

Part 2 will provide the theoretical framework of this dissertation by, first of all, explaining the audiovisual constraints confining the choice of subtitlers in their effort to enhance linguistic and cultural mediation in the audiovisual medium. I will assess the translation strategies and techniques in light of subtitling in which the mediation of meaning is associated with the multimodality of the audiovisual medium. Research on translation has made a distinction between translation strategy and translation technique in the analysis of the translation process. According to Molina and Albir (2002), a translation strategy determines the outcome of a translation, while a translation technique is the method adopted by a translator in reaching a particular TL solution for realising a chosen translation strategy. A discussion on whether subtitles are supplements to the audience’s primary focus, or main object of it will lead to the tendency to over-domesticate in the state-sponsored translation of several Hollywood blockbusters exhibited in cinemas across China between 2008 and 2013. Solutions must be found in order to guide subtitlers towards more accurate translation practices. Such solutions may be reached by considering the theoretical thinking of Lu Xun on “Hard Translation”, of which the implication for Chinese subtitling will be explicated.
Part 3 will explore why subtitling, and fansubbing in particular, is popular to the Chinese audience in view of the changes in social, economic and political conditions in the country, and the film and media industries. Here an attempt will be made to explain the ways in which Mainland China – its government, its people and its AVT community – has reacted to current globalising tendencies in industry. I will investigate the conflicts between the authoritarian censorship of foreign cultural and media products, and the network of fansubbing, which facilitates unauthorised free access to foreign films and TV. Survival strategies adopted by the fansubbing groups in face of government prosecutions will also be explored. I intend to demonstrate that fansubbing groups have become the major force in the practice of subtitling in China, representing a form of resistance to the authoritarian censorship. They are so widespread and so expert in subtitling techniques that they are able to compete with professional translators in terms of audience reception and developing working relations with private distributors. Hence, fansubbing groups may also be capable of influencing the state-sponsored translation in terms of translation strategies, as indicated above.

In support of this, Part 4 will explore how “Hard Transaltion” is utilised to enhance the flexibility of subtitles in adapting spatial and temporal constraints of an audiovisual medium, in light of the creativity of fansubs. I intend to highlight the application and innovation of such creativity by Chinese fansubbing groups and thereby demonstrate their connection to the latest trends in creative subtitling which in many ways contrast with the conventional solutions employed to surmount commonly encountered problems in AVT. I will emphasise the commitment of Chinese fansubbing groups to providing the authentic experience of the original, as is the case of fansubbing groups elsewhere (See Cubbison 2005; and Pérez-González...
2007). Part 4 will also explore the desired outcome of the subtitling process, and the extent to which Chinese subtitlers succeed. I intend to emphasise the concept of the “translation process”, which can be understood as the mental process which leads a translator to his or her final strategy of translation. Theorists have long debated the dichotomy of word-for-word on the one hand and sense-for-sense translation and free and literal translation on the other. However, they have rarely questioned the ways in which translators reach certain choices, or how to evaluate those choices in the process of coming to a final solution (Lee-Jahnke 1998). I will explore the application of translation techniques in dealing with verbal and non-verbal features of spontaneous speech, including discourse markers, and swearing which forms challenge to subtitlers due to acceptability of coarse language rather than translatability, and furthermore, humour, including the translation of universal humour (which is comprehensible across different cultures), cultural humour (which involves cultural-specific references) and linguistic humour (which is mostly untranslatable due to its dependence on features inherent in the SL).

It is my hope that the analysis of these translations may help demonstrate that the quality of fansubs is comparable with, and sometimes even better than, the state-sponsored or privately sponsored translations, at least in Mainland China. While domesticated translations are frequently noticed in fansubs, it is the use of explanatory techniques preventing them from eradicating the foreignness of a particular original, though these techniques are often deemed “amateurish” by researchers and professionals, most of whom have so far approached fansubbing in the European and American contexts. I argue that these explanatory techniques make a fansubbed English-language original an alternative to “Hard Translation” in the audiovisual medium. By identifying the correspondence between the explanatory techniques of
fansubbing and "Hard Translation", I will seek to move towards a set of norms 
upholding principles of accurate subtitling, which include the two general guidelines 
proposed in Section 1.5 above.
Part 1. Literature Review

Although the first practice of subtitling can be traced back to the 1930s or earlier – scholars have pronounced on this matter differently\(^1\) – subtitling has only recently been subjected to concerted research efforts, while other modes of AVT have been similarly neglected. Research into AVT began to flourish when the contrast between its academic and social impacts became obvious. Some established theories of translation did not apply well to AVT (Díaz-Cintas 2004). Debate raged as to whether AVT was within the scope of translation, with authors like Whitman-Linsen (1992: 17) supporting the necessity to “dispel the disdain of literary intelligentsia, who seem to dismiss film translating and the degree of difficulty involved in it as not worthy of their attention” (Whitman-Linsen 1992:17). Research into the Chinese context has yet to address AVT with more systematic methods and up-to-date theories directly related to AVT, and in particular subtitling. This part demonstrates the neglect of Chinese subtitling in the wider international scholarly context and reflects on existing studies of Chinese subtitling in order to seek a path for further research.

Chapter 2 describes the past and present state of research in subtitling in the wider context. Obstacles to relevant research in the past are highlighted, as generalised by Díaz-Cintas (2004; 2009), and the components of the current progress described. Chapter 3 reviews research relating to subtitling in the Chinese-speaking world, including research conducted in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China, rather than confining the perspective to the third, though my research will primarily

\(^1\) According to Nornes (2007: 149), the practice of subtitling began with Herman Weinberg’s translation of the German operetta Zwei Herzen im Dreiviertel-Takt (Two Hearts in Waltz Time) in 1930. However, Ivarsson (2004) pointed out that subtitles had already been applied to film translation in 1909, when M.N. Topp registered his patent on a “device for the rapid showing of titles for moving pictures other than those on the film strip”. The first attested exhibition of a subtitled sound film was in Paris, where the film The Jazz Singer was shown with French subtitles in 1929 (ibid.).
focus on the practice of subtitling in Mainland China. I intend to highlight the absence of substantial scholarly attention to the inaccurate translation caused by over-domestication. In my view, this may be the result of the self-imposed censorship in the scholarly community, which is one of two major obstacles to the progress of subtitling research in China, in addition to a lack of communication between research in China and that elsewhere in the world. Chapter 4 introduces some new paths of research in AVT and shows how Chinese scholars have participated in these new trends, in comparison with the research conducted elsewhere. At the end of this part, I will conclude by discussing the state of research into Chinese subtitling and its implications for my own research.
Chapter 2. Subtitling Research in the World Context

This chapter describes the history of research into the practice of subtitling, showing how it has evolved from a largely neglected but influential aspect of translation to a fully established academic subject of Translation Studies (TS). According to Díaz-Cintas (2004; 2009), obstacles to research in the past have included: a lack of communication amongst researchers, a lack of recognition as a legitimate academic subject and insufficient financial and technical support. Considering this, Díaz-Cintas (2009) observes four ways in which research into subtitling can progress: constant efforts made by major researchers to the research into relevant subjects, increasing research interests in the practice of subtitling, improvements in pedagogy, and events organised for research and industries related to AVT.

2.1 Obstacles to Research

The earliest research on AVT was conducted in the 1930s, with further (somewhat intermittent) research being conducted by various scholars in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In this early period of enquiry into the subject, academic and lay writing relating to AVT could be found in a range of materials, from cinema and translation journals to newspapers, magazines and tabloids. More scholarly works were shared privately through the social connections of professionals and academics. It is difficult to determine the authorship of these materials, as much work on the subject was circulated in this informal way, which leaves the historiography of the research into AVT incomplete (Díaz-Cintas 2009: 1-2).

2 Bibliographical references can be found in various resources. For example, Gottlieb compiled a list under the title Titles on Subtitling 1929-1999. An International Annotated Bibliography: Interlingual Subtitling for Cinema, TV, Video and DVD. The list is retrievable via: www.researchschool.org/intranets/gottlieb%20bibliography%20intro.pdf (consulted on 10.03.2015).
Another difficulty often encountered in research into AVT is in accessing working materials. Díaz-Cintas (2004; 2009) suggests that this difficulty can be explained by three factors. First, the “ideal material” – a dialogue list transcribing the original dialogue verbatim – is rarely accessible. Published film scripts rarely coincide with the dialogue in the actual film, so people often have to undertake the tedious task of correcting a script manually by comparing it with the dialogue in the actual film. Additionally, the cost of accessing materials of good quality can be high, and access to these materials can be blocked by production companies for copyright reasons. Furthermore, the consistency of any translation may change, as the actual work of the translator may not be what is shown on the screen. On top of this, subtitles are often the outcome of teamwork, which makes it difficult to ascertain who is ultimately responsible for a given translation.

Despite these difficulties, in comparison with studies focused on other modes of AVT (e.g. dubbing, voice-over and more recently, audio description), the study of subtitling is easier, as the accompanying video material always contains the original soundtrack and the subtitles. Globalisation has facilitated the practice of AVT and research into it, while the latest developments in digital and communicational technology (e.g. digital transcription of screenplays, subtitles of DVDs and Podcasts), including dissemination of working materials and alternative channels of access to them, make research into AVT even more essential.

2.2 Progress Since the 1990s

A flurry of research into AVT began in the 1990s, as professional and scholarly participation in systematic studies from translational perspectives increased (Gambier 1995; 1998). The increase of research in this area occurred in four main components.
First of all, research on subtitling has progressed due to the work of pre-eminent authors such as Jorge Díaz-Cintas and Henrik Gottlieb, who have paved the way for practice and research. Díaz-Cintas has authored numerous articles and edited numerous books on AVT, and subtitling in particular, including *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* (co-written with Aline Remael, 2007) and *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* (edited, 2008). In the former, he introduced technical changes in audiovisual production and investigated how such changes affect subtitling. In a 2004 article, he provided an overview of topics, figures, publications and conferences that have had an impact on subtitling. He also pointed out current challenges faced by researchers as well as avenues of study. Further, in 2007, he compiled an extended bibliography of works focused on AVT, drawing heavily on Gottlieb’s bibliography. The additional works included subjects related to multimodality, pragmatic function, constraints and relevance, language use, linguistic variation and the teaching of AVT.

Henrik Gottlieb has taught Screen Translation at the University of Copenhagen, and lectured worldwide on related subjects, since 1991. One of his main areas of research is focused on issues such as language policies to be recommended for the media industries of smaller speech communities, where English is becoming more than just a ‘foreign’ language (Gottlieb 2001: 249). Gottlieb (2009) has compared the Danish films reaching the American audience (i.e. “upstream”) and American films reaching the Danish audience (i.e. “downstream”). Gottlieb (2009: 27) posited that there has been considerably less effort expended in subtitling English films for non-English audiences than subtitling non-English films for English-speaking audiences. Thus, Danish films reaching English-speaking audiences employ more “explicatory, adaptive and deletive strategies”, sacrificing a considerable degree of their localism.
(Gottlieb 2009: 27). However, his statistical analysis eventually revealed a more complex situation in which film genres also have influence equal to that of the source and target language in the subtitling process. As for art films, Gottlieb (2009: 41) concluded that non-English films going "upstream" (i.e. reaching English-speaking audiences) demonstrate a high degree of fidelity to the original and source culture.

The second factor that has positively affected research into AVT has been an increase in the publication of postgraduate dissertations and academic articles on AVT, which have covered a range of issues in the field. For example, in his doctoral thesis *Towards a Methodology for the Investigation of Norms in Audiovisual Translation*, Karamitroglou (2000) made use of contemporary translation concepts and applied them to the field of AVT, which has the discipline expanded, for instance to include the audience reception of AVT. Another example is Mattson (2009), who in her thesis analysed ten American films in order to investigate the Swedish translation of selected English discourse particles (e.g. well, oh, okay, right and like).

The third factor influencing the recent increase in AVT research has been a growth in AVT courses offered in the universities and higher education institutions. Many European universities now offer courses with a wide variety of specialisations, including audio description for the vision impaired. This is in large part due to the legislated principles of audiovisual accessibility that are upheld in the EU. In many universities where courses on AVT are already being conducted (e.g. the University of Lille in France), students have a chance to get hands-on experience in professional subtitling, for example, in classes or through internships. However, in general pedagogical training in AVT is still at the experimental stage (Díaz-Cintas 2009). This is particularly reflected by the circumstances in China where pedagogy in AVT has not drawn much attention from either academia or the professional industry.
The fourth factor to affect the field of AVT studies has been the increasing number and frequency of academic and professional AVT conferences and events. Such events facilitate connections and communications between peers and efficiently disseminate the most recent development in the field. For example, Languages and the Media has been held regularly since 2003 in Berlin. Each year, practitioners, scholars and representatives from the industry (the majority of whom are European) come together to communicate and cooperate. The 2012 sessions comprised topics related to Market and Industry, the Role and Status of Audiovisual Translators, Technological Developments, Localisation Trends, the Reception of AVT, and Language Diversity and AVT. In order to emphasise the influence of conferences such as Languages and the Media have on the development of AVT research, the remainder of this chapter will explore three papers presented at the 2012 conference – those of Nikolić, Han and McClarty.

Nikolić investigated the audience’s perception of culture and subtitles in general. As part of his doctoral thesis, Nikolić sought to design a testing model which would be helpful in testing various aspects of audience perception of audiovisual content. He also aimed to use that model to measure the difference between subtitlers’ expectations concerning audience familiarity with foreign cultural references.

Han described the role of the translator as that of a “cultural mediator” who filters culture-specific elements in the ST so as to make the meaning of the translation accessible to the TL audience and TL culture. Translators do this through a synchronic transfer of meaning across cultures and diachronic mediation in multiple historical traditions and settings. She drew examples from two Chinese films – Crazy Racer (2009) and The Blue Kite (1996) – to demonstrate when cultural mediation is required and how it works in subtitling. Despite her emphasis on intelligibility in
subtitling, Han recognised cultural filtering as "a double-edged sword", which may lead to the complete erasure of SL conventions and values. Thus subtitlers should intervene and manipulate an original without distorting the original context.

McClarty analysed audience reception of creative subtitling, using an eye-tracking study and questionnaire, with fourteen English-speaking participants who were asked to view the Spanish film *Camino* (2008) in two separated groups – one viewing a version of conventional subtitling, and the other viewing a version of creative subtitling. Results presented at the conference showed that the eye-tracking data collected in the process of viewing revealed few significant differences between the two groups in terms of their processing efforts and viewing patterns. McClarty expects that further empirical research may determine the ability of conventional subtitling to meet contemporary audiences’ wants and needs and to become an additional part of their experience of a film. Thus further research into audience reception of creative subtitling is opening new avenues of study relating to subtitling theory and practice.

In these ways research into AVT has attracted more attention and grown in significance in recent years. It has developed into an autonomous field within the broader discipline of TS, but maintains its connections to other academic fields such as Linguistics and Cultural Studies. On this progress, Romero Fresco (2006) states:

[...] if the autonomy of AVT is the starting point for research, its interdisciplinarity is the way forward, as it is drawing on other disciplines that AVT finds new and fruitful avenues of research.

However, this progress mainly applies to European research, while the practice of AVT outside Europe rarely draws substantial research attention. China is no exception, in spite of some recent progress. Up to the present, the only published
monograph on Chinese-English subtitling is that by Xiaohui Yuan (2012) at the University of Nottingham. *Politeness and Audience Response in Chinese-English Subtitling* was published as a volume in the series *New Trends in Translation Studies* in 2012. The book has a narrow focus, specifically the representation of miàn-zì (面子, face) as it relates to the notion of politeness advanced by Brown and Levinson (1987).

The book *Basic Literacy in AV Translation and Research* by Du Zhifeng and his colleagues, published in China in 2013, provides a more general descriptive insight into how AVT is carried out in the Chinese context, as well as those technical challenges faced by audiovisual translators. However, it rather focuses on Chinese dubbing, subtitling translation from Chinese into English and intralingual subtitling than subtitling translation from English into Chinese and how subtitling is received in China. Other works relating to AVT studies completed reveal a series of merits and shortcomings, which have not been carefully analysed, particularly those works completed in Mainland China. The causes of this inadequacy in subtitling research will be investigated in the next chapter.
Chapter 3. Subtitling Research in the Chinese Context

Despite efforts to develop contemporary AVT research and theories in the Chinese context, research has not yet reflected the importance of AVT or its influence. Yan Fu’s principles of translation, first proposed in the late nineteenth century, xin (信, faithfulness), dà (达, intelligibility) and yà (雅, refinement) remain highly regarded and function as the primary criteria for the practice and theoretical reflection of translation (Lin 2002: 170). In a volume to mark the 40th anniversary of the Research Centre for Translation at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the articles drew solely from theories of literary translation, including Yan Fu’s doctrine, despite the implication of comprehensive research suggested by the title *Towards a History of Translating* (Wong and Wong 2013). Even so, there has been an increase in scholarly attention devoted to matters related to AVT since the turn of the century, in addition to earlier localised studies in Hong Kong (Au 1991) and Taiwan (Chen 1996; Qin 1997).

This chapter reviews the work that has been completed to date on Chinese subtitling. Problems, particularly associated with work by scholars in Mainland China are described. I argue that the self-imposed censorship of scholars in Mainland China hampers their research efforts. Nevertheless, scholars from Mainland China form the majority of Chinese academia, and their commitment and dedication have a significant influence on research into subtitling.

3.1 Subtitling Research in Taiwan and Hong Kong

Taiwan, where Mandarin Chinese is the primary language of daily communication, media broadcasts and workplace, has witnessed a flurry of research into subtitling, reflected in MA theses that have been recently published. These cover
translations from a wide variety of languages into Mandarin. Hiseh Hui-hsuan (2009) focused on the practice of subtitling and dubbing Japanese films in Taiwan, with particular reference to the Japanese film *Hanada Shōnenshi*. Hsieh Yi-Chin (2010) compared methods of subtitling humour on DVDs released in Mainland China and Taiwan. The results showed that for viewers in Mainland China, translation tended to domesticate the original humour, whereas for viewers in Taiwan, the translation tended to retain its foreignness. Wu Tsung-sheng (2012) compared two versions of Chinese subtitles (made in Taiwan and Mainland China respectively) of the German film *Die Blechtrommel* (*The Tin Drum* (1979)).

Viewers in Hong Kong prefer Cantonese subtitles to those in Mandarin, as Cantonese is the primary language of local communication (Lo 2001). Works on subtitling in Hong Kong therefore focus primarily on this local subjectivity, and hence have limited implications for the present dissertation. This does not mean that they are not significant. However, as this dissertation focuses on Mandarin Chinese subtitles translated from English-language originals, I will limit my attention to Hong Kong’s contribution to research into Chinese subtitling, which is relevant more generally.

*The International Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context* held in 2001 in Hong Kong was the first major conference on AVT held in Asia. Some of the most influential contributions to the conference were made by academics from Hong Kong researching AVT. Participants from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Italy, Belgium, Finland, Sweden and Australia presented papers on a wide variety of topics in AVT from the perspectives of history, theoretical study and practice. These papers were collected and published by the host institution under the title *Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context* in 2009.
However, events of this kind are still rare in the research into AVT, and more communication between Chinese and international researchers is needed in order to raise the profile of AVT research there. Díaz-Cintas emphasised in an interview conducted by Dong Haiya in 2012, that insufficient communication is a primary reason for the neglect of Chinese subtitling in academic circles internationally. This is evident when considering the English-speaking world, where the academic circle of AVT is rarely informed about the research into Chinese-related subjects. The scarce publications in English contrast starkly with the large number of publications, and postgraduate studies conducted, in Mainland China.

3.2 Subtitling Research in Mainland China

Despite being the main force in Chinese academia, scholars from Mainland China are constrained in addressing subjects relating to subtitling and AVT in general. The limited research effort is mainly reflected by the lack of variety in research subjects rather than by the number of works. According to the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), 9,545 MA theses were devoted to subtitling between 2007 and 2014, and 600 of them focused specifically on translation. However, these works have rarely broadened the range of focus or applied relevant theories and findings developed elsewhere to the Chinese context. This is largely due to a lack of material and resources (i.e. financial, technical and theoretical support), as well as a lack of communication with international peers.

Most postgraduate research focuses on the translation of humour, which is, however, still an area requiring further empirical and systematic research. I observe that these works overlap conspicuously in terms of their theoretical basis with general work on translation; researchers in China mostly base their discussions on theories,
such as Skopos theory and dynamic/functional equivalence – which refer primarily to textual translation – rather than seeking out more recent theoretical work which relates directly to subtitling. The authors who based their discussion on Skopos theory (Li 2005; Huang 2007; Li 2008; Tang 2012, etc.) concluded that Chinese subtitles should serve the intent of the original and offer the Chinese audience the same experience as the SL audience in viewing the original. Those who drew insights from dynamic equivalence (Su 2007; Peng 2012; Xiang 2012, etc.) concluded that audiovisual translators consider the response of the audience as a priority, and are therefore motivated to strive to preserve or recreate the wit and other features of the original dialogue, rather than seeking to maintain equivalence in form and wording. They also suggested that translators should be prepared to sacrifice some characteristics of the SL dialogue in order to make the originally intended meaning accessible to the Chinese audience.

Outside the framework of dynamic equivalence and Skopos, Zhang Qiaoli (2011) based her analysis on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) developed by Raskin and Attardo (1991) and the six Knowledge Resources (KRs) identified by Attardo (2002), namely Language, Narrative Strategy, Target, Situation, Logical Mechanism and Script Opposition. She considered the KRs inadequate for analysing cultural and linguistic humour, despite their efficiency in explaining how humour is generated, and showed the paradox in which a translation respecting none of the KRs is deemed unfaithful, while at the same time it is almost impossible to preserve the KRs in a translation, particularly in a translation between English and Chinese.

In her PhD research, Dong (2007) focused on the translation of humour in five American sitcoms (Growing Pains, Seinfeld, Will and Grace, Friends and Everybody
Loves Raymond) which are widely watched in China through both official broadcasting channels, such as television, and unofficial channels, such as unsanctioned DVDs, online broadcasts and downloads. She observed that translators mostly explicate the humour in the original due to a strong audience-oriented consciousness in performing the role of intercultural mediator; this is out of consideration for the acceptability of translation and the audience’s responses to foreign cultures. However, when quoting the SL dialogue and its translation, Dong used a mixture of dubbed translation and subtitles. It is important to distinguish the two modes, as the differences add uncontrolled variables to her statistical analysis of the translator's application of translation strategies. The constraints encountered in the dubbing process differ from those encountered in the subtitling process. A translator has to evaluate a potential TL solution with criteria assigned to the mode he or she is commissioned to use.

Like many other researchers in Mainland China, Dong and Zhang left an operational methodology in subtitling humour lacking after a lengthy and systematic analysis of SL verbal information. This shortcoming is shared by the majority of postgraduate theses and secondary literature focusing on AVT in Mainland China, while empirical studies conducted in doctoral research are also lacking. Up to the present, Dong Haiya is the only person who has conducted doctoral research on subtitling in Mainland China, according to the records provided by the China Doctoral Dissertation Full-text Database (中国博士学位论文全文数据库) on cnki.net (中国知网).³

While there is more work to be done in the field of subtitling humour, the research done by Du Hongfei is among a very few that seeks to build a theoretical framework around subtitling for a specific film genre. Based on Gutt’s relevance-theoretical account of translation, Du Hongfei (2006: 51) proposed that subtitlers of war films should:

- be aware of the conventional meaning (i.e. literal meaning), short-circuited conversational meaning and conversational meaning of the SL dialogue before translation;
- translate the SL dialogue by bearing in mind the average reading speed of the audience (i.e. 3.38 characters per second);
- recognise that foreignisation is the ideal method of subtitling war films, though it is not always feasible because of differences between the SL and TL cultures and their relative military conventions; and
- recognise that domestication is a more pragmatic method of subtitling, serving the commercial interests of AVT as a product as well as providing Chinese viewers with entertainment and humanitarian education.

By considering foreignisation ideal, and domestication pragmatic, Du did not draw a clear line between foreignisation for accuracy, and hence authenticity, and domestication for the comprehensibility of the audience. It seems that subtitlers can switch randomly between the two strategies in the same translation for the sake of comprehensibility. Such randomness is also implied in studies done by prominent AVT researchers such as Ma Zhengqi, Qian Shaochang and Zhao Chunmei.

Ma Zhengqi (1997) stated that subtitles aim to cope with face-to-face communications between speakers on screen within a limited time. He suggests that translators should:
• make the translation simple and clear;
• be aware of how the TL audience might receive a translation;
• endow the language of subtitles with the unique style of a character so as to make the translation accurate and alive; and
• think and speak like the character they are translating, being aware of the corresponding emotions.

Unlike Ma, who emphasises accuracy but provides no comprehensive guidelines as to how to achieve it, Qian Shaochang (2005) proposed “rewriting” (i.e. recreation) as a more efficient solution than “translation”, particularly when seeking to preserve a punning effect in the TT. In my view, this technique of rewriting corresponds to the strategy of over-domestication, which is not limited to translation of puns and which in many cases leads to inaccurate translation.

In viewing these contrasting opinions, Zhao Chunmei (2004) identified four kinds of conflicts in subtitling, namely:

• the conflict between the length of a piece of SL dialogue and the length of a Chinese subtitle: the length of a subtitle does not fit the content, as different languages take different lengths of time to deliver the same meaning;
• the conflict between the order of TL elements and the corresponding action on screen: the sequence of the TL sentences delivered by subtitles does not concur with the relevant SL information due to differences in syntactic style between Chinese and the SL;
• the conflict between foreignisation and domestication: the foreignness of an original will survive without any alteration in any case, as subtitling leaves the SL information intact when that original reaches the TL audience;
• the conflict between transliteration and free translation (e.g. "sinolization") in translating personal names: in transliteration, the represented personal name will conflict with the Chinese way of naming a person; in free translation, substituting Chinese names will conflict with the foreignness represented by the character in the original, particularly where sinolisation is practised.

As for the first conflict, condensation of the SL information is necessary. The change of element order is often inevitable in a translation into Chinese, particularly when the SL is English; it is a kind of domestication which often enhances the TL flavour in subtitles. In dealing with the last two conflicts, translators should choose the translation that more closely reflects the original text (Zhao 2004). Hence, Zhao may have noticed the contrast between the strategy of domestication and the foreignness of the original but withdrew from seeking further solutions, implying that the inaccuracy of translation caused by this contrast should be considered inevitable in Chinese subtitling. As senior translators in the international department of the Chinese Central Television (CCTV) and leading scholars in the field, Ma, Qian and Zhao have a significant influence on those who participate in the production of Chinese subtitles.

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4 "Sinolization", or sinicisation, is the method of representing foreign names in a Chinese fashion. It is mainly used to "translate" the names of major sinologists such as 理雅阁 (i.e. James Legge) (1815-1897), who was the first professor of Chinese at Oxford University, and 卫利 (i.e. Arthur Waley) (1889-1966), who received the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for his abridged translation of the Chinese classic novel Monkey (i.e. A Journey to the West) and whose translation of Chinese poetry is still highly regarded by contemporary scholars such as John Minford (who is also known to Chinese academia as 闸福德).
3.3 A View on Self-Imposed Censorship

At present, substantial scholarly attention has not been given to the unsettling issue regarding how to maintain accuracy of Chinese subtitling, while the issue may be the most essential factor causing the inappropriate application of over-domestication in state-sponsored and unauthorised production of Chinese subtitles. In my view, scholars may have been reluctant to comment on the inaccuracy caused by over-domestication in authorised translation because of concern about the risk involved in questioning the outcome of state supervision in cultural and media productions. The risk is evident, as the government has recently prosecuted several academics who have been critical of the social and political policies. The cultural tradition under the Confucian code, “those who laugh at the sovereign deserve death”, still has a strong influence on intellectuals and literary freedom (Chang 1998: 257). At present, the notion of “the sovereign” has been extended to one’s parents, superiors, teachers and seniors (Hu 1987: 31-32).

Despite this, on the one hand, the government only takes action against those academics (or intellectuals) when their critical views draw substantial attention from the public and have the potential to threaten the leadership. On the other hand, the influence of the Confucian code above is being weakened by the rise of new media, and particularly by social networks and the fansubbing network. While an investigation of the relation between the government and academics (or intellectuals) is beyond the scope of this thesis, the recent censorship of the public lecture by Chai Jin, a former journalist of the CCTV, on air pollution in China, sheds light on the current situation.

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6 See The Anti-Pollution Documentary That's Taken China By Storm via http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2015/03/04/390689033/the-anti-pollution-documentary-thats-taken-
Due to the risk, most researchers also choose to not elaborate on reasons why they choose to use fansubs as their subject of assessment; the majority of authors who focus on Chinese subtitling use downloaded materials because these materials are otherwise unavailable in Mainland China. Dong is among the very few people who mention the obstacles posed by the censorship (Dong 2007: 106-107), albeit in a brief and euphemistic way. It may be argued that the reasoning behind their choice of subject is largely irrelevant to the primary focus of their research. However, considering that the majority of researchers in Mainland China avoid such topics, this example appears to be a perpetuation of the tendency towards self-imposed censorship. It hampers research efforts, while research into AVT outside China continues to progress, and new technologies are increasingly being developed for the practice of and research in AVT. These new technologies are opening new research paths and helping researchers and practitioners create new translation modes and therefore enhancing audiovisual accessibility. The next chapter will introduce three of these new trends: the applications of technology, fansubbing, and subtitling’s function in foreign-language teaching and learning.

Chapter 4. New Directions in Subtitling Research

Research into AVT has broadened significantly in recent years. New trends in research have been largely initiated by technological progress. The digital revolution has diversified the methods of circulation and distribution of audiovisual products globally, while developments in transnational cinema have allowed films made in minority languages to reach a wider audience. Conventional technological parameters are being dissolved and challenged by new ideas, formats and audiovisual media.

One new pathway in AVT research is the amateur practice of subtitling, known as fansubbing. This practice has evolved as technology has progressed, while many of the subtitling methods (e.g. subtitles in different colours and formats) pioneered by amateurs have led to similar innovations in the professional subtitling. Another new trend of research in AVT studies is how subtitling and subtitles are being used to teach foreign languages. Progress in multimedia technology has made it easier to use audiovisual materials as educational resources both during and outside foreign-language classes. For example, subtitles can be used as supporting material to develop students’ understanding of the language they are learning. Such an application can give students more autonomy in the process of learning.

In this chapter I address studies in each of the areas mentioned above, including the contribution made by Chinese scholars, thereby demonstrating Chinese researchers’ efforts to engage with international trends in AVT research, in spite of the obstacles and drawbacks described in Chapter 3.

4.1 Applications of Technology

AVT research addressing innovations in technology can be categorised in four ways. First, DVD and Blu-ray technology and the Internet give more autonomy to
viewers by enabling them to choose different language combinations of soundtracks and subtitles. On one hand, inventions such as the DVD and Blu-ray technology are breakthroughs which enhance research in AVT, and subtitling in particular (Ivarsson & Caroll 1998; Díaz-Cintas & Remael 2007). On the other hand, these technologies are not without problems. Some are practical – such as regional code restrictions of some soundtracks and subtitles differing between countries – and some are theoretical – such as how these new technologies affect the translation process (Kayahara 2005; O’Hagan 2007).

The second category of AVT research into new media technologies covers recent improvements in mobile technology, such as the iPhone and the iPad, which have further changed the audience’s viewing experiences. These “on-the-go” mobile devices, combined with the amateur practice of fan-subtitling, will bring more changes to the practice of AVT and to research methodologies in the years to come (Díaz-Cintas 2009: 10).

The third category of technological advances that have affected AVT research is eye-tracking technology, though most discussions about its application to AVT has occurred in the European context. For example, the applications of eye-tracking to subtitling were the topic of two of the workshops during the Languages and the Media conference (2012) in Berlin. One focused on the practical use of eye-tracking systems in AVT, while the other linked the application of eye-tracking technology to research into audience reception of AVT. This technology, and research into its application to AVT, is in its infancy.

The fourth category of technology applications in AVT research is that of creative subtitling, a subject that has been attracting more and more attention in recent years, as practitioners seek to enhance the aesthetic dimension of subtitled audiovisual
programs with various visual and animation effects. Although notable film-makers have experimented with creative means since the 1970s,\(^7\) creative subtitling did not become a subject of research until the English subtitles of the Russian fantasy film *Night Watch* reached audiences in North America. Foester (2010) used creative means of subtitling in this film to demonstrate the paradox represented by the principle of invisibility.\(^8\) *The Code of Good Subtitling* (Ivarsson & Carroll 1998: 157-159), among others, holds the principle of invisibility as a major criterion.

The “textual inserts” (Molerov 2012) of the BBC series *Sherlock* represent an outstanding example of using textual information to enhance aesthetic means and as a narrative device. In his MA thesis, Molerov investigated the production of the German version of the series by analysing an interview with the translator of the German script, as well as the series itself. Molerov considered the German version of the textual inserts as “substituting translation”, as the TL version reuses the position and graphic properties of the original message. An agreement was reached between the German distributor of *Sherlock* and the BBC to share the programming of the original inserts, which allowed the German inserts to replace the original English inserts while retaining the original graphics and positioning. This allows them to smoothly blend into the image in the same way as the original English inserts without interrupting the viewing experience. However, further research is needed to investigate issues regarding production methods and audience reception.\(^9\)

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\(^7\) For example, in his film *Annie Hall* (1977), Woody Allen used subtitles to demonstrate the characters’ psyches while they were having a superficial conversation.

\(^8\) It is explained in *Subtitling International UK* (1994: 3) that “subtitles should ideally blend in with the film in such a way that the viewer doesn’t notice them and they must never distract the viewer from the story”.

\(^9\) As for audience reception of creative subtitling, McClarty’s research, which has been discussed previously, is a notable example. Both McClarty and Molerov presented at *Languages and the Media* 2012 during the session “Creative Subtitling”, along with O’Sullivan. It was McClarty who focused on
The practice of creative subtitling in Mainland China was in fact pioneered by non-profit fansubbing groups. The leading fansubbing group YYeTs (人人影视) produced the Chinese-subtitled version of *Sherlock* by using the same creative techniques used in the original series shortly after its premiere in the UK in 2010. This Chinese-subtitled version has maintained great popularity among Chinese viewers and perhaps paved the way for the official online release of the third series of *Sherlock* in Mainland China in 2013. Despite this, creative subtitling attracts less attention due to controversy surrounding fansubbing. There has also been a continuing bias against fansubbing amongst academics and professionals due to questions over its translation accuracy. Another contributing factor to this lack of attention is the general neglect of subjects related to China in AVT research worldwide. Despite this, research focused on Chinese subtitling has mostly used fansubs as a resource. However, creative means of subtitling applied by fansubbing groups and film-makers in China are yet to be studied.\(^\text{10}\)

### 4.2 Fansubbing

In the Western context, studies of fansubs have mostly focused on fan circulation and translations of Japanese anime series, though the circulation of other Asian media materials and English-language originals are becoming more popular worldwide. Fansubbing requires further scholarly attention as currently many regard it as an amateur practice lacking professional competence (Bogucki 2009). In her study of the Italian fansubs of two American TV series — *Lost* and *Californication* —

\[\text{the audience's reception of creative subtitling, while Molerov and O'Sullivan focused on production methods.}\]

\(\text{10 This dissertation discusses creative subtitling in Chapter 10, from the perspective of its function and some examples regarding the practice.}\)
Massidda (2015) found that fansubs often achieve fidelity to the original. This fidelity sometimes creates a sense of humour in the TL, and hence bridges the cultural gap between Italy and the US. She predicted that fansubbing would reshape existing subtitling norms in the coming decades.

Research in the Chinese context has approached fansubbing from two different directions. The first focuses on the socio-cultural dimension, regarding which Nie Yonghua (2013) observed that the limited number of foreign sitcoms on Chinese TV is due to the challenge these foreign sitcoms represent in translation, official restrictions on foreign media products, and vulgar SL dialogue, which is considered unacceptable by the vast majority of Chinese viewer. The latter reason proposed by Nie is debatable, as the acceptability of vulgarity and explicit language (e.g. sexual references) varies among different Chinese audience groups. Young people, who form the majority of the audience of foreign audiovisual programmes (Wilson 2011: 242), often are accepting of these elements in the original dialogue and expect them to be preserved in translation. Older viewers and viewers from less developed areas of China, and in particular minority ethnic groups, are more conservative. However, these demographics do not view foreign audiovisual programs as often as younger viewers.

Ma Lihong (2013) explained the popularity of American TV series in China as an inevitable consequence of the rise of the Internet in China, which provides easy access to both official and pirated releases of American TV series. Ma analysed the internal and external factors that explain this. He considered the successful distribution of American TV series in Chinese society an example of cultural differences between America and China being overcome. However, he also stated that the Chinese audience must treat these American cultural products critically, so as to
prevent a cultural invasion. Nevertheless, the two authors mentioned above, among
others, do not identify the contribution of online piracy to AVT.

There has been growing interest in amateur translation in postgraduate studies
in Taiwan. Among the authors, Hu Yi-chen (2009) describes the non-profit activity
carried out by Chinese fansubbing groups illegally online. She emphasises the neo­
liberalism behind this fans based cultural phenomenon in Chinese society. Tian Yuan
(2011) also focused on fansub cyber culture in China in her Master’s thesis. She
observed the Chinese fansubbing phenomenon from an intercultural perspective and
acknowledged the contribution made by fans in connecting the Chinese audience
closer to a globalised world. Boyko (2012) compared and contrasted the operational
strategies of fansubbing groups in Russia and China, and concluded that fan-subtitling
should be considered as an important social phenomenon in the age of globalisation.

In research relating to translation, Julia Szu-Tu (2010) compared three fan-
subtitled versions of the popular American TV show Gossip Girl with the official
subtitles created for its DVD distribution in Taiwan. She investigated different
subtitling strategies used by the fansubbers and the official version in terms of
register, representing cultural information, and the use of contemporary colloquial
Chinese. Zhang Xin (2012) focused on the translation of the culturally related
elements in the English-language originals, mainly using translations of the American
sitcom The Big Bang Theory as his source. Guan Zhenbin (2013) focused on the
translation of verbal humour based on SL cultural references in the American sitcom
Friends. He identified three strategies used to translate the humour in the series –
explication, total omission and domestication – and explained how the Chinese
subtitlers translated the intent of the humour (i.e. Skopos). Liang Mingyan (2013)
investigated the translation of cultural references in the TV series House. Her
investigation is based on the subtitles created by a Chinese fansubbing team called “1000fr” (风软字幕组). She identified logic, clarity, fluency and artistic considerations as the main factors affecting the translation of cultural references.

Ding Lingling (2013) investigated Chinese fansubbing using examples selected from *The Big Bang Theory*. She recognised the creativity of fansubbing in maintaining the register of the original and acceptability of the meaning of the SL dialogue. She asserted that the official translations are “appropriate to the young and the old” (老少皆宜) but “makes one feel like one is chewing wax” (味同嚼蜡). However, Ding did not cite examples from any existing official translation to support this argument. The fansubbed version produced by YYeTs is the only translation of the series that has been used in the officially sanctioned online broadcasts on Sohu TV. Hei Yi (2013) explained fansubbing strategies in translating English-language sitcoms (e.g. explanatory notes, explication, substitution, omission and recreation), using examples selected from *The Big Bang Theory*. His view of fansubbing strategies is different from the previously discussed authors because he advocates these strategies – particularly substitution and re-creation, which grant a translator more freedom – and asserts that they should be used as guidelines in the Chinese translation of English sitcoms.

However, systematic study of fan-subtitling is still lacking in Mainland China. I identify two problems with the works produced so far. First, most authors, including those mentioned above, have used fansubs as data without carefully examining the translation strategies and standards used by fan-subtitlers. Secondly, those who sought to assess the quality of fansubs were rather hasty in their evaluations of the translations, without providing detailed analysis and explanations of their assessment criteria.
Further efforts are yet to be made in comparative studies of fansubs and official translations of the same original. This dissertation will carry out this task by using the fansubs produced by YYeTs, as well as other notable fansubbing groups. I will mainly use examples from the fansubs of *The Big Bang Theory*, *Two and a Half Men* and *The Walking Dead*. The official translations of the first two programmes will be used when relevant issues arise during the discussion. These programmes have been chosen due to their popularity in China. This is demonstrated by the high download rates, as listed on the YYeTs website.

### 4.3 Language Acquisition

Since scholars have become aware of the significance of AVT as a pedagogical tool only recently, they have also recently recognised the application of subtitling in foreign-language teaching and learning. Many have suggested using SL audiovisual materials with subtitles in either the SL or the TL to assist learning the SL in the TL cultures. Research into the pedagogical applications of subtitles covers, firstly, the use of bimodal subtitles (i.e. intra-lingual subtitles (SL) and audio in the same language), which helps students acquire second-language skills such as listening and speaking (Araujo 2008), and vocabulary building (Caimi 2006). Research has also explored the potential of standard subtitles (i.e. inter-lingual subtitles (TL) and the TL audio) to improve linguistic balance in non-equivalence bilingual situations (De Bot et al 1986), constantly motivate vocabulary learning (Pavakanun & d’Ydewalle 1992), and enhance listening and speaking skills, those of beginners in particular (Araujo 2008).

Thirdly, research has found that setting subtitling tasks for students by using subtitling programs benefits learners of foreign languages in terms of:
• lexical development and socio-cultural learning (Díaz-Cintas 1997; 2008);
• constant motivation and transferable skills (William & Thorne 2000); and
• learning skills in general (Hadzilacos et al 2004).

On the basis of these findings, Talavan (2010) combined the use of subtitling as a support and subtitling as a task into a pedagogical experiment used in an English class. The result was a testament to the function of the application of subtitling and subtitles to the task of enhancing oral comprehension skills. The results of her experiment were positive, as she found that assigning students the task of producing subtitles for an audiovisual programme improved oral comprehension skills. She also found that bimodal subtitles assisted students during their viewing of an English video programme, improving their comprehension of later similar viewings. Both applications (subtitling as a task and subtitling as a support) fostered students’ knowledge about audiovisual comprehension. The unification of the two applications encouraged autonomous learning and strengthened mediating function of subtitling in foreign language classes.

Research in China has mainly focused on the application of subtitling as a support. For example, Tan Weilu (2013) stated that foreign-language education benefited from the online dissemination of foreign audiovisual products provided by fan-subtitling groups. Students explained in a questionnaire survey that accessing subtitled foreign programmes online led them to be more motivated in the viewing process and have more autonomy in their learning process. Tan (2013) found that the assumption that watching American television series would improve their English language skills is widespread among students. Tan (2013) proposed the following
methods to encourage appropriate use of these TV series as supporting materials in language learning:

- choosing different types of subtitles (i.e. interlingual, intralingual and bilingual) in a viewing process;
- viewing the same material repeatedly so as to fully understand the dialogue; and
- practising pronunciation by imitating the characters on screen.

While agreeing with Tan, Xu Shuyi (2013) stated further that teachers should provide clearer guidelines to students about foreign-language audiovisual materials. She recommended the American sitcom *Hannah Montana* as supporting material in English classes at universities in China. She explained that each episode of this series is 20 minutes, which leaves sufficient time for teachers and students to discuss and reflect on their understanding and questions. The second reason for choosing this series is its “wholesome” content, meaning that the educational authorities are more likely to accept it as part of the English curriculum. In addition, the majority of the vocabulary in this series can be found in university textbooks of English in China, especially courses on oral work and listening. However, research is still at the preliminary stage, and agreement regarding the feasibility of using subtitles as support has not been reached between academics and authorities in Mainland China.

### 4.4 Implications for the Current Project

The study of AVT has been widely acknowledged as a fully developed discipline, within which subtitling attracts the most research attention. However, much of the progress in the area of subtitling research has been Euro-centric, being confined to major European languages such as English, French and Spanish. Research
relating to subtitling rarely addresses non-European subjects, and many non-European languages are neglected, Asian languages in particular.

Generally speaking, research into Chinese subtitling lacks scientific or systematic analysis; it focuses solely on the translator’s experience or on various translation strategies. Many studies are superficial rather than being extensive and thorough, addressing a rather limited range of issues, such as subtitling humour and cultural references, and often overlap in terms of theory and data. Chinese researchers need to provide constructive insights into the practice of AVT and thus invite scholarly attention to relevant subjects concerning Chinese AVT, subtitling in particular. We must resolve to face these challenges and address contemporary issues in AVT with an objective attitude and a holistic perspective, rather than confining ourselves to limited subjects and resources and avoiding matters deemed politically sensitive.

At present, the long-standing deficiency in research into Chinese subtitling has started to be eroded. Using the latest corpus-based approach in AVT research, Jun Tang (2014) compared different strategies used by Cantonese subtitlers and those working on Standard Mandarin in Mainland China and Taiwan, as well as two fansubbing groups, in translating culture-related information in the film Kung Fu Panda. Focusing on a corpus built with one version of translation, Chong Han and Kenny Wang (2014) analysed the translation of English swearwords in the Australian TV series The Family, on the basis of the Chinese subtitles produced by the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). In her PhD dissertation Chinese Subtitles of English-language Feature Films in Taiwan – a systematic investigation of Solution-types, Cheng Yu-jie (2013) from the Australian National University provided a statistical analysis of the translation strategies in Chinese subtitling in Taiwan by comparing
Chinese subtitles used in 35 English-language films. In the United Kingdom, Yang Fan from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London is conducting research into the norms of English-Chinese subtitling.\textsuperscript{11} In Austria, research into the localisation of video games in China by Zhang Xiaochun is close to completion;\textsuperscript{12} Zhang also presented her latest findings at the 10\textsuperscript{th} International Conference on Language Transfer in Audiovisual Media in 2014.\textsuperscript{13} My own work seems to further address the current shortcomings in research into Chinese subtitling and in the process justify the place of Chinese subtitling in the AVT research field. In doing this, I aim to identify factors which are unique to the practice of subtitling, and to further analyse the progress and shortcomings in the current practice. Following this, I will propose strategies apparent in that practice, particularly to enhance accuracy of translation in audiovisual media, as well as suggest new pathways of subtitling research.

\textsuperscript{11} Information concerning Ms Yang’s research first came to my attention during my search of bibliographic references of Chinese subtitling. To confirm the credibility of this information, I emailed Ms Yang in 2012, to which she kindly replied. An abstract of her dissertation can be found through the link below: https://www.soas.ac.uk/staff/staff59430.php (consulted on 10.03.2015).

\textsuperscript{12} I met Xiaochun Zhang at the 9\textsuperscript{th} Languages and Media conference in Berlin in 2012. We share the same research interest in translation by fans and have been collaborating since last year (2014) in writing on a series of topics.

\textsuperscript{13} A preview of Zhang’s presentation was published on the website of the conference under the title \textit{Game Localisation: the issue of translators’ authorship Are fan translations of games – usually ready and free within one or two days – damaging for professional translators?}, which is retrievable via: http://www.languages-media.com/press_interviews_2014_xiaochun.php (consulted on 10.03.2015).
Part 2. Theoretical Framework

Film translators successfully introduced foreign genres into China when dubbing was the only means of translation for the cinema by resorting to the strategy of domestication (Du, et al. 2013: 97-101). In subtitling, the so-called běn-tǔ-huà-fān-yì (本土化翻译, domesticated translation) in a series of Hollywood films were found acceptable by the audience in quite recent years. For example, the success of Garfield 2 (2006) in Mainland China was by and large due to the use of a series of slang expressions such as fēn-sī (粉丝, fans) and dīng (顶, to support). The audience responded to the domestic elements in cinema subtitles positively, recognising them as an imitation of fansubs, which had begun to thrive in China in the early 2000s (Xu Yali 2013). However, the favourable feedback led authorised translation towards an irrational preference for domesticated translation and eventually drew more negative responses from viewers than positive ones (Liu Ting 2013).

From this point on, the discussion approaches the domesticated translation in Chinese subtitling. To begin with, Part 2 will provide a theoretical framework by explaining how subtitles are traditionally produced to enhance audiovisual accessibility and how over-domesticated and inaccurate translation distorts the audiovisual medium, and consulting the theoretical thinking of translation developed throughout Chinese cultural history with possible methods to prevent inaccuracy. In justifying traditional Chinese translation theories and their applicability in the 21st century, Liu (2002:110) stated:

We see only the tip of an iceberg, since traditional Chinese translation theory is grounded on traditional theorizing about literary writing developed through the centuries. Even though Chinese translation theory puts a premium on intuitive experience rather than abstract reasoning, empathetic response rather than logical thinking, it nonetheless is based on a rich crop of critical literary theory, and should therefore not be slighted (in Chan 2004: 11-12).
I propose to address the key ideas propounded by Lu Xun, whose views on Chinese translation have drawn attention from Chinese translation scholars only in recent years, though justification of his theoretical thinking about translation was attempted elsewhere in the early 1990s.

To highlight the subjective position of subtitlers, Chapter 5 explores how the multimodal constitution of an audiovisual medium generates the meaning which subtitlers strive to deliver to the TL audience. The multimodality of the audiovisual medium will lead to the dilemma, which lies in the supplemental function of subtitles to an original and the TL audience’s need for translation to understand the meaning of that original, faced by subtitlers whose solutions for translation are subject to primarily the spatial and temporal constraints of the audiovisual medium.

Chapter 6 explores the inaccurate translation highlighting the contrast between the context represented by the Chinese subtitles and the foreign context depicted in the original. A series of films shown in cinemas across China in the past few years are chosen, including *Madagascar 3* (2012), *Men in Black 3* (2012), *Pacific Rim* (2013) and *Rio* (2011). The Chinese subtitles of these films include elements and references which are considered TL culture-specific, or jìe-di-qi (接地气, conforming to the local atmosphere), as used widely among media critiques and reviews from the Chinese audience. The subtitles distort the foreign contexts at many points, even though, according to Chan (2004), domestication, or more specifically speaking, zhōng-guó-huà (中国化, sinicisation), used to be preferable in the Chinese context to foreignisation. Whereas scholarly opinions are yet given to this matter, most critiques from the media in China refer to Yan Fu’s principles xìn (信, faithfulness),

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14 The term Sinicisation use by Chan (2004) refers to the same concept explained by others as “Sinolization” (Zhao 2002).
dá (达, intelligibility) and yā (雅, refinement). However, the applicability of these principles to Chinese subtitling is questionable, not to mention the absence of comprehensive definitions for the three terms.

I seek to apply theoretical thought to Chinese subtitling in light of the notion of ying-yi (硬译, Hard Translation) advocated by the Chinese writer and translator, Lu Xun. Chapter 7 introduces the key ideas of Lu Xun, who is regarded as the father of modern Chinese literature, and aims to justify his views “Hard Translation” by presenting the debates between him and his literary opponent Liang Shiqiu, who is one of the highest regarded Chinese translators of Shakespeare. In contrast with the recognition of his achievement in Chinese literature, Lu Xun’s theoretical thinking about translation into Chinese has been largely forgotten until recent years, but is worth some consideration in connection with matters of subtitling.
Chapter 5. Subtitling: Constraints and Meaning

Practitioners of subtitling often treat the mode as adaptation rather than translation (Delabastita 1989: 213-214), as the loss of information inherent in the process of subtitling is too obvious to be ignored. Those who understand the SL dialogue will find that they hear more than what they actually read on the screen (Minh-ha and Trinh 1992: 102). However, as Nida (in O’Shea 1996: 241) states, “all types of translation involve loss of information, addition of information or skewing of information.” Although the TL audience may have difficulty in understand an original without subtitles, many have emphasised that the audience of a subtitled audiovisual programme should not be aware that they are apprehending the meaning of the original through the translation given in the subtitles (Ivarsson & Carroll 1998; Díaz-Cintas & Remael 2007). This chapter will explain in 5.1 the norms of subtitling enforced by audiovisual constraints, the basis on which a subtitler evaluates potential solutions by adopting various translation strategies and techniques (which are explained in 5.2), and, in 5.3 and 5.4, the multimodal constitution of the audiovisual medium which generates the meaning of a particular original and extends the subject of translation beyond textual information. This is to demonstrate, in 5.5, the contrast between the task of subtitlers, who should capture as much of the original as possible and inform the TL audience about what is said and unsaid, and the subtitles produced by them, which are supposed to be concise and even reductive and hence supplemental to a particular original.

5.1 Norms Enforced by Audiovisual Constraints

Subtitlers cannot render an original in the way translators render a printed document because, in audiovisual materials, verbal and non-verbal information
convey the meaning collaboratively. The SL content is often manipulated by subtitlers in order to cope with the migration of the original information from oral languages to written texts (Díaz-Cintas 2012: 284). This section explains the spatial and temporal constraints that enforce a set of norms of subtitling, and the technical solutions applied in Chinese subtitling.

5.1.1 Spatial and Temporal Constraints
A subtitler faces the following constraints in an audiovisual medium:

- the spatial and temporal constraints of the original material;
- the cross-semiotic characteristics of subtitling;
- the SL soundtrack and visual elements in an original.

Subtitling shares some features with the translation of poetry in the sense of constraints. Gottlieb (1998) proposes the “textual or qualitative constraint” in which the visual and vocal elements of an original determine the position and duration of subtitles. In addition, subtitles should remain as unobtrusive as possible because of the “formal or quantitative constraint” (Gottlieb 1998). Subtitlers must choose the format for their subtitles carefully, bearing in mind that the space on the screen may be sufficient for one format but insufficient for another.

In the cinema, a film plays at an unchanging speed. Subtitles appear the moment a character begins to talk, and disappear immediately after the SL speech is finished. Consequently, the audience is constantly engaged in the dual observation of both the subtitles and the images on the reel (Nornes 2007: 162) and thus cannot stop at any point as readers of books do, though viewers using home-video and portable playing devices can pause or play back at any time. Subtitlers are not obliged to consider these factors, as task is to adapt subtitles into the audiovisual medium rather than manipulating the pace for the reception of the translation.
The spatial and temporal constraints are obvious also in the subtitler's need of sample videos and transcripts of original dialogue to evaluate potential solutions for translation. Díaz-Cintas holds that good source material (i.e. a dialogue list) is essential to subtitling, but a subtitler should use it with "a critical eye and a pinch of salt" (Diaz Cintas 2001: 208). As for the standard of the "good dialogue list", Díaz-Cintas (2001: 200) states that:

Such a list is usually supplied by the film distributor or producer and in its ideal format it offers, besides all the dialogue, metatextual information on the implicit socio-cultural connotations, explains punning, word play and possible double entendre, [it] explains the meaning of colloquialisms and dialectalisms, elucidates the origin and the usage in context or certain terms that may be obscure at first sight, gives the correct spelling of all proper names, advises on the convenience of using a particular font type for some words in the subtitled version, clarifies implicit as well as explicit allusions to geographical realities, etc..

Such a dialogue list compresses the original verbal information into SL subtitles, which a subtitler can use to analyse and translate each sentence or each scene frame by frame, or in accordance with several related frames (Díaz-Cintas 2001: 200-203). However, to prevent piracy, film companies rarely permit previews of a film. Some film companies may provide a subtitler with only those parts which need to be subtitled (Díaz-Cintas 2007). In this case, the subtitler will receive a dialogue list in the format given below, in addition to an excerpt from the film. The SL dialogue and other information are segmented into individual lines marked with serial numbers, reminding the subtitler of the time limits.

69
00:03:29,442 --> 00:03:31,000
What time does our train arrive?

15 The lines presented as an example are from Pulp Fiction (1994), the transcript of English dialogue is retrievable via: http://subhd.com/a/195603 (last consulted on 09.04.2015).
The document will also set the number of lines of the subtitles, unless the subtitler considers further segmentation of the translation necessary. A subtitler will receive a full description of an original, if the audiovisual copy is unavailable. The document usually contains a detailed description of the film’s title, scenes, shots, spoken dialogue, and the marks of the footage of each scene. It may also include other written information in the original, such as written notes and the headline of a newspaper (Shu 2009).

Nowadays, subtitling programmes are multifunctional, which enables subtitlers to carry out multiple tasks, assisting them to comply with the audiovisual constraints more efficiently. A subtitling program can show the length of a video in hours, minutes, seconds and microseconds (one thousand microseconds equals one second). Hence subtitlers can mark precisely the “in” and “out” points of SL speech (Schwarz 2003) and translate at the same time. The programme will attach the translation to the video automatically after the input is completed. Therefore, the subtitler will know the suitability of the TT to the original and consider other solutions if the translation breaches spatial constraints.

5.1.2 Norms of Subtitling

A subtitler needs to comply with certain standards of practice in order to guarantee the quality of subtitles. These include:

- rules concerning relevance and omission in subtitling, according to which a subtitler makes decisions on what to translate;
• the Minimax Principle proposed by Levy (1967), promising maximum effect for minimal effort;
• the rules of coherence in subtitling, which determine how the translation of SL speech will be divided into individual lines while functioning as a comprehensible entity;
• the rules of presentation, which determine the format of subtitles.

After putting a subtitled film into a cinema in Hollywood for the first time, Herman Weinberg went into the theatre during the showing time, wondering if the audience "were going to drop their heads slightly to read the titles at the bottom of the screen and then raise them again after they read the titles" (Weinberg 1985: 108). However, the audience "merely dropped their eyes" (Weinberg 1985: 108). The result "emboldened" Weinberg "to insert more titles up to 100 to 150 titles a reel" and hence to translate more and more of the original dialogue (Weinberg 1985: 108). Despite this, he emphasised that a line of subtitle must be inserted "only when the dialogue was good enough to warrant it" (Weinberg 1985: 108).

Subtitlers have to decide whether to retain or omit certain portions of the information in the original according to their relevance. They tend to exclude the following SL information from subtitles:

• repeated information;
• fillers such as "you know" or "you see";
• redundant expressions;
• subjects and pronouns;
• brief interjections.

Hence, "reduced subtitling" (i.e. expressing only that which is necessary) receives greater appreciation from the audience than more elaborated ones (i.e. expressing as
much as the original) (Taylor 2003: 204), though it sometimes neutralises the meaning and purpose of a speaker due to the conciseness it aims to achieve. Through condensation, the subtitler fits the translation into the constraints of the audiovisual medium in the least obtrusive manner. To cope with the pace of a speaker, omission trims the original further. For example, in a scene where two speakers are quarrelling, the subtitles have to be as concise as possible in order to follow the rapid exchanges. However, the subtitler can misconceive repetitive elements of the original as redundant when condensing the information in that original. Such a misperception leads to serious omissions and compromise the TL audience’s understanding of the original.

Kovacic (1996: 302) believes that the choice lies between the ideational and interpersonal aspects. Subtitlers often concentrate on the ideational aspect and resort to the Relevance Theory advanced by Sperber and Wilson (1986), who consider, “People do not speak unless they assume that what they have to say will have some effect on (will be relevant to) their audience (...) Conversely, audiences assume that what is said to them will be relevant in some way or another” (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 49). As condensation and ellipsis optimise relevance, subtitles convey the maximum amount of information by using the minimum number of words. When the space is limited, expansion, explication, vocatives, appellatives, proper names, circumstances and modifiers are the first to be left out (Kovačič 1994). The relevance of the communicator’s message is a prerequisite for the addressee’s understanding. However, omission cannot be reduced to a matter of linguistic differences between the SL and TL (Kovačič 1994). It is the balance between the effort required by the audience to process an item and its relevance to the narration that determines whether it is to be included in translation (Díaz-Cintas & Remael 2007: 148).
In addition, when SL dialogue is filled with cumbersome descriptors, subtitlers are careful to avoid unnecessary adverbs in order to give the subtitles strength. At the same time, the translation must fit the screen, or nothing will work. When space allows, the subtitler can use sentences of reasonable length to maintain the nuances of the dialogue. Omission imposed by audiovisual constraints is usually acceptable, as long as synchronisation is not affected. There may also be changes and omissions beyond the control of subtitlers, for example, where accents and other para-linguistic elements are almost impossible to show in subtitles. Other manipulations may occur for ideological reasons (Diaz Cintas 2012: 284-285).

A coherent subtitle is one which can be easily read and understood, and which is connected to other subtitles and compatible with the screen. Ideally, each line is a well-structured and meaningful sentence which forms a linguistic visual entity with the others. Segmentation should be carefully handled on the syntactic level. SL dialogue is segmented depending on the natural breaks taken by the speakers. Sometimes, subtitlers have to divide TL sentences to fit each exposure to the reading speed of the audience, while deciding at which point a sentence can be divided and which words must be grouped together, in order to guarantee cohesion of meaning in translation and prevent subtitles from further intruding into the visual.

5.1.3 Applications in Chinese subtitling

Traditionally, Chinese subtitles are centred at the bottom of the screen. They are presented in white when the film is shown in cinemas or on television. In presenting numbers, Arabic numerals are used instead of Chinese characters. Subtitlers often adjust the timing in order to fill the gap between the starting point of SL speech and the point at which the audience hears the sound. Normally, each subtitle should remain on the screen for three to six seconds. But if the subtitle contains only one
word, the duration should not be shorter than one second. Based on my count, the number of characters per line is fifteen or less, and a subtitle is mostly presented in a single line in each frame of exposure. However, two-line subtitles are used when:

- a sentence exceeding the maximum number of characters in one line cannot be further condensed or segmented;
- two speeches are closely related;
- the conversation moves quickly.

To minimise disturbance, it is generally recommended that a two-liner be displayed in a shorter first line and a full second line, though Chinese subtitles are sometimes presented in the opposite way. Two-liners should not be presented in quick succession. They are inapplicable when the speaker speaks slowly, particularly when there is some important information to be revealed. In this situation, the subtitles must deliver the SL message bit by bit until the point of final revelation. Chinese subtitles show incomplete sentences only when it is necessary to follow the pace and breaks of the speakers. Subtitlers always seek the most comprehensive expressions in order to present a complete sentence at each exposure. Each subtitle should maintain coherence with the visual and vocal elements of an original. This helps the TL audience to understand the dialogue.

Some have proposed the vertical display of Chinese subtitles on either side of the screen. The vertical layout prevents the subtitles from consuming the central part of the screen. Thus, they intrude less into the moving image, especially when there is a close-up of an actor's face. In a close-up, part of the visual inevitably overlaps with horizontal subtitles. In addition, vertical subtitles can shift position on the two sides of the screen. Hence, vertical subtitles match the position of the speaker and are less intrusive to visual (Shu 2009). However, the vertical display of Chinese characters
creates its own problems. As the vertical subtitles are positioned at either side of the screen, the viewers have to move their eyes between the two sides in order to read the translation, so it is difficult for them to focus on the central part of the screen. Even if such a distraction were trivial, reading these vertical lines of Chinese characters would be distracting to the modern Chinese viewers.

In the early twentieth century, written Chinese convention underwent innovation, and the layout of Chinese characters changed from the previous vertical format to horizontal display. Chinese may still be printed or written in vertical format in newspapers, classical texts, and calligraphy and so on, but at present, it is presented horizontally in most situations. Nowadays it would be difficult for Chinese people to read vertical text at normal speed. Horizontal layout is the better way of presenting subtitles because it conforms to the reading habits of the modern audience.

For both brevity and aesthetic purposes, Chinese subtitling is sparing in its punctuation. By convention, periods are not used. Quotation marks are used in a few cases, such as lyrics, letters and words from foreign language. A comma is used when there are two sentences in one exposure, but it can be replaced by a blank space between the two sentences. Ellipses are inserted into a sentence to signify a false start, pause, slip of the tongue, or interruption. Short dashes are used to show that sections of dialogue are spoken by different characters. They are also usually attached to adjacent pairs, such as question/answer, greeting/greeting, reprimand/apology, command/acceptance.

Linguistic factors are essential to the quality of subtitling. Condensation refers not only to the choice of relevant information to be delivered but also to the omission of the grammatical characteristics of the SL. Chinese subtitles do not strictly follow the word or sentence order of the SL speech, particularly those of English. A line of a
Chinese subtitle usually shows the meaning of an SL sentence while the speaker on the screen is delivering another. This is to guarantee the fluency and logic of translation, particularly in dealing with more than two interrelated chunks or inverted sentences of the original; a Chinese translation may seem awkward to the audience if the subtitler preserves the English textual sequence. While the spatial and temporal constraints confine the subtitler’s choice of solutions, the factor most essential to the outcome of subtitling is the quality of translation, for which a series of strategies and techniques are used to enhance linguistic and cultural mediation.

5.2 Translation Strategies and Techniques in Subtitling

The categories used for the analysis of translation, namely text, context and decision-making process, assist one in the understanding of the method used by the subtitler in a particular subtitling project and the appreciation of the solutions employed for problems arising in the translation process. Molina and Albir (2002) introduced the notion of translation technique as a means of looking into the SL textual micro-units and their translations, distinguishing translation technique from translation strategy, which is associated with the final outcome of the completed TT.

Subtitlers often resort to three translation strategies to enhance linguistic and cultural accessibility for the audience; these are foreignisation, neutralisation and naturalisation (which is also known as domestication) (Fong 2009b: 101). Subtitles created through foreignisation acculturate the audience and lead them further into the exotic world of the original. In domestication, foreign elements are domesticated and replaced by indigenous equivalents, or what is, in the subtitler’s opinion, easier for the audience to understand, as shown below in the three versions of Chinese subtitles of *Inglorious Basterds* (2009).
Example 1: *The Inglorious Basterds* (2009)\(^6\)

**Foreignisation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Simplified Chinese Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-by-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before the occupation, there were four Jewish families in this area</td>
<td>法国被占领之前 这地区有四家犹太人</td>
<td>France-passive voice-occupy-before/this-area-have-four-family-Jew(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All dairy farmers like yourself</td>
<td>全都跟你一样是奶农</td>
<td>All-all-with-you-the same-are-dairy farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doleracs, Rollins, the Loveitts</td>
<td>德勒列克、罗伦昂、拉维特</td>
<td>Doleracs-Rollins-Loveitts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and the Dreyfuses</td>
<td>以及德瑞芙斯</td>
<td>And-Dreyfuses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Domestication:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Simplified Chinese Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-by-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before the occupation, there were four Jewish families in this area</td>
<td>我军进驻之前 本区有四户犹太人家</td>
<td>I-military-enter-settle-of-before/here-area-have-four-residence-Jew(s)-family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All dairy farmers like yourself</td>
<td>都是你那样的乳牛农民</td>
<td>All-are-you-that-way-of-cow-farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doleracs, Rollins, the Loveitts</td>
<td>分别姓狄、姓卢、姓陆</td>
<td>Separately-individually-surnamed-Di-surnamed-Lu-surnamed-Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and the Dreyfuses</td>
<td>姓戴</td>
<td>Surnamed-Dai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Foreignisation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YTET</th>
<th>Character-by-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before the occupation, there were four Jewish families in this area</td>
<td>在占领前 這兒有四戶猶太人</td>
<td>At-occupation-before/here-have-four-residence-Jew(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All dairy farmers like yourself</td>
<td>和你一樣 都是奶農</td>
<td>With-you-the same-all-are-dairy farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doleracs, Rollins, the Loveitts</td>
<td>Dolerac 家 Rollin 家 Loveitt 家</td>
<td>Dolerac-family-Rollin-family-Loveitt-family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...and the Dreyfuses</td>
<td>還有 Dreyfus 家</td>
<td>And-Dreyfus-family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In foreignisation, the Chinese translation of personal names are phonetically identical with their SL counterparts and hence retains the foreignness, while, in fansubs, foreign names are preserved in their original forms. Phonetic imitation has been used in the translation for television and cinema audiences since the beginning of the practice of AVT in Mainland China, particularly in dubbing, in which dubbing

\(^6\) The transcripts of English and Chinese subtitles quoted in this example are retrievable via: http://subhd.com/a/150276 (last consulted on 09.04.2015).
actors use a foreign accent when pronouncing the Chinese translation of foreign personal names. Although the phonetic imitation in dubbing makes the audience aware of the foreignness in foreign personal names, it once gave the audience in Mainland China the false impression that the dubbing voice offered the correct pronunciation of those names (Szu-Tu 2010: 29).

As for domestication, some have attempted to render foreign names in a domestic fashion (Chen 2009: 122); this is associated with "ease of perception". The strategy lets the audience perceive the names without acquiring the SL phonetic system (Windle 2010: 163). Phonetic imitation (or transliteration), on the other hand, creates obstacles in reading, in Chinese subtitles, while English words are explicit and straightforward in delivering the information. However, direct borrowing may cause difficulties for those who have not acquired the SL or for those who have a limited knowledge of it. In comparison, adaptation induces TL solutions that occupy the least space on the screen. It is also the easiest way for a Chinese viewer to recognise and remember the names of characters. However, adaptation may lead to over-domestication which contrasts the subtitles with the context of the original.

Neutralisation erases any vestige of an identifiable cultural community. It aims to explain the culturally rooted elements in the ST rather than replacing them with TL characteristics and without distorting the original context (Pardal 1989: 64). Neutralisation is less intrusive than foreignisation and domestication, aiming to reduce the cultural specificities of the ST and TT; subtitlers mostly resort to neutralisation when the original information contains no special features associated strictly with the SL and its culture (i.e. universal meaning and concepts). In

17 This is one of the BBC's principles in presenting personal names. The other principle is "ease of production" which emphasises that the name should be easy to read by the TV presenter without any phonetic training.
comparison, domestication is often used to retain specific SL styles depicted in an original (e.g. swearing and humour) (Fong 2009a: 58-59).

Subtitlers adopt different translation techniques to realise their chosen strategy. Molina and Albir (2002: 509-511) propose the following translation techniques which may also be applicable to subtitling:

- adaptation, which replaces cultural elements and literary genres in the original with those from the TL culture;
- amplification, which provides details that are not explicit in the original;
- borrowing, which uses an SL word or expression in the TT; the preservation of foreign names in their SL forms is part of this technique;
- calque, which is a literal translation of a foreign word or phrase; such literal translation can be either lexical or structural. The phonetic imitation of English personal names uses calquing for lexical coinage in the TL context. Calques and borrowing are associated with foreignisation, by applying which translators leave some SL elements, such as institutions, personal relations, social customs, and linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the SL, the same in the TL context;
- compensation, which shows a stylistic use of TL in a place where no corresponding SL stylistic use is intended; the reason for choosing this technique is to compensate for the omission of the same use of style somewhere else in the translation;
- description, which provides a description of an SL term or expression rather than coining a TL term or expression with the same meaning and usage;
discursive creation, which coins TL expressions for relevant SL elements in the context of a single original only; such TL usage may appear meaningless or inappropriate outside this particular context;

established equivalent, which is acknowledged as equivalent to a specific SL word or expression by the TL convention. Such equivalence is not always based on a word-to-word correspondence;

generalisation, by applying which the subtitler uses a more general or neutral term for one or more SL words or concepts overlapping in their meanings;

particularisation, the opposite of generalisation. Generalisation and particularisation are associated with domestication. By choosing one of these and complying with the TL vocabulary, a translator generalises or particularises a certain SL concept or meaning, or SL cultural item; the chosen TL word or expression might be the only available solution for its counterpart in the original;

linguistic amplification, which adds linguistic elements which are absent in the ST in order to follow the TL convention;

linguistic compression, which is the opposite of linguistic amplification, synthesising SL linguistic elements, such as connectives and infinitive markers;

literal translation, which corresponds to Nida's formal equivalence which emphasises equivalence from function and meaning.

modulation, which changes the focus or cognitive category represented by the SL information so as to comply with the TL context;

reduction, which suppresses SL information for the sake of conciseness;
• substitution, which replaces paralinguistic elements with linguistic ones or vice versa;

• transposition, which changes a SL grammatical category in the TT so as to comply with the TL context;

• variation, which changes SL linguistic or paralinguistic elements for the sake of the TL; this technique affects the tones of voice, styles, dialects and geographical characteristics represented in the original. Changes brought by modulation, substitution, transposition and variation also conform to domestication.

A translation technique applied in a particular context represents the subtitler’s decision to choose a TL solution to realise a translation strategy, and stands as evidence of “procedures to analyse and classify how translation equivalence works” (Molina & Albir 2002: 509). Hence, a translation can be analysed contextually in terms of the translation techniques used. In light of subtitling, the notion of context should be further explicated by understanding the multimodal system of an audiovisual medium.

5.3 Multimodality of an Audiovisual Medium

Delabastita (1989) observed that viewers of audiovisual programmes deal simultaneously with four different types of signs which contribute to the meaning of a particular original:

• verbal acoustic signs (e.g. dialogue);

• non-verbal acoustic signs (e.g. music and sound effects);

• verbal visual signs (written information on screen, including subtitles);

• non-verbal visual signs (i.e. other visual elements).
Verbal information in audiovisual programmes collaborates with non-verbal information in various ways. The meaning of an original emerges from combinations of various signifying channels, each of which exerts a different degree of influence on the realisation of meaning. An audiovisual programme represents the intentions and meanings conveyed, and thereby the effects produced, by the multiple channels in the audiovisual medium. Some parts of the original message will be transmitted more efficiently by the visual mode or image, others by the verbal mode or words, but there is no defined division on this issue (Remael 2001: 17). For example, the humorous effects in the American sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* are conveyed through a combination of the visual and the vocal; the characters in this series often speak in ways which defy common sense and hence generate verbal and non-verbal information through different semiotic modes in the original.

Moreover, there are situations where more information is loaded onto one specific channel than onto the others. The narrative function of an audiovisual programme relies more upon the verbal sign than upon nonverbal forms of expression or vice versa. For example, *Yes, Minister* was initially broadcast on radio but later adapted for television because of its success. There is a book version of this series, which isolates the linguistic content of the series from its audiovisual context but still maintains its humour. In addition, *Knaller Frauen* is a German TV comedy that creates humour mostly through the visual. The main character, Frauen, asks her father if he has any difficulty in using the iPad she bought for him. In response, her father demonstrates his confident in handling the new technology by using the iPad as a chopping board.

A film operates in auditory and visual channels in order to convey information, while subtitles are deemed to deliver only the meaning of verbal information. This is
mainly the SL dialogue which cannot be deprived of its colloquialisms for the norms of written discourse. Delabastita (1989) considered that the subject of translation is not limited to linguistic components, due to the semiotic complexity of audiovisual media, but involves the whole audiovisual medium. Therefore, the mode of textual translation, which represents the transfer of verbal information from one language to another, is expanded to “multi-modes” (Taylor 2003).

5.4 Multimodality of Subtitling

Although AVT is regarded as “constrained translation” (Mayoral 1988), the concept of constrained translation has a rather negative effect on the definition of AVT, since the term “constrained” deals exclusively with words, whereas AVT involves other semiotic modes that theorists of literary translation are initially reluctant to recognise. Chuang (2009) discusses the concept of multimodality, which gives shape to the text of a film and its subtitled version. Chaume (2004) believes that subtitlers should know the function of each of the modes involved in an original, and the possible incidence of all signs which influence the outcome of translation. A TT emerges from various source texts of varying influence. An audiovisual programme involves a number of source materials which may belong to different text-types. These source materials work both individually and collaboratively to generate meaning. All of them determine the production and reception of the final TT, including subtitled films.

Subtitlers transform a synthesis of modes – involved in conveying the meaning of an audiovisual programme in the SL context – into another synthesis of modes – those based on the original modes delivering meaning to the SL audience. This new synthesis of modes (a subtitled film) primarily targets audiences from a language
community who have no knowledge of the language(s) in which an original is produced. Equivalence exists in subtitling – unlike the one-to-one modal translation – between all modes involved in the ST (the original film) and all the modes involved in the TT (the subtitled film).

In subtitling, text, verbal, non-verbal, audio and visual elements are treated with the same degree of importance. It is difficult to clarify:

- which of the elements is produced prior to the inclusion of the others;
- what kind of relationship is established between the production stages; and
- how they are collected and merged into a particular audiovisual medium.

As for the audience, they deconstruct the semiotic structure in order to understand the meaning of a text and observe the mixture of information from the different sign channels in the original. Although the SL meaning may not be comprehensible to them, they still have access to the other modes and signs which contain crucial information as to the meaning.

Various ST modes are imposed on the translation process and lead it to the TT and all its modes. Yet this matter is less distinct in subtitling, since the TT is “almost” the same film with subtitles inserted. The use of “almost” is meant to highlight the changes made to the original in the appraisal procedure and by the subtitler’s interpretation of the ST (Remael 2001: 17). The audience’s awareness of these changes depends on its level of proficiency in the SL. However, if the audience at large is unaware of them, this indicates a successful translation. This also applies to the situation in which the TL audiences have acquired the SL to a certain level of proficiency. Then there arises the question of the way in which subtitlers strive to help the TL audience understand an original while keeping the “intrusion” of subtitles to a minimum.
A subtitler has the choice to not render certain parts of the SL dialogue in the subtitles, and the right to decide where to distribute the meaning of the ST in the TT (Chuang 2007: 372-383). In Example 1, Joey does not realise that he has dated a man, even after Ross alerts him. The translation is as simple and implicit as the original, letting the visual and other modes provide the rest of the information. Yet the subtitles of “You or me?”, nǐ-hái-shi-wō (你还是我, you-or-is-me; you or me), is odd and unable to lead the audience to the interpersonal meaning of the SL speech. I suggest nǐ-shuō-hái-shi-wō-shuō (你说还是我说, you-speak-or-is-I-speak; it’s you or me to speak) as the TL solution, as it conforms to the context of the scene and reflects the intended meaning of the speaker.

Example 2: *Friends*: Season 2 Episode 3 (1995)\(^{18}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joey: When I first moved here, I went out with this girl</td>
<td>我刚搬到这里时 与一个女孩交往</td>
<td>I-have just-move-to-here-inside-with-one-unit-of quantity-girl-cross-towards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really hot, great kisser...</td>
<td>非常热情，很会接吻...</td>
<td>Not-usual-hot-emotion-very-can-connect-kiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...but she had the biggest Adam's apple</td>
<td>但是她的喉结非常大粒</td>
<td>But-is-she-of-throat-knot-not-usual-big-particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drove me nuts</td>
<td>真让我受不了</td>
<td>Real-make-I-feel-not-end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler: (To Ross) You or me?</td>
<td>你还是我?</td>
<td>You-or-is-me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The visual may provide more precise and more explicit clues to the subtitler (and hence to the audience) than the verbal information does. Thus the nuances of the visual, such as a close-up, a camera angle or a succession of shots and scene changes, require equal attention from the subtitler. These details in the visual correspond to the progress of the narrative, and to the mood of a speaker, but ultimately to the coherence of the original (de Linde & Kay 1999: 32). Hence, analytical skills are required.

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\(^{18}\) The subtitles are retrievable via: http://subhd.com/a/296654 (last consulted on 07.04.2015).
important to subtitlers, who need to take note of the subtle linguistic and other signals within an audiovisual programme in order to maintain the character of the speech. In terms of totality, a subtitler takes account of different modes of an original and in many cases redistributes them so as to replicate it in translation. Subtitles are further immersed into the visual and aural effects, which in turn compensate for the omission in translation. Then the subtitled version of an original programme stimulates the same reaction in the TL audience as that elicited by the original from the SL audience, as shown in the dialogue below selected from *Basic Instinct*.

Example 3: *Basic Instinct* (1992)\(^{19}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Subtitles in the Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tarker: Why have you waived your right to an attorney, Miss Tramell?</td>
<td>你为何放弃请律师的权利?</td>
<td>You-for-what-put-abandon-hire-law-professional personnel-of-right-benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tramell: (To Curran) Why did you think I wouldn't want one?</td>
<td>你们为何认为我有需要?</td>
<td>You-plural marker-for-what-recognise-consider-I-have-need-want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curran: I told them you wouldn’t want to hide.</td>
<td>我说过你不想隐瞒</td>
<td>I-speak-past tense marker-you-no-want-hide-cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tramell: I have nothing to hide.</td>
<td>我没什么好隐瞒的</td>
<td>I-do not have-what-need-to-hide-cover-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td>You-from-never-positive voice-he-tie-up-come-past tense marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curran: You never tied him up?</td>
<td>你从未把他绑起来过?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tramell: No</td>
<td>没有</td>
<td>No-have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny liked to use his hands too much</td>
<td>强尼喜欢利用双手</td>
<td>Qiang-ni-like-favour-benefit-use-couple-hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like hands and fingers.</td>
<td>我喜欢手掌和手指</td>
<td>I-like-favour-hand-palm(s)-hand-finger(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td>You-kill-past tense marker-bazi-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krailey: Did you kill Mr. Boz, Miss Tramell?</td>
<td>你杀了巴兹吗?</td>
<td>I-no-have-stupid-to-use-myself-self-book-inside-of-method(s)-rule(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tramell: I'd have to be pretty stupid to write a book about killing...</td>
<td>我没有笨到用我自己书中的方法...</td>
<td>To-kill-one-unit of quantity-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... and then kill somebody the way I described it in my book</td>
<td>...去杀一个人...</td>
<td>Afterwards-claim-spread-self-self-is-evil-skilful personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'd be announcing myself as the killer</td>
<td>...再宣布自己是凶手</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm not stupid</td>
<td>我没那么笨</td>
<td>I-no-that-much-stupid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{19}\) The subtitles are retrievable via: http://subhd.com/a/149170 (last consulted on 12.04.2015).
Tramell’s action and speech are associated with her equanimity and expertise in turning an initially hostile situation to her advantage. The TL words are carefully chosen to conform to the pace and tension of the scene, assisting the audience to understand how the verbal information is connected with the non-verbal information (e.g. a character’s facial expression and gesture), and how this connection assists the portrayal of the characters and their relations with each other.

The translation also provides the details mentioned by Tramell with the same explicitness; this leads the TL audience to Trammel’s statement, “I have nothing to hide”, as intended in the SL dialogue. For example, the sentence “I like hands and fingers” is translated as wō-xǐ-huǎn-shǒu-zhāng-hē-shǒu-zhǐ (我喜欢手掌和手指, I-like-favour-hand-palm-hand-finger; I like palm(s) and finger(s)). Her frankness silences her opponents and forces them to drop the subject. A notable detail in this scene is that the attorney attempts to break down Tramell’s defences by leaning forward and asking her directly if she killed Mr. Boz. However, Tramell responds to his question with simple, convincing statements while mimicking the attorney’s gesture. The subtitle of Krailey’s line is nǐ-shā-le-bā-zǐ-ma (你杀了巴兹吗, you-kill-tense marker (past)-Boz-modal word (questioning); did you kill Boz?), which replicates the essence of the SL content but neutralises the speaker’s compelling manner; the subtitles of Tramell’s response deliver the SL content precisely. A truer translation of Krailey’s line and its delivery would be: nǐ-shā-dào-dǐ-shā-méi-shā-bā-zǐ-xiānshēng (你到底杀没杀巴兹先生, you-to-bottom-kill-not-kill-Boz-Mister; did you really kill (or) not kill Mr. Boz?). This translation omits the social etiquette in addressing Tramell as “Miss Tramell” for brevity and uses dào-dǐ (到底, to-bottom; really) to indicate the mood of the speaker in the TL manner. Without the word dào-dǐ
The functions of each mode can be reduced or increased without changing their representation in the TT. For example, brevity and readability of translation may change the interpersonal dynamics in an original, but such interpersonal dynamics are retrievable through the characters’ facial expressions and movements. When the other modes operate, it is unnecessary to make the subtitles explicitly convey in every aspect of the original verbal information. By understanding how the modes in an original operates in each frame, shot or phase, subtitlers can decide how subtitles are to be formulated to comply with their operation. They need to interpret correctly how the original information is delivered through different channels in an audiovisual programme and hence to ensure the subtitles correspond to the changing relations between the different modes and to the intrinsic changes occurring within each of these modes.

Subtitlers answer to the expectation of the audience, when implanting a TL text into the multi-modal system of an audiovisual medium, in which the distribution and integration of meaning show how the modes in a subtitled original function as an entity. Hence, subtitlers should also determine to which extent the audience should focus on subtitles, while receiving information generated by other audio and visual modes.

5.5 Subtitles as Supplements
Subtitling is also an “overt translation” (Gottlieb 1998: 108). To the audience, viewing a subtitled film combines reading, hearing and seeing into one single activity; subtitles engage viewers with translation even while other information emanating from the upper screen space requires their primary attention (Hillman 2010: 380). While still being criticised for despoiling the image on the screen and separating the viewers from the beauty of the original, this technical shortcoming of subtitling never prevents the mode from bringing an original to audiences outside the SL culture.

The outcome of subtitling consists of textual and cinematic effects which function only within a receiving culture while reaching beyond the creation of a narrative equivalence (Nornes 2007: 180). Subtitles represent a valid translation that, as Lewis (1985: 41) suggests, “values experimentation, tampers with usage, [and] seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original”. While the audience may hardly notice the disturbance from either the dualism in the experience of watching, or from the schism between the source and target languages, they expect to understand every detail contributing to the meaning of the original. Therefore, subtitling is trapped in the paradox between inadequacy and over-abundance.

Subtitles can fill gaps in information, but they also repeat information conveyed through other channels in the original. Subtitlers seek to adjust, adapt and even abridge the original for the TL audience. Though the basic elements of narrative must be communicated, these are not immune to variation, as every language maintains a diversity of variety which involves regional or group dialects, jargons, clichés and

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20 This notion of “overt” overlaps with House’s (2001; 2006) theory of translation as re-contextualisation, in which subtitlers make their choices between two types of translation: overt and covert translation. However, House’s definitions of “overt” and “covert” need to be reconsidered in light of subtitling, as the original remains intact in a subtitled version. In addition, it is difficult to measure the extent to which the TL audience’s awareness and comprehension of the SL information (mostly the SL dialogue) influence their viewing experience.
slogans, stylistic innovations, archaisms and neologisms (Lecercle 1990). Whereas it is difficult to replicate such elements in a TL without corrupting its standard usage, it is almost impossible for the subtitler to bring the linguistic and cultural idiosyncrasies of a particular original to the audience without inscribing it with features of the TL and its culture. Subtitlers who seek to reach beyond the textual effect of a recipient context can present variation in dialect, discourse, register or style with domesticated solutions (Venuti 2000: 471) which, however, can “corrupt” an original in translation, reducing “the conspiracy and the riches” of the original to domestic meanings and therefore keeping these original characteristics hidden from the TL audience (Nornes 2007: 178).

In light of this, Nornes (2007) introduces the concept of abusive subtitling, which often is achieved through the inventive use of language and innovation in cinematic rules, breaking the direct link between a subtitled audiovisual programme and the TL audience by highlighting the middle ground held by the subtitler (Nornes 2007: 178-179). As for the inventive use of language, the “scrupulous anonymous English”, in the English subtitles of Japanese film Ran (1985), such as “I would with you go” (Richie 1991: 16), is an experimentation by a subtitler who chose to conform to the linguistic style of the original. Innovation in cinematic rules is evident in the creative subtitling (which will be discussed further in Part 4) practiced by the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) in Australia, among other broadcasting services around the world. The subtitles are often presented in different formats and colours to highlight multilingualism, linguistic variation or para-linguistic information in original audiovisual programmes.

It seems that abusive subtitling betrays the supplementary role assigned to subtitles. It may hinder the audience’s understanding of translation due to the use of
inventive and hence unfamiliar TL expressions, and make the audience wonder why subtitles are shown in varying colours and formats. The experience of viewing, nevertheless, relies upon a predilection toward synthesizing and generating meaning in the human mind (Fong 2009a: 42); people tend to look for solutions to problems, to seek order out of chaos, and try to make sense of what they perceive. Subtitles form a prerequisite component of the foreign film experience (Fong 2009a: 43) even if the primary function of subtitles is supplementary, as they bridge the gap between the meaning of an original and its manifestation in the TL context, and hence engage the TL audience. The so-called disturbance in a subtitled film is secondary because the audience searches for both meaning and enjoyment.

For these needs of the audience, subtitlers should primarily seek accuracy by making a translation resemble the original "closely enough in the relevance respect" (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 137). Any misunderstanding of the nature of communication may cause a mismatch in contextual information and thus jeopardise the communicability of substantial parts of the original or even the ST as a whole. Thus, in bringing the original to the TL audience, the subtitler should comply with the context of the SL dialogue. The precision of the TT (i.e. a subtitled version) is not always guaranteed, since in translation there is always a risk of dislocating the cultural identity presented in the ST.
Chapter 6. Over-Domestication in Subtitles

The tendency to domesticate once prevailed in Chinese translation in the late 19th and early 20th century, particularly in the translation of Western literature; most modern Chinese translators seek to make translations “readable” for readers, even to the point of betrayal or distortion of source texts (Chan 2004). Film translators in China have been applying the strategy of domestication in dubbing out of consideration for the Chinese audience’s scanty knowledge of foreign languages and cultures (Du, et al 2013: 93). Many scenes describing social life in foreign films exhibited in Chinese cinemas between the 1950s and the early 1990s were filled with authentic Chinese expressions. For example, in Dobry voják Švej (The Good Soldier Švejk) (1957), everyone in the pub addressed the proprietor as zhāng-gui-de (掌柜的, control-counter-adjective marker; the one who controls the counter). This archaic expression was used during the period of time contemporaneous with the historical context depicted in the original to refer to the owner of a restaurant. However, subtitles showing the word zhāng-gui-de in the film mentioned above, or other foreign films with comparable historical contexts, would be deemed inaccurate by the contemporary Chinese audience.

Despite this, the Chinese audience has seen the use of expressions and references which are too culture-specific in the Chinese context to be adopted as solutions for subtitling. It is obvious that subtitlers have taken liberties in resorting to sinicisation, regardless of the nature of the corresponding original information, and practise cultural filtering and rewriting in adapting an original to the Chinese context. House (2001: 251) defines a “cultural filter” as “a means of capturing socio-cultural differences in shared conventions of behaviour and communication, preferred rhetorical styles and expectation norms in the two speech communities”; through
cultural filtering, the translator aims to recreate an equivalent (or non-equivalent) speech event by manipulating the ST. However, in doing so, a subtitler may easily make the Chinese-subtitled version over-domesticated. The contemporary Chinese audience has become aware of the credibility gaps between the meaning of subtitles on screen and the original audiovisual narrative. Hence, they are increasingly critical of the inaccuracy caused by over-domestication, or sinicisation, as the viewing of subtitled versions is becoming more common (Liu Ting 2013).

Although the audience’s attitude challenges the long-standing tradition of sinicisation, which is a variety of over-domestication in the Chinese context, substantial research has not investigate the relevant subjects systematically. This chapter looks into the way over-domestication is realised by rewriting an original with TL-oriented elements and emphasises the importance of further theoretical consideration of Chinese subtitling in light of the current circumstances.

### 6.1 Over-Domestication Through Rewriting

As the examples below demonstrate, domesticated solutions are incompatible with the linguistic and cultural otherness depicted in the original.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Subtitles in the State-sponsored Translation</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example 4: [Madagascar 3 (2012)] No traffic!</td>
<td>不限号 不堵车</td>
<td>No-restriction-number-no-jam-car(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 5: [Madagascar 3 (2012)] That is one ugly, mug-ugly lady!</td>
<td>这是麻辣凤凰吧</td>
<td>This-is-spicy-hot-phoenix-sister-model word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 6: [Madagascar 3 (2012)] 'Cause you’re too cute to be out here in the real world.</td>
<td>世界这么乱 装萌给谁看</td>
<td>World-this-much-chaotic-pretend-innocent-give-who-look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 7: [Madagascar 3 (2012)]</td>
<td>我们做个夫妻档 / 像小沈阳一</td>
<td>I-plural maker-make-a-husband-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2012)]</td>
<td>'Cause all you have to do is put them around your partner.</td>
<td>炫 上星光大道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 8: [Men in Black 3 (2012)]</td>
<td>我可以向你保证这很快就会结束了</td>
<td>I-can-to-you-promise-this-very-will-can-end-simple future tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lonelier too, since you are the last Bogladyte standing.</td>
<td>天长地久有时尽</td>
<td>Sky-long-earth-long-have-time-end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>此恨绵绵无绝期</td>
<td>This-sorrow-long-long-no-end-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 9: [Rio (2011)]</td>
<td>你们把我当成脑残了</td>
<td>You—plural marker-make-I-consider-as-brain-retard-model word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think I’m an idiot?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 10: [Rio (2011)]</td>
<td>这地方是我见过最给力的</td>
<td>This-place-is-I-see-present perfect tense-most-give-strength-adjective marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the coolest place I’ve ever seen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 11: [Rio (2011)]</td>
<td>我是来打酱油的</td>
<td>I-am-come-buy-sauce-oil-model word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know what’s going on here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 12: [Pacific Rim (2013)]</td>
<td>我不能跟你说 打死都不能说</td>
<td>I-not-can-to-you-tell-beat-death-still-not-can-tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So I couldn’t tell you. Even if I wanted to.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 13: [Pacific Rim (2013)]</td>
<td>天马流星拳</td>
<td>Sky-horse-flying-star-fist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbow Rocket!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Example 4, the subtitle would be more appropriate in terms of the original context without the phrase bü-xiàn-hào (不限号, No-restriction-number; no restriction on plate numbers) as the subtitler has already delivered the meaning of “no traffic” by bü-dū- chē (不堵车, no-jam-car(s); no traffic jam). The expression bü-xiàn-hào refers to a regulation established in China to schedule automobile access to particular areas of a city according to their plate numbers so as to prevent traffic jams. This reference to a local traffic regulation does not comply with the original context where the character, a lion escaped from a zoo in New York, is admiring a model of New York City made of sand.
The subtitler’s efforts to rewrite the original information are obvious in the subtitles in Example 5, 6 and 7. The subtitle of “one ugly, mug-ugly lady” in Example 2 is má-là-fēng-jíě (麻辣凤姐, spicy-hot-phoenix-sister; hot phoenix sister), referring to a Chinese “online celebrity” whose nickname is fēng-jíě (凤姐, phoenix sister). She has been widely noted among Chinese Internet users for her controversial comments on social affairs, and for her unpresentable appearance and exaggerated manners. The reference to “phoenix sister” corresponds to the speaker’s emphasis on the meaning of “ugly” but contrasts with the actual reference made by the speaker. The speaker refers to a monkey dressed in medieval fashion, which makes it ugly, and gambling in a casino in Monte Carlo.

In Example 5, the speaker is sympathetic to a group of little dogs in a circus. In his view, these little dogs should not enter the real world to join the circus. However, the cinema subtitle expresses a meaning that is completely irrelevant to the original information and will give the audience a wrong impression of the speaker’s intention; the Chinese subtitle means, “to whom you are showing your innocence when the world is chaotic”. It can be spoken in an indifferent manner, while the character on the screen speaks with sympathy. In addition, it is the use of zhuāng-méng (装萌, pretend-innocent; showing one’s innocent nature) that causes the subtitle to diverge from the original context.

In Example 6, the subtitle is a re-creation distorting the original context in which the speaker is trying to encourage her timid friend to dance with her. The original information is rewritten with expressions and references strictly associated with the Chinese context. The word fū-qī-dàng (夫妻档, husband-wife-partnership; spousal teamwork) is used to refer to teamwork between a man and a woman. The word xiǎo-shēn-yāng (小沈阳, little-shēn-yāng; Little Shengyang) is the nickname of
a Chinese comedian who once participated in a talent show called xīng-guāng-dà-dào (星光大道, star-light-avenue), which was broadcast on Chinese Central Television Channel One. Likewise, the cinema subtitles in Example 8 represent the subtitler’s decision to disregard the original information by replacing the line “Lonelier too, since you are the last Bogladyte standing” with a line from *The Everlasting Wrong* by Bo Juyi, a famous poet in the Tang Dynasty of the ancient China (618-907 AD).

The subtitles in Example 9, 10 and 11 contain the popular slang expressions nào-cán (脑残, brain-retard; stupid), gěi-lì (给力, give-strength; cool) and dā-jìàng-yōu-de (打酱油的, buy-sauce-oil-model word; buying soy sauce). These correspond with the meanings of their SL counterparts but contrast with the original context in a similar manner to the domesticated subtitles in previous examples. Nǎo-cán was originally used to criticise the controversial behaviour and social comments of the generation of Chinese born during the 1990s. Gěi-lì has been coined as an alternative to kù (酷, cool) by Chinese Internet users, and Dā-jìàng-yōu-de is used to refer to those who are irrelevant to a particular situation.

In Example 12, the TL audience may consider the speaker to be desperate, as the subtitle reads dā-sī-dōu-bù-néng-shuō (打死都不能说, beat-death-still-not-tell; I won’t tell even if I am going to be beaten to death.), while the speaker is actually apologising for not being able to speak honestly. In Example 13, the subtitler may be attempting to bring a third culture into the subtitled version by using the phrase tiān-mǎ-liú-xīng-quān (天马流星拳, sky-horse-flying-star-fist; Pegasus Meteor Fist) which is the Chinese translation of a combat technique described in the Japanese anime *Saint Seiya*. However, this reference is by and large irrelevant to and different from the “Elbow Rocket” described in the original, and hence should not be used as the TL solution for the original phrase.
Here the subtitlers use references to domestic affairs and popular slang in order to re-contextualise the original for the TL audience, at the same time causing the subtitles to depart from the original context. The distortion is more conspicuous when the subtitler tries to import an element from a third culture into the Chinese-subtitled version. The subtitler may have wished to entertain the viewers by using a foreign element which is familiar to them. However, that element may also have been manipulated, since it is introduced through translation by adopting a Chinese perception of the third culture, and thus takes the place of that culture. This too may be considered as a technique of domestication.

Despite the subtitler’s aim to assimilate the audience into the original narrative, it is crucial to maintain a distance between the world in the original and the world presented by the subtitles; an overzealous subtitler turns the original narrative into a completely different entity (Fong 2009a: 58-59). While it is difficult to maintain the middle ground between foreignisation and domestication, given that the foreignness of a particular original cannot be completely neutralised by subtitling, the question which remains is how subtitler can enhance audiovisual accessibility with accuracy and comprehensibility without dislocating the cultural identity represented by the original context.

6.2 A Preliminary Theoretical Discussion

The inaccurate subtitles discussed above show subtitlers’ efforts to conduct cultural filtering, a practice which carries the danger of eliminating the original context and replacing it with a TL context. In contrast to their attempts to minimise foreignness, the majority of the members of audience are critical of the sinicised translation because it hinders their understanding of the authentic original context. In
addition, the covert strategy, in which the subtitler resorts to rhetorical styles, linguistic patterns or cultural references preferred by TL speakers, contrasts with the overt nature of subtitling.

6.2.1 Over-Domestication v. Subtitling as Overt Translation

House (2001) distinguishes covert translation from overt translation in describing translation as re-contextualisation, in the process of which the translator takes an original out of its context and place it in a new one. A new language replaces the SL in constructing a TT which is “doubly contextually-bound: on the one hand to its contextually embedded source text and on the other hand to the (potential) recipient’s communicative-contextual conditions” (House 2006b: 343). The notion of context is “static” rather than “dynamic”, “linearly and sequentially unfolding” (Widdowson 2004: 8). The distance in terms of space and time between the ST and the TL audience is overcome by the contextual connections achieved through translation, linking the ST to both the original (associated with the SL audience) and new (associated with the audience of the translation) contexts (House 2006b: 343).

Further, House (2006a: 348-349) makes a distinction between a translation and a version, depending on the features of the ST and the purpose of bringing it to a new cultural and linguistic environment. This distinction is closely related to the concept of equivalence, and to different types of equivalence achieved for different audience groups from a particular culture. House (2001: 247-248) considers “equivalence” to be contextual and pragmatic rather than being associated with “formal, syntactic and lexical similarity”. Hence, translation represents a functional equivalent, which is a pragmatic application consisting of the ideational and interpersonal function of an
original in a particular “context of situation”\textsuperscript{21} of the TL (House 2001: 248). The task of subtitlers then is to translate the gist of the SL information into the TL and to produce a version of the original by superimposing the TL information on the original audiovisual medium. In this way, a subtitled version targets a particular TL audience group who have particular preferences and reasons for viewing the subtitled foreign original. However, House’s notion of overt and covert translation needs to be reconsidered with respect to subtitling, as it is evident that subtitlers also adopt cultural filtering even though subtitling is overt by nature.

No AVT method can erase the original information completely. It is likely to re-emerge from the audiovisual configuration in accordance with the varying AVT methods adopted for different recipient contexts. Then certain question arise: how the subtitler reconfigure the SL verbal and non-verbal information; how the reconfiguration correspond to the TL audience’s way of viewing the dissemination of verbal and non-verbal information; to what extent the visible SL information (particularly the dialogue) help the TL audience to appreciate the original or to assess the quality of translation, in view of the fact that the Chinese audience is increasingly sensitive to the equivalence and difference between the original information and the corresponding subtitle(s); and to what extent the covert strategy in rendering a particular kind of SL information (e.g. swearing and cultural humour) contrast with the overt nature of subtitling. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that a good subtitled version leaves the TL audience with no impression of the subtitles other than the

\textsuperscript{21} This “context of situation” involves the three major components of the Hallidayan notion of “register” (i.e. field, mode and tenor). Field stands for social activity, subject matter or topic of a text or communication; mode refers to the form of communication (i.e. spoken or written) and the level of involvement of each participants in a particular communication; tenor represents the nature of participants, which includes social distance and power relation, degree of emotional charge, the participant’s temporal, geographical and social provenance and individual perspective (i.e. intellectual, emotional or affective stance).
impression that the characters on screen are speaking the TL, as if the translation were transparent. In contrast to this, the very appearance of subtitles always makes the interference of subtitlers visible to the audience, whereas the audience may perceive the configuration of an original audiovisual medium with a different focus from that of the SL audience, through the mediation of subtitles which deliver both familiar and unfamiliar information.

By “familiar”, I refer to meanings and concepts which are considered universal but are inaccessible to the TL audience due to language differences only. By “unfamiliar”, I mean those meanings alien to the TL cognitive frame because of cultural differences and irreconcilable gaps between the SL and TL (e.g. puns). Subtitling is associated with a different sense of re-contextualisation, which is in turn associated with the subtitler’s decision to, in the case of Chinese subtitling, preserve the foreignness represented by an original, although the opposite has been preferred in practice! Despite this, research is yet to shed light on ways to prevent over-domestication, among other kinds of mistranslation. While some local Chinese newspapers and film reviews have referred to Yan Fu’s principles xin (faithfulness), dá (intelligibility) and yǎ (refinement) in commenting on subtitles, as shown below, the applicability of these three principles to subtitling is questionable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>所以，作为字幕译者，能否做到“信达雅”并不重要，但至少应当学会克制，做到准确通顺，</td>
<td>Thus, it is not necessary for subtitlers to fully comply with faithfulness, accessibility and refinement, but they should at least learn to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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22 This is conveyed in *The Invisible Subtitler* (2013) which is the first documentary to deal with the profession of subtitling. The documentary can be purchased or rented at: http://distrify.com/films/4817-the-invisible-subtitler?widget_id=3266&utm_source=Distrify&utm_medium=shorturl&utm_campaign=Widget-3266 (last consulted on 12.04.2015).
As part of the translation industry, film subtitlers need to take accuracy as the priority of translation. Certainly, they may also seek to achieve faithfulness, intelligibility and refinement, as literary translators do. [My translation]

6.2.2 Debates Surrounding Yan Fu’s Principles

Yan Fu proposed his three principles in the preface to his translation of T. H. Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics and other Essays*, as quoted below:

Despite his abiding influence on Chinese translation, Yan Fu has been continuously challenged primarily for his violation of the principle xin (信, faithfulness) in his own translations which, according to He (1925; in Fan 1999: 34), demonstrates his “irresponsible” attitude to the original authors. Besides, many remained sceptical with regard to the originality of Yan Fu’s three principles, as they

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23 The original article (in Chinese) is retrievable via: http://www.legalweekly.cn/index.php/Index/article/id/70 (consulted on 11.03.2015).

24 The original article (in Chinese) is retrievable via: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqgj/jryw/2013-08-06/content_9780862.html (consulted on 11.03.2015).
observed correspondences between Yan Fu’s principles and the laws of translation proposed by A. F. Tytler (Yang 1935: in Wang 2008); some others assert the originality of Yan Fu in this matter, claiming that his principles have had significant influence on Chinese Translation Studies and hence should be considered fundamental to the development of other theories in Chinese translation (Luo 1983; Zhao 1996: 36).

Zhu Chunshen (2008: 35-36) pointed out that efforts to seek evidence for the originality of Yan Fu’s views on translation are comparable to the action of gé-xuē-sāo-yāng (隔靴搔痒, isolate-boot(s)-scratch-itch; scratching one’s itch through one’s boot), and that assertions regarding the influence of Yan Fu are far-fetched. Zhu (2008: 35-36) considered that the correspondence between Yan Fu’s principles and theoretical thinking concerning other linguistic and cultural contexts provides evidence for the existence of common characteristics shared among translational phenomena in different linguistic and socio-cultural traditions. The recognition of such common characteristics opens a new path of research in Translation Studies in our globalising world, and contemporary studies need to provide sound and systematic explanations of the three principles in order to connect Chinese Translation Studies to Translation Studies in other cultures and traditions (Zhu 2008: 35 – 36). Zhu may have raised a new question as to how to explain and incorporate Yan Fu’s principles in the broader world context of Translation Studies. However, research into this aspect has rarely provided a satisfactory definition of the principles, something which is also absent in Yan Fu’s original work (Lao 1990; Fan 1991; Luo and Lei 2004). Moreover, they have been translated into various English versions in which,

25 Tytler (1790) stated, “[T]he Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; [T]he style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original; [T]he Translation should have all the ease of original composition.”
however, translators are simply rendering the three Chinese characters verbatim by labelling each of them with an English word. Hermans (2003: 382-383) is among a very few who have questionised this word-for-word strategy:

The terms have been rendered into English in a number of ways. I am not interested in what the best rendering might be, but in what would be needed to give me, as an outsider, access to the terms’ meaning and operational ranges. [...] I wonder how much the apparent agreement among the translations conceals. [...] The scepticism only increases when we see Yan Fu himself rehearsal his key terms later in his preface and evoking both Confucius and the Book of Changes in the process [...] Yan Fu’s terms carry echoes taking us back two thousand years and more. In overwriting the terms with English labels we obliterate these echoes and networks. [...] Perhaps, then, the question of how to represent Yan Fu’s concepts in the terminology currently available to Anglophone translation studies is not quite so simple.

In my view, a comprehensive English definition of the terms should also particularise the mode of translation and medium in which the original material is produced in order to cope with the ever-changing landscape of translation.

6.2.3 Are Yan Fu’s Principles Applicable to Subtitling?
Ma Junning is among the first to investigate this matter. According to Ma (2010), conformity with xin (信, faithfulness) includes the representation of the original verbal and non-verbal information, paralinguistic sounds, and those cultural references that are manifested in the audiovisual context. Conformity with dá (达, intelligibility) raises more challenges to the subtitler, as TL solutions deemed accessible have to be evaluated while considering the audiovisual constraints. Conformity with yā (雅, refinement) is considered by Ma Junning (2010) as conformity with the original style, which corresponds to the shift from Yan Fu’s original notion of yā (雅, refinement) to the notion of style, which, as Fan (1991: 68) explained, involves the following four factors: firstly, the time factor sets a work in time by using the current standard language or the language of a certain historical
period; secondly, the space factor requires translators to use TL dialects, which can be either standard or regional, if the author of an original adopted SL dialects, though TL dialects may not always be applicable to the original audiovisual context; thirdly, the factor of the speech community depicted by an author, and later replicated by a translator, covers those speech features shared by a group of people belonging to a particular social status, profession, age group or gender; and finally, the factor of subject matter is associated with the purpose of a particular textual or artistic creation, in which an author adopts a particular textual type and a series of language styles for a particular purpose.

In my view, the original scheme of yā (雅, refinement) is expanded by the notion of style rather than being changed into a new concept. In discussing the notion of 雅 (yā) (refinement), Yan Fu (as below) considered that the syntax and style of the classical Chinese dated to the pre-Han period could be used to replicate the “profound principles and subtle thoughts” of Western scientific and philosophical works in a refined and therefore appealing fashion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>故信達而外，求其爾雅，此不僅期以行遠已耳。實則精理微言，用漢以前字法、句法，則為難易；用近世利俗文字，則求達難。 (Yan Fu 1901/1981: xi-xii)</td>
<td>In addition to faithfulness and comprehensibility [accessibility], we should strive for elegance [refinement] in translation. This is not just for extending the effects far. In using the syntax and style of the pre-Han period one actually facilitates the comprehensibility [accessibility] of the profound principles and subtle thoughts whereas in using the modern vernacular one finds it difficult to make things comprehensible (translated by C.Y. Hsu [1973]; in Tak-Hung Leo Chan 2004: 70).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This opinion was shared and supported by other translators in the 20th century, such as Fu Lei, a pre-eminent translator and scholar who remains highly regarded for
his translations from French, including the works of Voltaire, Balzac and Romain Rolland. Fu considered bái-huà (白话, clear-talk; vernacular Chinese), an earlier form of modern Standard Mandarin, less formal and less able to cope with the rich vocabulary and complex syntax of some foreign languages, in comparison with wén-yán (文言, literate-language; classical Chinese) (in Chan 2004: 169). However, the use of classical Chinese eventually fell from favour, as vernacular Chinese was increasingly dominant. While exceptional use of classical Chinese may still be applicable in a context where elevated expressions are essential to the original literary composition (e.g. poetry), the choice between plain and refined styles of language depends on the context and style of the original.

Furthermore, the notion of style is more holistic than Yan Fu’s yǎ (雅, refinement and applies a wider variety of genres, media, use of language, and subject matter. Linguistically, the notion of style involves not only refined language but also the opposite, which is evident in film dialogue which often resorts to colloquial registers, and thus reflects situations in daily life, where refined or elegant language is not always appropriate. Discursively, style can be realised in different kinds of media, for example, the audiovisual medium, in which subtitlers should seek to replicate the style of an original in the TL rather than conform to the notion of yǎ (雅, refinement). However, in reproducing the style of an original, the subtitler may easily re-contextualise a particular original through cultural filtering and thereby produce over-domesticated or foreignised translation which can also be unintelligible.

In over-domestication, the subtitler renders the original style in ways accessible to the TL audience but largely diverges from the meaning of the original; in foreignisation, the subtitler strives to preserve the original in terms of meaning, and even structure or phonetic characteristics, but inevitably highlights its foreignness in
the TL context. In the latter case, the subtitler may fail to make both original meaning and style accessible to the viewers. Hence, the subtitler’s compliance with style may conflict with his or her conformity with xin (信, faithfulness) and dá (达, intelligibility). Thus, Yan Fu’s principles of faithfulness and accessibility, and their relation to the notion of style, are insufficient to guide subtitlers towards a satisfactory response to the demand of the audience, most of whom seek to experience the authenticity, and hence the foreignness, of a particular original.
Chapter 7. "Hard Translation" and Subtitling

A theoretical contribution in Chinese translation – one which has drawn substantial research attention in recent years – was made by Lu Xun (1881-1936), who translated numerous works of literature and literary criticism from English, Japanese, German, Hungarian, Russian, Spanish, to name but a few, into Chinese. Lu Xun is widely recognised as the most important modern Chinese writer for his creative imagination and his incisive and powerful social and cultural criticism. However, his contribution to TS has been overshadowed by his contribution to Chinese literature, although three million of the eight million characters written by him are devoted to translation and theoretical reflections on translation.

Many have disputed the quality of Lu Xun's translations and his translation strategy, which is known as ying-yi (硬译, hard-translation; "Hard Translation"), claiming that his translations leave the readers baffled at many points (Lundberg 1989; Pollard 1991). Lu Xun mostly relied on published translation into Japanese and German when translating the works assigned to him, rather than using the original source texts. Such secondary source texts may contain mistakes, which were invisible to Lu Xun, and hence may either remain in his target texts or lead him to further misinterpretations of the original (Lee 1987; Luo 2013). His translations are "rigid" due to his strict adherence to the ST and therefore have prompted conclusions concerning his "irrational obsession with literalism" (Chan 2004: 19).

However, many critics have judged Lu Xun's views on "Hard Translation", and his translations, without a comprehensive understanding of his perspectives regarding translation strategy, the goals he intended to reach via translation and the influence of translated works on readers. For example, the lack of a precise understanding of the principle ning-xin-ér-bù-shùn (宁信而不顺, would rather-faithful-but-not-fluent; to
be faithful rather than fluent) in Lu Xun’s terms, has led to further critiques of Lu Xun’s non-fluent translations which were considered contradictory to the term yi-jie (易解, easy-explain; to be clear and logical) which was defined by Lu Xun as an aim. The term yi-jie has mostly been regarded as a synonym for yi-dong (易懂, easy-comprehend; easy to understand) in modern Chinese and hence implies readability and fluency. However, according to Luo Xuanmin (2007), Lu Xun may have wished to emphasise clarity in the logical structure of Chinese rather than readability and fluency of translation, since Lu Xun considered the language (i.e. classical Chinese) used in translation, as was upheld by Yan Fu and his followers, loose in syntax and constricted in vocabulary and means of expression.

Hence, to reflect on Lu Xun’s practice and theoretical thinking of “Hard Translation”, one needs to look beyond his translations and thereby to take account of, firstly, his purpose in using “Hard Translation” as a means to improve the Chinese language and Chinese literature, and secondly, his efforts to highlight linguistic and cultural foreignness for Chinese readers of his time. Such reflections may shed light on Chinese subtitling, with implications for maintaining strict adherence to the original audiovisual context and its style, so as to enhance the accessibility and the verisimilitude of subtitled versions. This chapter will explore Lu Xun’s strategy of “Hard Translation” of literary works, and attempt to justify its theoretical validity. By examining his views on the goals of translation and its influence on readers, I seek to demonstrate the implications of “Hard Translation” for subtitling.
7.1 Lu Xun as a Translator

Lu Xun was the pseudonym adopted by Zhou Shuren, whose career in translation began in 1903, when he was in Japan as a medical student, three years before he took up literature as his main field of activity. In 1903, he translated two novels by Jules Verne and one short story by Victor Hugo from existing Japanese translations.\(^{26}\) In 1906, Lu Xun gave up the opportunity to become a doctor for a lifelong literary career, in response to the catastrophic reality in China in his time, realising that it was more important to cure the ailing mentality of the Chinese people than to take care of their physical health. Despite adverse critical reaction from his contemporaries, and difficulties in his life, he produced numerous translations from a great variety of original works. In the process, he gradually adopted the strategy of ying-yì (硬译, “Hard Translation”) and stuck to it until the end of his life, on 19th October 1936, when he was translating the second part of Gogol’s *Mertvye dushi* (Dead Souls).

Lu Xun’s career in translation progressed in three phases, the first of which was between 1903 and 1906, in which he tried to translate science fiction, hoping to popularise scientific facts and scientific ways of thinking in Chinese society (von Kowallis 2011). Aiming at conciseness, he adopted a combination of classical and vernacular Chinese (or sú-yǔ (俗语, mundane-language; vulgar language)):

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<tr>
<td>然纯用俗语，复嫌冗繁，因参用文言，以省篇</td>
<td>However, in using vulgar language, I frequently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{26}\) These early translations include Jules Verne’s “*De la terre à la lune*” (月界旅行) and “*Voyage au centre de la terre*” (地底旅行), and Victor Hugo’s “*L’origine de ‘Fantine’*” (姿尘). However, records showed that Lu Xun published another translation in 1903 under the title *斯巴达之魂* (Soul of Spartans). The source text of this translation is obscure. Some, including former Soviet Russian scholar V.I. Semanov (in von Kowallis 2011), have suspected that it was Lu Xun’s own creation based on materials collected in Japan,
Lu Xun became fully engaged in literature and translation in 1906, holding the view that translation was as important to Chinese society as creative writing. It was in the following years of his career that Lu Xun became aware of the disparity between foreign discourse and the Chinese discourse. He considered that Chinese translation was no longer solely associated with educational purposes but, more importantly, with the introduction of foreign cultures and literature, so as to enhance literary creation. The task of translators, as seen by Lu Xun in the second phase of his career (1906-1919), was to demonstrate the cultural background represented by an original as much as possible, without taking liberties in the TL context. The bulk of his translation during this time consisted of works by Eastern European authors whose countries were as "depressed" as China, in his view at least (Luo 2007). It has been noted that Lu Xun's revolutionary sympathies were the inspiration for his choices, though he may have had little knowledge of the social complexity of the countries in question (Eber 1977).

Lu Xun and his brother Zhou Zuoren published yü-wäi-xiäo-shuö-jí (《域外小说集》, Short Stories from Abroad) in 1909. It was in the production of this anthology that Lu Xun departed from the strategies of yi-yì (意译, meaning-translation; sense translation) and zi-yöu-yì (自由译, self-indulgence-translation; free translation) and adopted the strategy of zhí-yì (直译, straight-translation; straightforward translation). From 1909 onwards, he gradually adopted a strategy of xìn (信, faithfulness) at the lexical, syntactic and discursive level and disregarding dá...
(达, intelligibility) and yǎ (雅, refinement) in order to produce a “precise translation” (Perez-Barreio Nolla 1992). It was in striving for this strict literalism that he progressed to the third phase of his career (1919-1936) and translated a greater variety of foreign originals, including proletarian literature, Marxist literary theory, Japanese literature and art criticism. Through what he later described as “Hard Translation”, he sought to introduce foreign elements into the Chinese context, as a means of opposing the strategy of sinicisation which was prevalent at the time.

7.2 Theoretical Justification

The literalism pursued by Lu Xun led him to produce target texts containing new concepts, vocabulary and means of expression, which were yet to be accepted by readers of his time. In the third phase, he adopted “Hard Translation” as his strategy to cope with the complex reasoning in some original works, particularly when translating theoretical works, and to present such complexities to his readers. More importantly, it was through “Hard Translation” that Lu Xun made relentless efforts to further develop bái-huà (白话, clear-talk; vernacular Chinese), hoping that the Chinese language would adapt to the modern world. This section is devoted to justifying the theoretical validity of “Hard Translation” and its implications for Chinese subtitling.

7.2.1 Goals of “Hard Translation” and Its Potential Influence on Readers

Lu Xun adopted “Hard Translation” as a means to further develop vernacular Chinese. Many Chinese intellectuals advocated the overall use of vernacular Chinese in both speech and writing, in response to the New Literary Movement, which grew rapidly in the early 20th century. However, this was no easy task because, on the one hand, vernacular Chinese was still widely rejected by conservative scholars and the
ruling class, who, despite being part of the main force of Chinese intellectuals, were rather reluctant to foster its development. On the other hand, vernacular Chinese at that time still lacked an operative grammar and the vocabulary to allow it to be clear, logical and precise. Lu Xun considered such deficiencies in the vernacular as constraints holding back the popular mind and the development of Chinese literature, as shown below:

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<tr>
<td>中国的文或话，法子实在不太精密了[……]这语法的不精密，就在证明思路的不精密，换一句话，就是脑筋有些胡涂。倘若永远用着胡涂话，即使读的时候，滔滔而下，但归根结蒂，所得的还是一个胡涂的影子。要医这病，我以为只好陆续吃一点苦，装进一样的句法去，古的，外省外府的，外国的，后来便可以据为己有。 (in Luo 1984: 276)</td>
<td>Neither Chinese speech nor writing is precise enough in its manner of expression. [...] The lack of precision in our language proves the lack of precision in our way of thinking — we are muddle-headed. If we continue to use our muddle-headed language, even though we can read smoothly, ultimately we will find ourselves confused. To cure this ailment, I believe we have to do it the hard way and seek to render thought in wayward syntactical structures. What is old and foreign (coming from other provinces, regions and countries) can finally be embraced as our own (Lu Xun 1931/1981; translated by Leo T. H. Chan, in Tak-Huang Leo Chan 2004: 159-160).</td>
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Lu Xun therefore resolved to forge vernacular Chinese into a new and modernised language through translation, and thereby bring change to Chinese literature and the Chinese mentality (Luo 2007). Like many of his contemporaries, he considered the mission of translators comparable to that of the mythical hero Prometheus:

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<tr>
<td>但我从别国里窃得火来，本意却在煮自己的肉的，以为倘能味道较好，庶几在咀嚼者那一面也得到较多的好处，我也不枉费了身躯。 (Lu Xun 1930/1981)</td>
<td>But I stole fire from abroad to cook my own flesh, in the hope that if the taste proved agreeable, those who tasted it would benefit more, and my sacrifice would not prove in vain (Lu Xun 1930/1997; translated by Xianyi Yang &amp; Gladys)</td>
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In his view, the translation of a foreign original must comply with the nature of the SL, in order to represent the authenticity of the ST and the SL in its new context. This is similar to the notion of “literalism” in the sense of strict compliance with the SL linguistic structure. According to Jin Di and Nida (1984: 81), translators who comply with “literalism” strive to represent every meaningful element in the original in a form resembling the SL as much as possible. However, whereas literalism emphasises the translator’s consideration for the SL, the concept of ying (硬, hardness) points to the TL. The distinction between literalism and “Hard Translation” is evident, as quoted below, in the two goals of translation determined by Lu Xun, yi-jie (易解, easy-explain; to be clear and logical) and fēng-zī (丰姿, full-shape; charm). A translator pursuing these two goals can retain the foreignness of original works so as to provide an experience of the foreign (i.e. yí-qíng [移情, move-emotion]), enrich the Chinese language and readers’ knowledge of foreign cultures, and provide intellectual stimulation (i.e. yí-zhì [益智, enhance-intellectuality]).

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<td>如果还是翻译，那么，首先的目的，就是在博览外国的作品，不但移情，也要益智，至少是知道何地何时，有这等事，和旅行外国，是很相像的：它必须有异国风情，就是所谓的洋气。[......] 凡是翻译，必须兼顾这两面，一当然力求其易解，一则保存着原作的丰姿，但这保存，却又常常和易解相矛盾；看不懂了。不过它原是西洋鬼子，当然谁也看不惯，为比较着顺眼起见，只能改变他的衣裳，却不该削低他的鼻子，削掉他的眼睛。我是不主张削鼻剪眼的，所以有些地方，仍然宁可译得不顺口。</td>
<td>If it is still a translation, the first purpose in doing it is to offer readers an experience of foreignness and enhance their knowledge of foreign cultures, by enabling them to read a wide variety of foreign works. Translation should at least help readers to understand the time and place of a certain narrative. This is very similar to travelling in another country. Hence, a translated work must retain the foreignness of the originals (i.e. foreign styles and realities). [...] In translation, one must bear two goals in mind. One is to strive for clarity and logical structure of the TT, and the other is to retain the charm and style of the ST. However, the retained charm and...</td>
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style often contrast with the intelligibility of the TT and thus is deemed unacceptable. The original was nevertheless a foreigner and certainly would be acceptable to no one. Therefore, in order to make him more acceptable, one can change his clothes, but not cut short his nose or cut out his eyes. I never supported such ideas as shortening noses and cutting out eyes, so I would in many cases make my translations rather un-fluent. [My translation]

By practising “Hard Translation”, Lu Xun aimed to enhance the clarity of the Chinese language by making it more logical in meaning and comprehensive and systematic in grammatical structure. He believed that it would eventually be able to cope not only with the content of an original, but also with the logical and linguistic articulation of foreign ideas and foreign realities. Therefore, he sought to introduce new and active elements into the Chinese language and Chinese intellectual life. However, Lu Xun’s translations were difficult to read, due not only to the complex reasoning, new concepts and invented vocabulary, but also to the foreignised syntax modelled on European languages through the mediation of Japanese (Lundberg 1989: 221).

7.2.2 The Debate Between Lu Xun and the Opponents of “Hard Translation”

Most critics on “faults” in “Hard Translation” were based on a short-sighted view of the vernacular Chinese written by Lu Xun and the lack of fluency in his translation. They led to a polemical split between Lu Xun and his opponents over the choice between fidelity to the original and fluency of the TT, or, in modern terms, between foreignisation and domestication. Lu Xun’s most notable opponents were Zhao Jingshen, whose translation strategy is the opposite of Lu Xun’s, and Liang Shiqiu, who questioned the applicability of “Hard Translation” in terms of the intelligibility. Lu Xun strove for fidelity at the cost of fluency in order to avoid
distortion, which plagued the translations made by Lin Shu, a Chinese scholar who never learned any foreign languages but “translated” a number of works in foreign literature with the assistance of interpreters who may have distorted the meanings of original works in the first place; based on their “interpretations”, Lin may further distort an original in his “translation”, despite his eloquent literary language (Mao 1934; in Chan 2004: 192). Lu Xun also opposed the free, domesticating strategy, or liberalism, which prevailed among his contemporaries, such as Zhao Jingshen, who stated:

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<td>宁错而务顺，毋摛而仅信！ (In Luo 1984: 267)</td>
<td>[I] strive for fluency even if this entails inaccuracy, and avoid awkward and merely faithful expressions (Zhao JingShen 1931; translated by Waiping Yau; in Tak-Hung Leo Chan 2004: 154).</td>
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Lu Xun derided Zhao’s principle by pointing out Zhao’s over-emphasis of shùn (顺, fluency), which conformed to Yan Fu’s dá (达, intelligibility) and yǎ (雅, refinement). To Lu Xun, Yan Fu cancelled out the principle of xīn (信, faithfulness) with the principle of dá (达, intelligibility) and yǎ (雅, refinement). Striving to be “faithful”, Lu Xun introduced awkward expressions into his translations in order to assimilate new forms of expression into Chinese, rather than taking the liberty of foreignisation for the sake of fidelity, for example:

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<tr>
<td>Milky Way</td>
<td>神奶路</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behind the mountain the sun has gone down.</td>
<td>山背后太阳落下去了。</td>
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</table>
He translated "Milky Way" as shēn-nǎi-lù (神奶路, road of god’s milk), which adheres strictly to the English phrase, rather than niú-nǎi-lù (牛奶路, road of cow milk), so as to represent precisely the reference to Greek mythology implied by the standard SL phrase (Luo Xuanmin 2007: 43). In addition, he proposed to translate the sentence given above literally, rather than to adopt more idiomatic and TL-oriented solutions such as ri-luò-shān-yīn (日落山阴, the sun falls behind the mountain), and to retain the grammatical structure of the SL sentence. Thus, Lu Xun was exploring the possibility of introducing foreign cultures more precisely by adhering to the SL means of expression and the SL structures as closely as possible:

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<tr>
<td>乃是说，不妨不像吃茶泡饭一样几口可以嚼完，却必须费牙来嚼一嚼。这里就来了一个问题：为什么不完全中国化，给读者省些力气呢？这样费解，怎么还可以称为翻译呢？我的答案是：这也是译本，这样的译本，不但在输入新的内容，也在输入新的表现方式。 (In Luo 1984: 275-276)</td>
<td>In other words, if we can simply swallow something as we would sip tea and eat rice, why make an effort to chew? Here a question arises: Why not Sinicize our translations entirely, and save our readers trouble? Can an incomprehensible translation be called a translation at all? My answer is: it is still a translation because it introduces not only new content but also new means of expression (Lu Xun 1931/1981; translated by Tak-Hung Leo Chan; in Tak-Huang Leo Chan 2004: 160).</td>
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</table>

This technique of translation corresponds to Lu Xun’s views on the two goals of translation: yì-jíě (易解, easy-explain; to be clear and logical) and fēng-zǐ (丰姿, full-shape; charm); and the two influences of translation on readers: yì-qíng (移情, move-emotion; to experience the foreign) and yì-zhì (益智, enhance-intellectuality; to
enhance the knowledge about foreign cultures). Lu Xun sometimes favoured a combination of literalism and liberalism, in order to make a particular translation clearer in meaning and structure, and richer and more comprehensive in its means of expression. This is further demonstrated in his preface of his translation of *Was Peterchens Freunde erzählen*:

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<tr>
<td>凡学习外国文字的，开手不久便选读童话，我以为不能算不对，然而开手就翻译童话，却很有些不相宜的地方，因为每容易拘泥原文，不敢意译，令读者看得费力。这译本原先就很有这弊病，所以我当校改之际，就大加改译了一通，比较近于流畅了。 (In Luo 1984: 262)</td>
<td>For the student of a foreign language to start reading fairy tales shortly after he began to learn would not be improper. However, setting out to translate a fairy tale at this stage would be an inopportune venture to undertake, because, being straitjacketed by the original text, the student would not dare give a free rendition and, as a result, the reader would find it hard to read. This version (itself the translation from the Japanese translation of the German original) has numerous flaws of this kind, therefore, I altered the translation at many places during the time of checking, so that it reads much more smoothly now (Lu Xun 1929/1981; in Fan 1999).</td>
</tr>
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In addition, Lu Xun remained optimistic about the convoluted syntax and new vocabulary in his “hard translations”, which others deemed “un-Chinese” (Lundberg 1989) but would be assimilated, he hoped, into Chinese through a Darwinian natural selection process, as he wrote:

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| 一面尽量的输入，一面尽量的消化，吸收，可用的传下去了，渣滓就听他剩落在过去里。…… 其中一部分，将“不顺”而成为“顺”，有一部 | Now, we seek to import as much as we can, and then digest and absorb all we can. What is usable is retained, and what is left over is abandoned to the past. [

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27 Many referred to the original of this translation as *Little Peter*, the English translation of the Chinese title adopted by Lu Xun, while the actual original is Hermynia von Zur Mühlen’s *Was Peterchen’s Freunde erzählten (What Little Peter’s Friends Told: a children’s book)*, mentioned by Lundberg (1989) in his book *Lu Xun as a Translator.*
Eventually parts of our language will change from "being awkward" to "being fluent," and parts of it will be discarded, because of their continued "awkwardness." Our own judgment is crucial here (Lu Xun 1931/1981; translated by Tak-Huang Leo Chan; in Tak-Huang Leo Chan 2004: 160).

At the time, much of that “grammar, syntax and vocabulary” was new-fangled; but once people got used to it they could understand it without tracing the words with their fingers. And now that we are dealing with “foreign languages” we may need many new forms of construction—which, to put it strongly, have to be made by “hard translation.” In my experience, you can retain the flavour of the original better by this method than by rearranging your sentences; but modern Chinese has its limitations because it is still waiting for new constructions. There is nothing “miraculous” about this.

In the long run, better translators are bound to appear, who will neither distort the meaning nor give "hard" or “literal” translations, and, of course, when that happens my translations will be weeded out. All I am trying to do is to fill a gap between “having none” and “having better” translations (translated by Xianyi Yang & Gladys Yang 1959/1980).

Despite this, the debate over the feasibility of “Hard Translation” between Lu Xun and those opposing him remained heated. The strongest rejection came from Liang Shiqiu, who dismissed “Hard Translation” for its unreadability:

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28 The quotations (in Chinese) of Liang Shiqiu’s arguments in this and the following pages are all selected from his essay On Mr. Lu Xun’s Hard Translation (论鲁迅先生的“硬译”) (1929), which is reprinted in the book A True Record of the Debate between Lu Xun and Liang Shiqiu (鲁迅梁秋实论战实录).
Lu Xun responded by pointing out the limitations of the Chinese language in coping with the complex syntax and logic represented by the foreign originals:

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<tr>
<td>但因为译者的能力不够，和中国文本来的缺点，译完一看，晦涩，甚而至于难解之处也真多；倘若将句拆下来呢，又失了原来的语气，在我，是除了还是这样的硬译之外，只有束手这一条路了，所余的惟一的希望，只在读者还肯硬着头皮看下去而已。</td>
<td>Owing to my inadequacy as a translator and the limitations of the Chinese language, upon reading through my translation I find it obscure and uneven, and in many places very hard to understand. Yet if I were to cut the redundant phrases, it would lose its original flavour. As far as I am concerned, I must either go on producing these hard translations, or produce none at all. I can only hope readers will be willing to make the necessary mental effort to read it (translated by Xianyi Yang &amp; Gladys Yang 1959/1980).</td>
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(Lu Xun 1930/1997)                                                                                           

Liang (1929) further averred that “Hard Translation” was tantamount to sǐ-yì (死译, dead-translation; dead translation), and that it should not be encouraged because it was worse than hú-yì (胡译, senseless-translation; distorted translation), and translators at least produced something “readable” by applying the latter strategy:

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<tr>
<td>一部书断不会完全曲译……部分的曲译即使是错误，究竟也还给你一个错误，这个错误也许真是害人无穷的，而你读的时候究竟还落个爽快。</td>
<td>It is impossible for a translation to be a complete misrepresentation…. Maybe unfaithful renderings give a wrong idea of the original, but they give the reader something even though they are mistaken. Even if the wrongness does damage, it is still pleasant to read (translated by Xianyi Yang &amp; Gladys Yang 1959/1980).</td>
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(Liang Shiqiu 1929/1997)
In his response, Lu Xun emphasised his fidelity to the original which, in his view, would tolerate no “additions or cuts” made by translators who resorted to hú-yì:

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<td>但我自信并无故意的曲译，打着我所不佩服的批评家的伤处了的时候我就一笑，打者的伤处了的时候我就忍疼，却决不肯有所增减，这也是始终“硬译”的一个原因。 (Lu Xun 1930/1997)</td>
<td>And I can say with confidence that I never deliberately distort the meaning of any work. When it touches critics on the raw, I laugh. When it touches me on the raw, I put up with it. But I absolutely refuse to make additions or cuts, hence I have always believed in “hard translation” (translated by Xianyi Yang &amp; Gladys Yang 1959/1980).</td>
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By focusing on the unreadability of “Hard Translation”, Liang addressed the convoluted syntax adopted by Lu Xun who, in his opinion, overlooked the differences between Chinese and foreign languages and sought irrationally for syntactic correspondence between foreign discourse and Chinese discourse:

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<tr>
<td>中国文和外国文是不同的，翻译之难即在于这个地方。假如两种文中的文法句法词法完全一样，那么翻译还成为一件工作吗？我们不妨把句法变换一下，以使读者能懂为第一要义，因为“硬着头皮”不是一件愉快的事，并且“硬译”也不见得能保存“原来的精悍的语气”。假如“硬译”而还能保存“原来的精悍的语气”，那真是一件奇迹，还能说中国文是有“缺点”吗？ (Liang 1929/1997)</td>
<td>Chinese is unlike other languages—that is what makes translation difficult. If the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of two languages were identical, we should have no trouble in translating. With intelligibility as our prime criterion, there is no harm in changing the order of sentences, because “making a mental effort” is no fun, and it is doubtful whether “hard translation” can preserve “the essential style of the original.” Certainly, if “hard translation” could preserve the essential style of the original that would be a miracle, and we could not accuse the Chinese language of having “limitations” (translated by Xianyi Yang &amp; Gladys Yang 1959/1980).</td>
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Lu Xun’s response showed that his awareness of grammatical complexity, and of the characteristics shared by those languages belonging to the same language family, was ahead of his contemporaries (Chan 2004):

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<td>我倒不见得如此之愚，要寻求和中国文相同的外国文，或者希望“两种文中的文法句法词法完全一样”。我但以为文法繁复的国语，较易于翻译外国文，语系相近的，也较易于翻译，而且也是一种工作。 (Lu Xun 1930/1997)</td>
<td>I am not quite such a fool as to look for a foreign language which is like Chinese language, or hope that “the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of the two languages will be identical.” But I believe it is relatively easy to translate from languages which have a complex grammar. It is relatively easy, too, to translate from a language akin to your own, although that still requires some effort (translated by Xianyi Yang &amp; Gladys Yang 1959/1980).</td>
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Above all, Lu Xun maintained stubborn adherence to his “Hard Translation”, which he used to pursue relentlessly his goals of cultural and social renovation. He strove to register rather than remove the foreignness of the original and to explore the possibility of modernising the Chinese language by importing new means of expression and new syntax borrowed from foreign languages. He has been recognised as an extreme literalist comparable to Dryden, who resorted to imitation and metaphrase in order to convert an author’s work word for word, and to Goethe, who considered the perfect correspondence between the ST and TT as the highest achievement of translation. Lu Xun may also be put in company with modern Western scholars, such as Vladimir Nabokov and Walter Benjamin, who tried to put word-for-word interlinear translation into practice. However, Lu Xun’s focus on yi-jie (易解, easy-explain; to be clear and logical) and fēng-zī (丰姿, full-shape; charm) as the goals of translation has shown that he was at least theoretically adopting a
combination of literalism and liberalism, but tending strongly towards foreignised translation for experimental linguistic and cultural innovation.

7.2.3 “Hard Translation” and Foreignisation

Lu Xun was seemingly at odds with many of his contemporaries who were propagating the use of vernacular Chinese as a means to enhance the accessibility of translated works. However, his translations were designed exclusively for educated readers, as may be seen below. Thus, in applying “Hard Translation” as his translation method and ning-xin-ér-bù-shùn (宁信而不顺, would rather-faithful-but-not-fluent; to be faithful rather than fluent) as his principle, he seemed to resort to an extremely literal strategy, by which he was bound, as he thought, to achieve congruence with original in a translation which would be foreignised and therefore not fluent.

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<td>将这些大众，粗粗的粉起来；甲，有很受了教育的；乙，有略能识字的；丙，有识字无几的。而其中的丙，则在“读者”范围之外，启发他们的是图画，演讲，戏剧，电影的任务，在这里可以不论。供给乙的，还不能用翻译，至少是改作，最好还是创作，而这创作有必须并不只在配合读者的口味，讨好了，读的多就够。至于供给甲类的读者的译本，无论什么，我是至今主张“宁信而不顺”的。 (In Luo 1984: 275-276)</td>
<td>There are roughly three types: (1) the well-educated; (2) the semi-literate; and (3) the illiterates. The third group actually cannot be classified as “readers,” and it is the task of paintings, public lectures, drama, and movies to enlighten them. Here they need not be discussed. But the same books should not be given to the first two categories of readers, each of which should be provided with reading material appropriate for them. Even for the second group, we cannot give them translations. Adaptations are good enough, but creative works are still the best. Yet these creative works must aim not only at catering to the taste of readers, for readers must also be encouraged to read more. As for translations for the first group, whatever the situation, I would still advocate the idea of “better be faithful than fluent” (Lu Xun 1931; translated by Tak-Huang Leo Chan, in Tak-Huang Leo Chan 2004: 159-160).</td>
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The principle “to be faithful rather than fluent” corresponds with the concept of un-fluent translation proposed by Venuti (1995: 24) as the means to relieve the TL audience, as well as the original work, of the TL cultural constraints governing their thinking and cognitive patterns, and threatening to overpower or domesticate the original. Venuti (1998: 10) considered that translations prizing comprehensibility over all else may well turn out to be the most prejudiced or “ideologically slanted”, no matter how unconsciously the translator’s decisions were made. However, whereas Venuti advocates resistance to the linguistic and cultural hegemony (of the U.S. and the U.K.), Lu Xun was striving for the cultural survival of China and its language in the modern era; whereas Lu Xun aimed to modernise the Chinese language through the practice of 硬译 (ying-yi) (“Hard Translation”), Venuti had no intention of bringing changes to the English language through foreignised translation. In his literal and foreignising strategies, Lu Xun was influenced by the methods used by the ancient Chinese translators of Buddhist scriptures, rather than, as stated by Venuti (1998: 233), by Goethe and Schleiermacher. Lu Xun studied those Buddhist translations, particularly those by Xuan Zang (600 – 664), a pre-eminent translator of Buddhist scriptures, who favoured a close resemblance between the ST and TT in both meaning and grammatical structure (Zhao Ying 1991: 34-52). However, Venuti (1998: 233) was correct in stating that Lu Xun’s method was a form of resistance to the tendency of domesticated translation which prevailed at that time. In this sense, Lu Xun propounded almost a century ago may help find solutions for the problem of over-domestication which we face in Chinese subtitling today.
7.3 Implications for Chinese Subtitling

The notion of ying-yi (硬译, hard-translation) advocated by Lu Xun never had an impact comparable to the strategy of domestication and yi-yi (意译, sense-translation; sense translation), nor were his translations widely accepted. However, his wish to see ‘natural selection’ triumph has been vindicated in the Standard Mandarin now in use, in which foreign vocabulary and syntax is not uncommon. Many of the elements introduced by him have survived into the modern era, though others have been rejected. Vernacular Chinese at present is semantically clearer and more precise, and syntactically more logical and explicit, than that used by Lu Xun in his translations. It seems that Lu Xun was at least successful in modernising the language and making it more capable of accommodating foreign originals in translation. His method has not yet become obsolete, as he predicted it would, at least with regard to the practice of subtitling in Mainland China. As may be seen in state-sponsored film translation, subtitlers often resort to over-domestication in favour of the Chinese context but distort the original, while the TL solutions adopted by them are in many cases irrelevant to their SL counterparts. This kind of inappropriate manipulation of the original information contrasts with the audience’s awareness of the otherness represented by a particular foreign original. Hence, a subtitled version should conform to this awareness and functions as an example of “Hard Translation” in the audiovisual medium.

A well-composed audiovisual narrative depicts cultures more vividly than textual material and hence attracts a larger Chinese audience than printed materials. The original remains audible in a subtitled version and forces the subtitler to think carefully when choosing between subtitling for adaptation and subtitling for explanation. By choosing adaptation, the subtitler is more likely to distort the original,
though the subtitler might have aimed to make the viewing process more enjoyable. If choosing explanation, the subtitler has to make explicit the original information and represent the style of the original, while keeping in mind the audience’s awareness of linguistic and cultural otherness. In light of “Hard Translation”, I consider explanation more appropriate for the Chinese context than adaptation because, in choosing to explain an original, a subtitler will better conform to the overt nature of subtitling, without adopting solutions contrasting with the foreign reality depicted on the screen, and comply with the varying style of an original and deliver most of the information deemed essential to the audience’s understanding of that original, in a fashion that adheres to audiovisual constraints.

The notion of Hard Translation” requires modification. Modern Chinese is more comprehensive in syntax and no longer perceived by Chinese-speakers as convoluted. It is richer in vocabulary and means of expression, and is therefore no longer constricted in presenting foreign concepts and ideas, compared to the vernacular Chinese used by Lu Xun in his translations. Subtitlers need to explain linguistically or culturally oriented expressions in the original, rather than merely domesticating them for the sake of comprehensibility. Adherence to the original should be demonstrated by conformity to the varying style of an original audiovisual medium, rather than to the SL verbal information only. The principle ning-xìn-ér-bù-shùn (宁信而不顺, would rather-faithful-but-not-fluent; to be faithful rather than fluent) may also need to be revised in terms of the fluency of a viewing process rather than the approximation between subtitles and the corresponding SL syntax and vocabulary.

In my view, the implications of “Hard Translation” for subtitling can be expressed in two Chinese phrases zhōng-shí-dé-tǐ (忠实得体, loyal-faithful-appropriate-genre; faithful to the SL meaning, and appropriate to the genre), and jiān-
ming-jin-yi (简明尽异, concise-clear-exhaust-difference; concise and clear in the TL, and comprehensive and faithful to the foreignness presented). These two terms correspond with the two general guidelines I put forward in the Introduction, which are: 1) the subtitles should accurately convey the original information which they serve to explain, and be compatible with its genre, and thus be appropriate and thorough in reflecting its style; 2) the subtitler needs to make the TL text on the screen concise in form and comprehensive in representing the foreignness of the original. These two guidelines describe translation as re-contextualisation by addressing the mutual relationship between an original and the TL audience, which a subtitler needs to consider to maintain clarity and logical structure in the subtitles (i.e. yi-jie [易解, easy-explain; to be clear and logical]), and to preserve the charm and style of the original (i.e. feng-zi [丰姿, full-shape; charm]), in order to let viewers experience the foreignness of the original and improve their knowledge of foreign cultures and languages. In this way, a Chinese-subtitled version will incorporate the two factors determined by Lu Xun, namely, yi-qing (移情, move-emotion; to experience the foreign), which allows the audience to fully experience the foreignness thoroughly, and yi-zhi (益智, enhance-intellectuality; to enhance the knowledge about foreign cultures), which enhances the audience’s knowledge of foreign cultures.

The guidelines above may be at odds with the norms enforced by the spatial and temporal constraints of the audiovisual medium. However, these norms may have been frequently violated, if not completely disregarded, in fansubbing which is in many ways different from authorised translation. Pérez González (2006: 265) observed that the unconventional strategies and techniques seen in fansubs represent a view of needs and preferences of the target audience and hence, in my opinion, go beyond the “abusive subtitling” upheld by Nornes (2007). It is important to explore
how the two scenarios of Chinese subtitling (i.e. authorised translation and fansubbing) facilitate (or restrict) access to foreign films and TV in China, and the ways in which they compete and cooperate with each other, before exploring how “Hard Translation”, intended for literary translation, has been adapted to the very different medium of subtitling.
Part 3. Authorised Translation, Fansubbing and the Censorship

In recent years, owing to the spread of cultural and economic globalisation, Western values and ideologies have become increasingly accessible via media products to the general public in the People’s Republic of China (Mainland China, or China). Although authorised translation enables the exchange of socio-cultural values and ideas across different languages and cultures, it is susceptible to the stringent censorship which restricts the access to foreign cultural products. Outside authorised domains, through fansubbing, voluntary activities in subtitling and the disseminating of foreign films by fans, participants in fansubbing groups (fansubbers) utilise their professional expertise and language skills to enhance the audience’s comprehensibility of foreign films and TV which are in the same editions as those shown in their countries of origin. Subsequently, activities of fansubbing groups inevitably affect the efficacy of censorship and the efficiency of authorised translation which can be either state-sponsored or private-sponsored for legitimate distributions in China. Whereas the Chinese government endeavours to support the domestic film and television industries by forging international cooperation, its appraisal policies on cultural products tend to stifle the market. The tension caused by the Chinese government attempting to control access to (popular) foreign films raises the question of how the Chinese audience access foreign popular media contents and how they experience the intervention of censorship by accessing the foreign films provided and translated by fansubbing groups.

In seeking answers to the questions, Part 3 delves into the two scenarios of audiovisual accessibility enhanced by Chinese subtitling and their delicate relation with the censorship and thereby reflects the ways in which China – its government, its people and its AVT community – has reacted to current transnational tendencies in
the world’s film and media industries. Chapter 8 seeks to present an overview of the access to foreign films and television in official domains where the censorship procedures are severe but lacking a set of comprehensive and transparent guidelines. In light of the ever-changing socio-political environment in China, the possible motivations behind the decisions made by censors will also be analysed. Chapter 9 explains the development and proliferation of Chinese fansubbing, with a particular focus on the access to foreign audiovisual products facilitated by the fansubbing network and its influence on censorship. Further, the chapter reflects on the reaction of the Chinese government to the fansubbing phenomenon in terms of prosecution and the response of fansubbing groups, and that of their audiences, to the authorities. In Chapter 10, the working methods of fansubbing groups will be described, with reference to YYeTs, the largest fansubbing group in China. I argue that fansubbing may have already influenced the practice of Chinese subtitling and the Chinese society as a new wave of translation; and that, despite its initial focus on popular cultural practice, fansubbing in China has become an undercurrent flowing beneath the authoritarian censorship and therefore has made the fine line between cultural life and political activism obscure, though it is yet to "fully extend to the political sphere" (Zhang and Mao 2013: 59).
Chapter 8. Censorship and Subtitling in Official Domains

The Chinese Government relies on the censorship system to control the distribution of media. Censorship masks the erotic, vulgar or inconvenient content of an original and sometimes bans particular films outright because it is difficult to edit them without jeopardizing their quality. Despite the greater tolerance of diversity and progress, in comparison with the previous eras, the Government is apt to intensify the censorship so as to keep the spectrum of cultural materials under control. Domestically, the state cultural regulation has a strong grip over the domestic television media through confining the range of formats and content (Gao 2012: 68). Internationally, foreign media networks and film production companies have to survive prolonged and complex bureaucratic and censorship procedures in order to enter the market in Mainland China (Rohn 2010: 260-261). The process of state-sanctioned marketisation and opening-up has been subject to intense censorship in order to avoid any potential repercussions from the influence of foreign cultures and ideologies (mostly Western), which may inspire the viewers to challenge the Party rule (Shirk 2010: 3). Censorship is enforced not only to repress but also to influence and guide authors, art work and public opinion and thereby defend the ideological governance of the Chinese Communist Party (Xie 2012: 10).

To explore the dynamic practice of censorship on the access to foreign films and television, this chapter will, first, provides an overview of AVT in China, with a particular focus on authorised translation (8.1). 8.2 will introduce the major censorship institution in China by focusing on its innovation for supporting the state monopoly on cultural and media products. In 8.3, the regulations and principles enforced by the censorship institution will be put into question in light of several decisions made by censors when appraising American films and television series. It
will be argued in 8.4, that the censorship should not be understood as simply a political safeguarding system combating hostile or inappropriate elements of foreign cultures and ideologies, since the censorship operates as much for economic reasons as political ones.

8.1 AVT in China and Access to the Foreign Electronic Entertainment

Foreign films produced by non-socialist countries were scarce in China before 1978, the year when the country began to reform its economic system and open up to the world, particularly the West. Most foreign films shown in cinemas across the country were imported from the Former Soviet Union (FSU). Nevertheless, the dubbing industry thrived because the practice was deemed essential to the viewing experience of a Chinese audience due to the high rates of illiteracy as well as the lack of public knowledge about foreign languages and cultures (Qian 2009: 17-18). The dubbing industry in China entered its golden age after 1978, when a group of dedicated and experienced dubbing artists devoted their passions and talent to the translation and dubbing of a wider variety of foreign films imported from different countries.

Between the late 1970s and mid-1990s, dubbing was still welcomed by Chinese audiences who found dubbed film versions to be more appealing than subtitled ones (Zhang 2004). Since the late 1990s, however, particularly after 2002, when China joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO), dubbing gradually lost its appeal to cinema audiences in major cities due to social and economic changes, although the majority of foreign films and TV programmes are still dubbed for TV viewers (Du et al, 2013: 95). In addition, the retirement of senior dubbing artists as well as the increased workload and insufficient financial rewards have made it more difficult for
newcomers to fulfil their tasks to the same level of quality, as achieved by their predecessors. The annual quota for imported films is approximately thirty-four films which are translated by four Chinese film companies: August First Film Studio, Changchun Film Group Corporation, Shanghai Film Translation Corporation and Beijing Film Translation Corporation. Despite the significant amount of work involved, funding is very often insufficient to cover the costs of each translation project. According to Wang (2013: 87), the executive director of the translation department at August First Film Studio, funding for a dubbing project amounts to 50,000 yuan (approximately 7600 AUD); this amount includes not only the payment for the translators and voice actors but also the cost of facilities and other expenditure.

Alongside dubbed films were subtitled versions of foreign films. The majority of those that reached Chinese audiences at the time were smuggled from Hong Kong, Taiwan and other regions of Southeast Asia because subtitling was not the preferred domestic method of official screen translation. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Chinese subtitles produced for foreign films in Mainland China were considered unsatisfactory; translators who were asked to carry out the task lacked sufficient knowledge about source language (SL) colloquialisms and cultures, due to the lacking of close contacts with an authentic SL context, while essential professional guidelines and technological supports were also absent (Chen 2009: 108). Despite this, subtitling has been proved to be a faster and more economic mode of AVT than dubbing, among other advantages.

Whereas dubbing can negatively affect rather than actively enhance audio and visual entertainment due to the lack of technological infrastructure, subtitling assists the audience to listen to the original dialogue and to enjoy the entire performance; this

is particularly evident in Hollywood blockbusters featuring sophisticated sound effects which are difficult to retain in a dubbed version (Du, et al: 2013: 104-105). Viewers are also aware of “credibility gap” (Pedersen 2007: 33) as their ability of to understand and communicate in foreign languages improves. It leads to an increased awareness of the socio-cultural differences between an original narrative and the Chinese context. For example, a Chinese-dubbed film may be considered surreal by a viewer, as the characters speaking Mandarin, despite the backdrop of diverse ethnocultural backgrounds.

On television, the few officially released programmes are deprived of the original flavour of the SL dialogue and popular cultural references due to the censorship in the officially approved subtitling and dubbing (Hsiao 2014: 219). Meanwhile the domestically produced TV dramas continued which many considered as having predictable plots, limited themes and explicit political posturing since the 1980s, the time when the domestic production of TV programmes began to thrive (Gao 2012: 62-65). Significant changes have happened since the turn of the century, as multiple viewing platforms are developed to cope with the fast online distribution of audiovisual products. The spread of knowledge and materials from foreign cultures, particularly from the West, has raised the issue among the audience for an authentic experience of popular foreign television series through the less controlled media on the Internet rather than being subject to the dominant national television networks (Gao 2012: 65). It is against this background that fansubbing emerges and proliferates in China, challenging the authorised translation by preserving the integrity of the original and striving for transparency in translation. In addition, fansubbing provides the audience with a wider variety of foreign audiovisual products which are, on the one hand, more up-to-date products in international cinema and TV broadcasts,
and on the other hand, free from the official appraisal procedures which aim to edit imported films into culturally and politically correct forms.

8.2 Censorship

In China, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT), a branch of the State Council, is in charge of supervising the enterprises engaged in cultural and media productions and guarding access to foreign (popular) cultural and media content. One of its primary responsibilities is to censor any material that is considered offensive to the Chinese Government, the mainstream ideologies and cultural standards. To remain efficient in fulfilling this task, SAPPRFT has made three innovations to its current administrative structure, merging different institutions to supervise cultural and media activities. It was originally known as the Film and Television Bureau, founded in 1986 by bringing the State Ministry of Culture, Film Council and the Department of Radio and Television under the same administrative framework. The bureau was then reorganised as the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) in 1998 probably in response to the expanding trade and co-production between the domestic and foreign film and media enterprises. The administration was merged with the General Administration of Press and Publication in 2014 to form the current SAPPFRT probably due to the widely noticed dispute around the newspaper Southern Weekly30 in 2013. In this way, the administration and its subordinate institutions conduct the censorship on film, television, press and the information on the Internet and hence perform the gate-keeping role more effectively. The next section will seek to describe the policies and rules on the appraisement of foreign films submitted for approval of exhibition.

8.3. A Lack of Transparency in Censorship Regulations

The Chinese government, in the efforts to censor depictions of crime and sex, once resorted to banning all entertainment films in order to maintain the legitimacy of socialist culture (Zhang 2008). Despite the relaxation in censorship after the open-up in 1978 and particularly the entry to WTO in 2002, as Clark (1987: 57) concluded, "[W]hat changed least was the formal structure of censorship and control", as the censorship is seemingly relaxed not because of an active adjustment but is due to the fact that, "with the deepening of reform era, much is permanently out of control" (Pickowicz 1995: 218); and that "many intellectuals have pressured successfully for fewer restrictions" (Kraus 2004: 122), while "the emerging cultural market place has complicated the censors’ job" (ibid.). When it comes to the case of censoring foreign films, many films containing politically sensitive messages or allusions have been approved for public exhibition. For example, the Chinese Central Television network (CCTV) aired the film *V for Vendetta* (2006) in 2012 without any further editing. In contrast to this, according to Article 25 of the Regulations on the Administration of Films, the following contents are prohibited from being involved in films:

1) those denying the basic principles determined by the constitution;
2) those affecting the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of China;
3) those leaking classified information, threatens the homeland security or damages the credit and interest of China;
4) those encouraging hatred and discrimination among ethnic groups, jeopardises the solidarity among ethnic groups, or violates ethic cultural norms and principles;
5) those propagating cult and superstitions;
6) those disturbing social order and threatens social stability;
7) those depicting pornography, gambling, violence, or abets people to commit crimes;

8) those humiliating or defaming the others, or damaging the lawful interests of the others;

9) those compromising social morality or traditional cultures in China; and

10) those containing information which is prohibited by law, administrative regulations and government policies. (translated by Wang and Zhang [forthcoming])

In practice, the censorship, as observed by Calkins (1998: 243), is “contextual, individualised, and continuously negotiable rather than absolute or binding”, since there are no comprehensive definitions and guidelines specifying the elements targeted by the censorship. For example, there is no exact definition on what are social morality and traditional cultures in China and what kind of content may compromise them. The focus of film censorship is on content of the film itself and therefore the standards and guidelines applied vary from case to case. One particular film may be approved, while another one belonging to the same category or franchise may be banned. For example, among the four instalments of *The Pirates of the Caribbean* the second one was banned outright for its “violent and supernatural content”,32 and third one underwent a severe cut of scenes, including those showing the Chinese character Sao Feng33 due to his physical resemblance to one of the

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33 See China Censors ‘Cut’ Pirates Film: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/6744245.stm (Last consulted on 17.04.2015)
stereotypical portrayals of Chinese people, Fu Manchu. In other cases, a formerly approved film may be disapproved or "re-adjusted", as is the case of the cut of the nude drawing scene in *Titanic 3D* (2012); the scene passed the censorship in 1997 when the original film was exhibited in China. Besides, whereas popular American television series, such as *The Big Bang Theory* and *The Practice*, are banned from licensed online broadcast, other series containing politically sensitive information, such as *House of Cards*, remain available in the authorised video-streaming services;\(^{34}\) not to mention the Chinese Central Television (CCTV) broadcasts the Chinese-dubbed versions of *Game of Thrones* and *Under the Dome* nation-wide, despite the depictions of violence in both series. The inconsistency and flip-flops demonstrate a certain degree of arbitrariness of censorship, as the censors are seemingly to approve or disapprove a particular film based on what they consider an appropriate interpretation of the regulations above.

The arbitrariness in the practice of censorship is afforded by the absence of a comprehensive rating system which establishes the restriction on the audience age for viewing a particular film. The authorities considers that China lacks "essential conditions" for the implementation of a comprehensive rating system for films, as stated by Zang Zengxiang, the deputy director of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Film, Radio and TV.\(^{35}\) However, he did not provide any explanation on what exactly the so-called "essential conditions" are. The lack of rating system may also be due to the concern that the rating system would allow filmmakers to exploit box-office earnings by making films full of dissident content such as sex and violence (Wang 2014: 404). The absence of a rating system in turn allows the government to maintain the


authoritarian censorship or intensified it at any time in its efforts to prevent the
elements prohibited by the regulations above from reaching the Chinese audience and
thereby realise the political and ideological control. The censors may have been
influenced by the socio-political circumstances in China at time when a particular
film is under appraisement, and by economic goals determined by the Government,
particularly those in developing domestic film industry in accordance with the outlook
set by the central Government.

8.4 Possible Motivations for Censorship

In China, on the one hand, the Marxist ideology and the Communist Party have
a significant influence on political, social, economic and cultural activities (Zheng
2007); and on the other hand, by implementing “socialist market economy” and
joining WTO, the country receives the influx of foreign capital, values, and cultural
products and their consumptions (Fung 2009; and Tan 2011). Subsequently, there
arises a series of paradoxes in the consumption of cultural products. Despite being
productive in terms of numbers, the cultural production in China is inefficient in
satisfying the aspiration and curiosity of the audience, and particularly the young,
educated generation (Wilson 2011: 241). In response to the rapid spread of new
television technology and the rise of new media, domestic broadcasters are seeking to
expand their services globally (Latham 2007), while popular social networks such as
Facebook and Twitter are banned from public access; the CCTV propagates the
audience reception of the online live broadcast of the 2015 Chinese New Eve Gala on

36 According to the Notice of the Production of TV Series in May 2013 (关于 2013 年 5 月全国拍摄制
作电视剧备案公示的通知) (written in Chinese), 103 TV series were in production, with a combined
total of 3354 episodes. These series cover a wide variety of genres, from political propaganda series,
such as depicting the improving living standards in rural areas, to teenage dramas and romantic
comedies. The original article can be found at: http://www.sarft.gov.cn/articles/2013/06/17/20130617165128790652.html (last consulted on
Facebook in a series of news reports during the Chinese New Year. It is against this background that hegemonic practices of censorship by the Party through the SAPPRFT coordinate market and political discourse, channelling the content of foreign cultural products into the ideologically neutral zone by gagging their dissident contents and confining their popularity and reception, particularly in the authorised venues such as cinemas and TV, so as to protect the interest of domestic film industry.

8.4.1 Political Concerns

Although the censorship on foreign films is becoming increasingly relaxed, it remains vigilant against the expression that is seemingly critical about the Party and its governance and political stands in the past and present and the communist ideology in general. Films concerning or making references to China, particularly the history of the Party, major historical events, and/or political issues (contemporary ones in particular), may be severely censored or banned even though they are politically neutral, or highly anticipated blockbusters. Driven by the commercial interests, foreign studios, and particularly those in Hollywood, deliberately add positive references to China to their films or alter the content of those films in order to pass the censorship. Despite this, many films are still rejected by the censors for political reasons. One noticeable example is *World War Z* (2013), of which the references to China were purposefully altered and may thereby led to some major changes in the original plot of the film, including making China the only country uninfected by the zombie epidemic while in the original novel China is the source of the catastrophe.

The film may be banned for its depiction of violence and graphic scenes, as is determined by the censorship regulations explained in 8.3 above, but it may be more

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likely to be banned due to the fall of the Communist regime in China described in the original novel, which is absolutely intolerable and unacceptable to the Government. In contrast, in the licensed online broadcast of *House of Cards*, a politically controversial statement, “Mao is dead, and so is his China”, reaches the audience with a precise translation.\(^{38}\) Indeed, the current administration is presenting to the world a new face of China (given its progress in economic and domestic reform) hence seemingly leaving farther behind the political system forged by Mao.

In addition, some films may be neutral when referring to China however still considered unacceptable by the censors. For example, the first twenty minutes of the film *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (2009)* was severely censored, and several scenes were cut from this part of the film, in order to erase the indications and references that may help the audience realise that the military operation shown in this part of the film was taking place in Shanghai. Therefore, the night view of Shanghai presented in the original film was changed into dark background with only one local reference left un-censored - a billboard of “Meters/bonwe”, a leading Chinese clothes manufacturer. The operation of foreign military forces on the Chinese soil is offensive to the authorities, but a Chinese brand shown in a Hollywood blockbuster may be a convincing way for the Government to propagate the international economic influence of China to the audience. This contradictory dual standard of censorship is more evident as in the case of the film *Transformers: Age of Extinction (2014)* which is ridden by commercials of Chinese brands and scenes showing local attractions in Beijing and Hong Kong, despite the latter being rampaged by chaotic robotic warfare.

The censors may change their perspective due to the consideration for the positive

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effect of the Chinese elements in the film in boasting to the audience the success of
the Government in building the soft power of China; the Chinese party-state officials
has spoken openly of increasing the soft power of China (Edney 2012: 889), and
particularly through developing a strong film industry (Su 2013).

Lastly, as to the flip-flops in the decisions by censors, the reason may primarily
be the response from the audience to a particular film, which is formerly approved by
the censorship, rather than the film itself. In most cases, responses from the audience
are parodic in nature but may also contain sensitive messages, to which the authorities
are cautious due to the consequences such messages might cause. A convincing
example is the removal of Avatar (2009) from all 2D cinemas across China, ordered
by the government in response to the metaphor, which compares the settlement of
indigenous alien species in the film to the “dìng-zi-hù” (钉子户, nail household(s)) in
China, made by viewers on popular Chinese social networks. “Nail houses” are
buildings, mostly in less developed suburban areas of a city or in countryside, marked
“illegal” or purchased by real estate companies for their development plans in the
name of the urbanisation supported by the government; people living in “nail houses”
refuse to cooperate because they would not have any other places to live upon the
removal of their current living places. The antagonism between residents in “nail
houses” and developers has raised a series of controversial issues that are
contradictory to the outlook of “harmonious society” which the Government
propagate deliberately to the public and to the international community. Thus, when
the audience made a comparison between the conflict between the indigenous alien
species and the human forces depicted in Avatar and that between “nail households”
and urban developers, the Government intervened and restricted the exhibition to 3D
cinemas so as to prevent the film from receiving a wider reception, instead of
overturning the former decision of censorship by banning the film.\textsuperscript{39} Nevertheless, by the time the Government ordered its removal, the film had already earned 300 million yuan (approximately $62,500,000), the ticket price for 3D cinemas is triple as much as 2D cinemas (or even more expensive) so that many viewers could not afford to view the film. Subsequently, the censorship is seemingly preventing the dissident comment above from having a wider recognition by preventing a number of viewers from experiencing the cause. However, the hidden reasons behind this order of restriction could also be out of a further economic consideration for the earning of box office by domestic films. Shortly after the order of restriction is issued, the state-backed Chinese blockbuster \textit{Confucius} (2010) was in cinema, which grossed about 13 million yuan (approximately $2,708,333); the earning would probably be less if the Government did not intervene.

As discussed above, while political reasons fit the stereotypical notion of censorship, it is too monotonic to consider them as the absolute and only reasons that influence the result of censorship, as any explanation of censorship in China based on only political reasons forestalls the influence from the economic sector which is as important as the political goals determined by the Government. Nevertheless, the film censorship is implemented to carry out the dual-task to reinforce the persuasion of the official ideology, and to protect the domestic film industry which is an essential component of the soft power pursued by the Government.

\textsuperscript{39}See China Axes 2D Avatar from Cinemas: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/8469672.stm (Last consulted on 29 December 2014).
8.4.2 Economic Considerations

Since China’s ascension to the WTO in 2002, major Hollywood studios have made a series of bold moves towards capturing an increased share of the post-WTO Chinese film market. The U.S. IMAX Corp has moved its Asia headquarters from Singapore to Shanghai and now operates theatres backed by Warner Bros., International Theatre and United Cinemas International. The first decade of the new millennium witnessed the transformation of the major state-owned film studios into an era of coproduction, while feature films such as Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Kung Fu Hustle, and Hero have been international successes; each of these films was a joint-production between Chinese studios and major Hollywood enterprises. Despite this, censorship enforces a restriction on foreign films, of which the quota for importation is limited to thirty-four or so and hence ensures the influence of foreign cultures and cultural products in China are kept under control.\(^\text{40}\) Subsequently, the domestic film industry in particular would be able to compete with foreign films in the market of China, or at least to obtain a decent share.\(^\text{41}\)

In 2003, cinema was recognised as an “industry” in an official administrative document, and several other documents offering similar pronouncements soon followed.\(^\text{42}\) As relevant policies emphasise, to develop the domestic film industry, the Government:

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• issues the National Film Development Special Fund to support primarily the production of films targeting children and propagating the official history and communist ideology;
• provides tax incentives to major film studios (state-owned) and facilities used for production;
• supports those domestic film enterprises venturing into markets overseas, including channelling paths for these enterprise to join international co-production;
• finances the technological improvement of production and exhibition facilities, including purchasing high technological equipment, enhancing facilities in local cinemas, constructing more cinemas in remote and rural areas, and developing online viewing platforms providing high quality video-streaming services.

Although the domestic film industry is subject to an even more rigorous censorship system than foreign films trying to enter the market in China, viewers have seen exceptions in the domestic cinema in the past few years, in which the censorship is somehow more tolerant to the dissident element in domestic films than to those in foreign films. In the process of censoring domestic films, every aspect of a particular film production is scrutinised, from script writing to the finished film, while the contents prohibited in foreign films are also forbidden in domestic films, particularly those references to sensitive political issues and depictions of sexuality. However, the outcomes of censorship for domestic films and foreign ones respectively demonstrate a kind of dual standard in treating the prohibited contents and therefore make the censorship regulations contradictory in practice. For example, on the one hand, the critically acclaimed film *Let the Bullet Fly* (2010) passed the censorship and became the highest grossing film of the year in China, despite references to sensitive historical
and political events, which raised some wild online discussions by viewers, not to mention an ephemeral nude scene, among other sexual allusions and depiction of violence; on the other hand, the film *Cloud Atlas (2012)* was approved for exhibition in China with about forty minutes of its original content cut, due to the depiction of sex, homosexuality and violence.

The dual standard of censorship may be applied in order to encourage the production of domestic films which have formed the greatest challenge to imported films in the past few years; among the ten most grossed films in China, five are either domestically produced or by international joint production. Nevertheless, many imported films will not be as appealing to audiences as its original version due to the censored edition which cut scenes and clips without consideration for the integrity of the narrative. However, the efficacy of censorship is put at odds when the restrictions on content and the number of foreign films, among other foreign cultural products, have simply encouraged Chinese audiences to access the content rejected by censors through alternative sources, in particular those unofficial sources facilitated by the fansubbing networks.

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Chapter 9. Fansubbing: Entertainment and Activism

The firm stance of the Chinese authorities on the issue of censorship is at odds with recent innovations in communication and digital technology, which in many cases facilitate piracy to provide the Chinese audience with access to foreign films and television series in their original editions. After the turn of the century, piracy has found an alternative and more “secure” route to continue functioning – the Internet, which enables distributors to provide audiovisual products for consumers in a streamlined fashion, achieving a point-to-point connection between a consumer’s personal device and the online audiovisual resources, facilitating piracy to further expansion and prosperity. 9.1 of this chapter focuses on the “thriving and stubbornly persistent” business of audiovisual piracy in China (Gao 2014: 125) and how the widespread fansubbing network emerged and proliferated as a new form of piracy. This chapter seeks further to demonstrate how fansubbing puts censorship at odds with the demand from the audience (9.2), while striving to survive against prosecution by the government (9.3), through cultural practices in translation and therefore becomes a form of “fan activism” (Rowe et al, 2010) in the political sphere of China.

9.1 An overview of Audiovisual Piracy in China

Gao Yang (2012: 71) observes three phases in the progress of access to foreign media products in China: (1) the 1980s and 1990s, (2) between 2000 and 2005, and (3) from 2005 and onward. It is in the latter two phases that the more internalised and privatised consumption of pirated audiovisual products have developed among the Chinese audience, who have experienced the change of audiovisual medium from magnetic cassettes to optical discs and then to digitised video data shared (Gao, D. 2014: 129). Viewers find viewing on the Internet is more compatible with their lives.
than other viewing patterns associated with television, DVDs and cinema because those resources on most video-streaming and/or downloading websites are accessible by all without payment, not to mention the wider range of materials available on these website and the flexible viewing schedule they grant their viewers. As the formerly prevailing consumption of pirated DVDs, the audience resorts to the Internet for their consumption of foreign TV and films is considered the consequence caused collectively by the censorship, restriction on imports and higher cost of cinema tickets (Cai 2008: 138).

Audiovisual piracy is prevalent in China for at least two reasons: the speed at which pirated products can be distributed, and the ease with which they can meet the demand of Chinese consumers at lower prices. As one of the largest DVD markets in the world, in addition to its transnational economic and legal environment, China provides a large market for pirated media production and its growing consumption. The use of pirate products in China is so prevalent, and the loss to legitimate producers so high, that President Obama addressed piracy in his State of the Union speech in 2012, referring to the unsatisfactory situation in US-Chinese trade:

We’ve brought trade cases against China at nearly twice the rate as the last administration – and it’s made a difference… But we need to do more. It’s not right when another country lets our movies, music, and software be pirated.44

On disputes regarding copyright protection between the U.S. and China, Yang (2009: 3) stated that it may be less effective for the U.S. to put pressure on China so as to make it comply with international obligations for copyright protection. China needs time to develop into a country where International Property Rights (IPRs) are

44 The full transcript of the speech is found at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/state-of-the-union-2012-obama-speech-excerpts/2012/01/24/gIQA9D3QOQ_story_1.html (last consulted on 22.04.2015).
better enforced and relevant obligations are fully complied with. Whereas the international community, and the U.S. in particular, needs to seek to cooperate with China further to resolve their differences rather than instigating any conflict (Yang 2009: 27), the role of copyright in balancing the interest of right holders and the interests of the audience is increasingly complex (Creemers 2012: 17).

As technology progresses, those engaging in piracy have increasingly been meeting the demands of a global audience through the Internet. Online piracy has an extremely high audience reception in China, given that millions of Internet cafés in China, either licensed or unlicensed, provide facilities for illegal downloading and that downloading programmes are easy to access and user-friendly. Although the Chinese authorities have never accepted the idea of a “boundaryless” cyberspace and strive to keep the Internet under the strict official control (Tsui 2003), the state monopoly over the Internet access and the state-supervision over online activities have, ironically, facilitated the construction and expansion of the Internet (Qiu 2000: 13; Zhang 2006: 286). The reception and downloading of fansubbed materials raise question around the state-supervision which has been reinforced by many metaphorical descriptions, and particularly “the Great Firewall” (Walton 2001; Clayton et al, 2006; Blancafort 2014).

9.2 Fansubbing in China as Activism Against the Censorship

Fansubbing is the activity of subtitling done “by fans for fans” (Díaz Cintas & Sanchez 2006), in which the participants (fansubbers) are acting “effectively as self-appointed translation commissioners that choose what is to be subtitled” (Pérez-González 2007, 71). The fansubbing phenomenon emerged among American and European audiences of Japanese animation (anime) in the late 1980s and began to
proliferate in the mid 1990s (Díaz-Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2006). The multiple peer-to-peer networks of fansubbing owe much to the evolution of and easy access to user-friendly technologies, which enables fansubbers to carry out their collaborative activities in subtitling and free-sharing outside “commercial imperatives” (Díaz-Cintas 2009: 11). At present, the products of fansubbing has expanded beyond the anime genres and incorporated a wider variety of audiovisual products, from television drama to video games.

Fansubbing emerged in China since 2001, when broadband networks were established in every major city of the country (Tian 2011), joining the worldwide phenomenon of subtitling and sharing of anime. Fansubbing of English audiovisual programmes, particularly American television series, began in 2003 when *Friends* was introduced to Mainland China through the Internet and pirated DVDs. An online forum named “F6” was founded in response to the popularity of the series, marking the beginning of the fansubbing of American television series in Mainland China and adding the word měi-jù (美劇, American television series) to the Chinese vocabulary.

Fansubbers are those self-motivated viewers seeking authentic experiences and knowledge of foreign cultures and therefore dedicated voluntarily to unofficial translation and distribution of foreign films and TV for those who share the same enthusiasm. They gather with like-minded peers online and establish fansubbing groups and thereby foster a culture of download among the Internet users in China (Hu 2013: 440). Through crowdsourcing, fansubbers utilise their professional expertise and language skills to produce accurate translation in order to not only enhance the viewers’ knowledge about the different aspect of foreign countries but also correct some longstanding misconceptions about foreign countries and their cultures and ideologies caused by the state-controlled media and translation (Hsiao
By accessing resources provided by fansubbing groups, the audience soon realised how those officially imported foreign films and television series are deprived of their authenticity due to the unnatural euphemism and misrepresentation and, more importantly, the sanitisation by censorship which snipes those unwholesome scenes (Gao 2012: 74).

Fansubbing has been of concern by different parties (e.g. the government and copyright holders) not only due to the infringement of copyright protection, as is the case of fansubbing activities elsewhere (see Pérez-González 2007: 268-269). The Government is tolerant of fansubbers and their audiences, as long as they focus solely on the material consumption and popular culture, because, according to Fung (2009), the obsession and preoccupation with popular culture are likely to divert people “from critical discourse of civic engagement that could undermine state legitimacy” (Fung 2009 297). As Zhao (2008) pointed out, the authorities allowed the “market-driven popular culture and soft entertainment” to enter and emerge but only use them to maintain “social pacification” and to “sustain the party’s continuing political dominance” (Zhao 2008: 223). Meanwhile, the censorship remains strict and is ready to eliminate any content which is considered unfriendly by the authorities.

Although fansubbing primarily focuses on entertainment and popular culture, most of their audiences are driven by the plebeian curiosity and parochial imaginations about celebrities, television, film franchises and video games (etc.). The reception of fansubbed materials thus inevitably raises questions around the efficacy of censorship. Fansubbing in China can then be considered a form of the widespread “fan activism”, which, according to Rowe and his colleagues, is “regularly read as grass-roots resistance to cultural capitalism and its colonisation of the life worlds of those whose authentic relationship to their cultural forms, identities, and practices
cannot be reduced to disciplined, obedient consumption" (Rowe et al, 2010: 299). This nature of fan activism makes fansubbing groups and those illicit video websites affiliated with them, as well as licensed video-streaming services, targets of the prosecutions led by the authorities which have met resistance from fansubbing groups, those from the private sector and the audience.

9.3 Prosecutions and Resistance

The Government has made serious moves to regulate online activities since 2008, mainly targeting the illicit dissemination of foreign films and media products backed by fansubbing groups, for their activity of sharing "lewd, obscene, and violent content" (Xie & Huang 2010: 429), and for the infringement of copyright. The authorities have enhanced the official supervision on the audiovisual content distributed online by enforcing that online video-streaming services must be provided by licensed enterprises which are either state-owned or stated-controlled (Sennitt 2008, in Hu 2013: 441). However, the emphasis on copyright is primarily concerned with securing broadcasting rights to the Government for making profits and thereby competing with those from private sectors, rather than protecting the right of original authors (Hu 2013: 443). In response, fansubbing groups seek to cooperate with private video websites who need capable partners such as fansubbing groups to translate the purchased foreign media content so as to compete with state-owned enterprises. However, the rights of self-management and self-surveillance have been taken away from those in the private sector in order to halt the avid following of popular foreign films and media products translated by fansubbing groups (Hu 2013:

Therefore, while cooperation with private video websites is freeing some fansubbing groups from accusations of infringement of copyright protection, it also makes fansubbers and their patterns from the private sector subject to the official control over the access to foreign films, among other foreign entertainment media.

Besides translating the foreign entertainment media, the cooperation with the private sector also includes producing Chinese subtitles of open courses from some world-famous universities. For example, a project team of YYeTs, the largest fansubbing group in China, was once contracted with the online enterprise, Wang Yi, to translate a series courses from Yale University, seeking academic support from high-level institutes in China. The screenshot in Figure 1 and 2⁴⁶ appear, respectively, at the beginning and the end of each session of the course *Dante in Translation*, showing the following information:

- The participants in the subtitling project: students from the English Faculty of Xi’an International Studies University and members of YYeTs;
- Acknowledgement of these students;
- The tasks completed by the participants: members of YYeTs did the spotting and editing; students from the English Faculty of Xi’an International Studies University produced the translation;
- An emphasis on the non-commercial subtitling activity undertaken by YYeTs.

⁴⁶ The video resources can be found at: http://open.163.com/special/sp/danteintranslation.html (last consulted 23.04.2015).
China Daily, China’s national English-language newspaper, reported the subtitled version of Yale open courses produced by YYeTs, regarding the group as “China’s top-ranked volunteer translation group”, as shown below:
Yale professor Shelly Kagan doesn't speak Chinese, but thanks to online subtitling groups, thousands of Chinese students can now listen to Kagan's lectures. Over the past few months, China's top-ranked volunteer translation group, YYeTs, has subtitled 10 of Yale University's Open Courses for viewers to download for free, including Kagan's philosophy class on death ... Volunteer translation, or "crowdsourcing", is one solution that is increasingly popular in China, with Kagan's course receiving over 10,000 visitors per day ... YYeTs has traditionally translated US TV shows like CSI and Gray's Anatomy, but Fang Si, an English editor who joined the group in 2008, explains that they started the Open Yale Courses project because so many of their users are students. With this new project, the group is channeling its experience and passion for translating American entertainment.47

The report focused on the effort made by YYeTs (人人影视) to make the open courses accessible to Chinese audiences. Although mentioning their history of “translating American entertainment”, the journalist was reluctant to further question the legitimacy of such activities. Despite this, such a positive comment from this state-owned English-language newspaper inevitably improved the public image of YYeTs; its contribution to the progress of public literacy in China is now known to every reader of this report and, more importantly, to those who watch the subtitled video recordings of the open courses. However, as is the case of foreign entertainment media, open courses become extremely popular among the audience and therefore is of concern to many who consider the popularity of open courses from world-famous institutes a threat to the domestic education in China (Tian and Hu 2012; Duan and Yu 2013).

To remain active, some fansubbing groups tried to operate with multiple servers and downloading platforms. For example, although YYeTs does not provide download links to some films on its own website, its members still produce the subtitles of these films and provide links to other websites where these films can be downloaded for free. Figure 3 below shows the webpage supposed to provide the link to download of the film Lone Ranger. Instead, users see a notice written in bold, red characters,

saying, “For copyright reasons, no download service is provided for this film. Only the text files of subtitles and the trailer of this film are provided” (版权问题本片不提供下载，只提供字幕文件和预告片). However, another notice written in bold, black characters is given right below the first notice, showing “Our resources are from the websites below. You can go to these websites and find out if they provide download links of the film” (本站资源来源于以下网站，你可以到这些网站查看是否有下载).

(Figure 3: screenshot taken on 04.10.2013)

One of the links provided by YYeTs opens the relevant webpage of yayaxz.com, as shown in Figure 4. Besides video resources, viewers can also find a description of the plot of the film and options to share the information on Chinese social networks, the links of which are shown below the poster, as is shown in Figure 5.
Unlike the partnership with the private sector, the multiple downloading only further justifies that fansubbing is illegal because it facilitates unauthorised translation and dissemination of films and other audiovisual products. However, issues regarding
copyright are rather debatable than definitive in China. On the one hand, fansubbing groups operate in a legal grey zone where their fansubbed versions do not necessarily substitute for authorised products and thereby do not lead foreign media companies to any avenue losses due to the unavailability of most fansubbed materials in official distribution channels (Meng and Wu 2013: 130); on the other hand, piracy has largely been taken for granted rather than being a major concern by ordinary citizens (Wilson 2011: 225). Alford (1995: 2) considered the unique “Chinese political culture” the primary reason why the concept of intellectual property could not take hold in Chinese society. The modern sense of intellectual property was introduced to China in the mid-nineteenth century, when China was compelled by Western powers. Even at present, many Chinese people still consider the notion of copyright a “foreign moral pressure imposed on China” (Hsiao 2014: 221). Despite the efforts made by the ruling authorities from the early twentieth century to the present days, the campaign for intellectual property protection has shown no significant progress in China (Wang 2004: 260) but a collective psychology emphasizing that copyright should be proximate to power and subordinate to social hierarchies (Han 2010: 344).

More controversially, even those who recognise the copyright legitimacy still demonstrate some sort of resistance to it as a reaction to the censorship. This is evident in the comments posted by viewers on Sina Weibo, a Chinese answer to Twitter, supporting fansubbing groups against the antipiracy moves taken by the Government on the World Intellectual Property Day (26 April) in 2013. Among those comments, a metaphor is widely quoted, comparing fansubbers to Prometheus. The expression “dào-bān-zhē-jìù-shì-dào-huō-zhē” (盗版者就是盗火者, pirates are fire-bringers) demonstrates the views of the audience who consider fansubbing heroic
rather than illicit in a closed society such as China. The message implied by this metaphor may be that fansubbing is tolerable in the current socio-political climate in China, where the conventional idea of intellectual property is importunate and piracy is effective, while the efforts made by the authorities have been considered an “arduous and thankless job” (Li 2010, in Gao 2012: 75). Despite this, the affiliation with piracy makes the infringement of copyright protection nonetheless plausible to the government, which seeks to improve the copyright legitimacy in China. Nevertheless, the campaign to improve copyright legitimacy will help the government win global recognition (Pang 2012).

As the Government has determined to tighten its supervision over the Internet in order to “purify” the content shared online and perish online piracy, the Action “Sword-Net” was launched on 11 June 2014, mainly targeting fansubbing groups and those video websites affiliated with them, licensed or not. Since then, not only the copyright protection but also the censorship on online video-streaming and downloading services has been enforced, given that the SAPPRFT ordered the banning of many foreign films and popular TV series from the licensed private video websites which were formerly granted with autonomy in importing and censoring foreign audiovisual products. Besides, the action has seemingly been en route to end the illicit operation of fansubbing groups permanently, based on the current circumstance, in which unlicensed websites backed by fansubbing groups has ceased

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operating since the end of November 2014, including shooter.com, the largest online database of subtitles in China, and the website of YYeTs.\(^{50}\)

While eliminating all the resources for download from their websites, members of fansubbing groups still emphasise their conviction to those Chinese viewers, youth and young adults in particular, who are craving for more foreign culture products, in spite of the media monopoly by the government; to fansubbers, any means for this end should be the means serving public interests (Hsiao 2014: 221). This is evident in the message from the founder of shooter.com, announcing the closure of the website, saying:

The value that shooter.com used to uphold is to help people in this country climb over the wall so as to know other cultures in the world. If it has helped people in this way, I will be more than happy. However, the era in which shooter.com is needed has gone. Therefore, from now on, the website is shutdown”.\(^{51}\) (My translation)

Meanwhile, the resistance of fansubbing groups is likely to continue. While other fansubbing groups are subject to the order from the authorities by shutting down their server or having their IP addresses eliminated, YYeTs continues to communicate to its viewers on its whitewashed homepage between the late November 2014 and early February 2015, acknowledging their support in the past decade and emphasises its code of free-sharing, learning and progress. In addition, no fansubbing group has ceased introducing foreign cultural products (e.g. films, TV series and other entertainment media) to the Chinese audience and sharing their translation (Chinese subtitles) in textual files, given that YYeTs continues to post updates of their


\(^{51}\)See *YYeTs and Shooters.com Are Shut Down – Is This the End of Fansubbing?* (人人影视射手网关闭 互联网字幕组时代就此终结?): http://media.people.com.cn/n/2014/1124/c120837-26078129.html (last consulted on 23.04.2015).
translating activities and news of foreign popular media on Sina Weibo. Despite this, as the Action “Sword-Net” expands, the fansubbing network in China is unlikely to resume its former scale of operation. Unexpectedly, on 29 November 2014, shortly after its announcement of closure, YYeTs posted a short-lived message on its whitewashed homepage and its webpage on Weibo, showing the Latin words “invictus maneо” (I remain unvanquished). The meaning of the message is clear to most of its viewers, and other enthusiasts of foreign entertainment media, as it refers to the episode of *Person of Interest* subtitled by YYeTs shortly before its shutdown.

On 6 February 2015, YYeTs returned and has been operating in two separate platforms since then. One is rén-rén-měi-jù (人人美剧, YYeTs American TV) at [www.rrmj.tv](http://www.rrmj.tv), in which YYeTs facilitates a social network for enthusiasts of foreign popular entertainment media; and the other is SUBTITLES at [www.zimuzu.tv](http://www.zimuzu.tv), where YYeTs continues its fansubbing and free-sharing activities. Therefore, fansubbing in China, as a form of fan activism, may eventually be transferable from cultural consumption to political engagement, as the fan activism elsewhere described by Jenkins (2006), continuing to cater for the demands of the audience through well-organised subtitling procedures, despite the infringement of copyright protection.
Chapter 10. Working Methods of Fansubbing and Its Influence

Although taught by their peers at first, Chinese fansubbing groups have now established their own methods of operation that are specific to the Chinese context. Fansubbing groups follow their working schedules strictly in order to maintain efficiency and productivity and compete in attracting the highest audience reception. This chapter will, first, explore the process in which members of the same fansubbing group collaborate to complete a subtitling task and the common methods used by fansubbing groups to recruit and train new members (10.1), and the co-existence of peer-production and commodity production in a well-organised fansubbing group (10.2). I will elaborate the matters in discussion by referring to YYeTs.

Founded in October 2003, YYeTs gained popularity due to its efficiency and the variety of its services (e.g. advertising and online shopping). In recent years, the group has begun offering translation services other than just subtitling; for example, translating entertainment news from foreign media and cooperating with major online enterprises in China. Despite the controversy surrounding its continuing practice of fansubbing, the moves taken by YYeTs to engage with subtitling for commercial distribution and provide advertising services hint at possible paths for Chinese fansubbing groups to become legitimate enterprises. The transformation has nevertheless been proved approachable by the success of ViKi (Dwyer 2012), while many still emphasise “not-for-profit” as an essential nature of fansubbing (Barra 2009: 517). In light of latest scholarly opinions, I argue in 10.3 that, although successful integration into legitimate business is still underway, Chinese fansubbing has made a significant contribution to the reception of subtitling, while changing the field of audiovisual translation and audiovisual market place. Translation, according to Lin (2002), has been acting as the catalyst for social change throughout the history
10.1 Fansubbing Process and Assessment of Fansubbers

Investigating the internal affairs of fansubbing groups is no easy task. Due to the constant challenge from censorship, copyright and commercialisation, fansubbers are discreet about their true identities in order to avoid drawing unwelcome attention to themselves and their organisations (Hsiao 2014: 219). Their discretion is well described by Gao, who was “kicked out” of a fansubbing group when she disclosed her intention to study its operation for her sociological research (Gao 2012: 8). To avoid groundless assertions about fansubbing process, it is therefore important to gain the perspective of those who participate in fansubbing as well as that of a researcher, and to observe the fans’ operations as closely as possible. To achieve this, I acted as a volunteer and completed the first phase of the trial period under the instruction of a tutor or tutors; the email address I submitted my application and template of subtitles to might be used by several members who are assigned to assess applicants. Unfortunately, I could not continue the trial period as, through my own experience and following communication with members of YYeTs, I realised the workload was unsustainable. However, I collected valuable first-hand information during this short-lived venture into the world of fansubbing and thus was able to verify second-hand information gained from other channels such as journal articles, theses, news reports and fan blogs.

To produce subtitled versions of American television series, members of YYeTs work between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm for at least one day. The group often recruit people living in America and Canada to record a TV programme when a new episode is broadcast or to obtain a digital copy of a particular film. These copies are then sent
to different project teams for translation and conversion (i.e. inserting subtitles into the original video and then converting the subtitled version into different video formats). At the final stage, the subtitled videos are uploaded to the website of YYeTs for viewers to download. Therefore, it is important to ensure a person’s capability to complete the work and his sense of responsibility to the group before he becomes a member.

The human resources team of YYeTs will contact a candidate within 24 hours of his or her application having been submitted. The candidate will receive links to download the training and test materials. These links can only be accessed during the period that candidate is under consideration for recruitment. The candidate then needs to complete a subtitling test after studying all training materials. The training materials include a video instruction for using Time Machine, a subtitling programme developed by the technical team of YYeTs and a memo about rules applied to Chinese subtitling under the working standards of YYeTs. If the candidate passes the test, he or she will undergo a further training program online after joining the YYeTs’ forum on Tencent QQ. If the candidate does not make contact with the tutors of YYeTs on Tencent QQ in time, his or her access to the forum will expire; the candidate will be considered either irresponsible or unable to follow the working schedule of YYeTs and therefore incapable of being a dedicated member of the group. The trial sessions for assessing candidates imply the existence of a hierarchy within a fansubbing group seeking to establish its credibility among the audience.

10.2 Hierarchy, Competition and Commercialisation

According to Berdou (2010), the hierarchy functions as a generative force which is manifested in a process of learning and socialisation between newcomers
and veterans, peripheral participants and core members, and ordinary contributors and
decision-makers, rather than a repressive force sustaining peer production at both
organisation and discursive levels. Participants are motivated more by the opportunity
to learn than by monetary returns, upholding the spirit of volunteering and free
sharing. When considering fansubbing in China, besides the sense of achievement and
recognition from like-minded peers and viewers, the long-term benefit also lies in the
opportunity to improve one’s foreign-language proficiency (English in particular),
computer skills and media literacy (etc.). Besides these symbolic and psychological
rewards, members of a fansubbing group are striving to gain access to media content
that is not constantly available to all group members. Newcomers must perform well
in their probationary period in order to have access to the File Transfer Protocol
(FTP) server of the group, while existing members must maintain their contribution to
and participation in the group at a certain level, so as to retain access to it.

Despite this, it is difficult to determine whether participants can be accountable
without institutionalised rule-making procedures (Kreiss et al, 2011). The hierarchy
within a particular fansubbing group is necessary for quality control so as to compete
with the subtitling in authorised venues (e.g. state-sponsored translation), as well as
other fansubbing groups. In contrast to the cooperative and open-source principles,
Fuchs (2009: 78-80) observes antagonism between cooperation and competition in the
Internet economy. For example, different groups are competing with one another to
be the first to release the subtitled versions of the latest episodes of some popular
series and Hollywood blockbusters. Winning means more than establishing good
brand image and gaining audience recognition, but also opportunities to cooperate
with commercial enterprises which can provide steady financial support for
fansubbing groups. For example, YYeTs is active in advertising and developing
partnership with licensed video-streaming websites. As the online traffic grows, and the number and size of files hosted on the servers increase, contributions from founding members and small donations from participants are unable to cover the running costs of the group. Commercialisation appears to be the inevitable path that fansubbing groups have to take in order to cope with their expanding activities and growing coverage of digital genres (Meng and Wu 2013: 140).

Within a well-organised fansubbing group, the operation also corresponds with commons-based peer production, which grants individual autonomy and sharing of the resources held in common, in comparison with the hierarchical structure of commodity production (Benkler 2006). However, while maintaining their own spaces for learning, socialising, creating and subtitling, participants in fansubbing are not entirely autonomous. Rather, the operation of a fansubbing group represents a hybrid of commons-based peer production and commodity production (Meng and Wu 2013: 131). On the one hand, members of a fansubbing group work in self-governing fashion, while nurturing a sense of belonging and identification with the group. On the other hand, they rely on digital commodities, such as television broadcasts, film distribution and DVDs in foreign countries to maintain the commons-based peer production of fansubbing. Hence, as stated by Langlois and Elmer (2009), peer production models cannot “escape the propriety imperatives embedded in the Web’s network architecture” (Langlois and Elmer 2009: 774). While the integration of commons-based peer production into commodity production has been realised by ViKi, a former fansubbing platform which successfully commercialises many of its subtitled contents (Dwyer 2012), fansubbing groups in China remain active in a legal grey zone, but have caused a “butterfly effect” beyond the audiovisual market place, in comparison with what is observed by Pérez-González (2007).
10.3 Influence of Fansubbing on Chinese Society

Developments in Chinese translation correspond to developments in the country’s socio-cultural and political transformation. Lin (2002) identifies five major waves of translation in Chinese history:

1. the translation of Buddhist texts from 148 AD to 1037 AD;
2. the translation of Western science and technology in the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644);
3. the translation of Western humanities and social sciences between the mid-19th century and the first half of the 20th century;
4. the translation of Russian materials (mostly socialist literature) in the mid-20th century;
5. present translation activities, involving a wide range of languages and genres (books, stage dramas, audiovisual materials).

The practice of dubbing in the Chinese context is an important factor in the fifth wave; indeed subtitling should be distinguished as a sixth wave, in which fansubbing groups make a significant contribution by providing streamlined access to foreign films and media and causing the “butterfly effect” (Pérez-González 2007) of the foreign in the audiovisual market place of China. Fansubbing groups surpass professionals in terms of productivity and audience share, bringing world cinema to the Chinese audience and highlighting the shortcomings in the practice of authorised subtitling. Professional qualifications are not considered mandatory by employers of subtitlers, although qualifications for the practice of translation have been recognised in a series of government documents (Yang 2011). Whereas amateur volunteer
Subtitlers devote themselves to their tasks out of enthusiasm for the material, those hired by the four major Chinese film franchises are less motivated. This is particularly evident in groups such as “电影字幕翻译 2.0” (Film Subtitle Translation 2.0), based in the Chinese social network service website Douban.com (豆瓣), which are attracting a rather smaller audience, in comparison with popular groups such as YYeTs. Film Subtitle Translation 2.0 focuses on subtitling art films and has launched seven subtitling projects since it was founded in 2010. Each of these projects includes some twenty films based on the members’ recommendations posted on Douban.com. The latest project contains twenty-two films produced in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Russian. Participants in these subtitling projects are registered members of Douban.com; they comply strictly with the traditional technical methodology and hence their works differ from fansubs, though they are also amateurs. In addition, each subtitler works independently on a subtitling project which often takes six weeks to complete.

Seeing the popularly of foreign entertainment media, major online enterprises began to broadcast popular foreign television series on their online video-streaming...
services in 2010 and develop business relationship with foreign broadcasters. For example, Sohu, the largest Chinese Internet enterprise ranked 29 in Alexa’s Internet rankings (according to the statistics on 6th of May 2015),\(^5^5\) has been purchasing the broadcasting rights from Netflix, to which no direct, official access is granted in China. To compete with the private sector, the Chinese Central Television released Chinese-dubbed versions of the first season of *Game of Thrones* and the first season of *Under the Dome* on a free-to-air channels in 2014, bringing the popular American television series into the television network which functions as one of the most important channels of official propaganda. Hence, while changing the dynamic of the audiovisual market place, which seemingly becomes more and more relaxed, the fan activism represented by fansubbing may also drive the ruling administration to seek alternative strategies of propaganda and ideological control.

As the fan activism spreads, it becomes easier for young people to access different ideologies and world-views through news, films, TV series and popular literature. Young Chinese, especially those who were born during the 1990s, are retreating from political propaganda and tending to be rebellious. They are more likely to form their own views of the world and life styles under the influence of progressive ideas from the West. Through viewing materials downloaded from the fansubbing network, Western styles, genres and images have been borrowed and adapted to the younger generation of Chinese who opt to accept and express alternative, or even opposite perspectives to the so-called “official culture” (Zhou 2007: 9).

In light of the innovative effects of fansubbing, it is time to implement more liberal media industry policies which afford a more tolerant appraisal procedure and

\(^{55}\) Updates of the rankings can be followed at: http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/sohu.com (last consulted on 06.05.2015).
allow more high-quality audiovisual products to reach Chinese audiences through legitimate distribution. Such quality can be defined in terms of artistic or entertainment value. This would require the government to distinguish art and entertainment value from ideological and political works. A more relaxed socio-political environment would allow outsiders to better understand China and its people, and the Chinese audience to better understand the rest of the world. Piracy could then be more easily contained. It may also be feasible to involve fansubbing groups such as YYeTs in the production of state-sponsored subtitling which, in turn, needs more people with both knowledge of translation practices and enthusiasm for AVT (subtitling in particular). Fansubbing has nevertheless influenced state-sponsored subtitling in various aspects, though many of its innovative strategies and techniques are yet to have a wider application.
Part 4. Application of Subtitling Norms and Translation Strategies and Techniques

Given its efficiency and productivity in catering to the demands of the audience, fansubbing is no doubt the main force in the practice of Chinese subtitling. This part will focus on the creativity and translation quality of subtitling and demonstrate the capability and potential of fansubbing to contribute to and influence the progress of Chinese subtitling, in light of the notion of “Hard Translation”. It is acknowledged that the foremost objective of fansubbing is to give the audience an authentic experience of a particular original through various innovative subtitling strategies which can be both translation-oriented and technological (Dennison 2011; Dwyer 2012). When pursuing this goal in the Chinese context, a fansubbed version represents an alternative to “Hard Translation” in the audiovisual medium, complying flexibly and strictly with the audiovisual constraints and SL meaning.

Chapter 11 will focus on the practice of creative subtitling, which contrasts with standard subtitling practices governed by conventions and norms such as those found in the Code of Good Subtitling Practice (Ivarsson & Carroll 1998), which prescribes the principles and norms introduced in Chapter 5 above. Creative subtitling represents a new trend, in which subtitlers take a creative departure from their former role of norm-obeying translator to introduce more aesthetic and innovative subtitling practices. While borrowing techniques developed in subtitling elsewhere, the practice of creative subtitling in the Chinese context maintains its own originality in presenting non-verbal information. Meanwhile, fansubbing continues to innovate existing techniques of creative subtitling by utilising various explanatory techniques to enhance audiovisual accessibility. I argue that the use of explanatory techniques can be considered an outcome of “Hard Translation”, when considering strict adherence to the SL meaning and context. The following discussion will focus on the
stylistic use of the SL, including non-verbal, paralinguistic features and discourse markers (Chapter 12), the translation of swearing (Chapter 13), and translation of humour which is either universal or culture-specific (Chapter 14).
Chapter 11. Creative Subtitling and Its Realisation in the Chinese context

With progress in digital technology, subtitles can now be produced in a greater variety of aesthetic and graphic modes. The practice of creative subtitling aims to produce subtitles by giving them styles, fonts and colours and by placing them in various positions, in accordance with the varying style of the original film (McClarty 2012: 150). Besides rendering meaning of verbal information, subtitles can be placed wherever is deemed appropriate, not necessarily at the bottom of the screen, to explicate the original with creative visual effects and explanatory techniques.

11.1 Texts with Special Visual Effects

Subtitles in various fonts, sizes and colour may still be dismissed by specialist and AVT academics as unprofessional or cultic, due to their frequent appearance in fansubs, which have long been considered amateurish. These opinions are at odds with the spread of creative subtitling in professional practice on the one hand, and on the other, with the results of several empirical studies in fansubbing and creative subtitling, which provide significant evidence of the efficiency of so-called “non-professional subtitling” (McClarty 2014; Orrego-Carmona 2014). In feature films, the stylistic formats are often adopted to emphasise the characteristics of a particular character. Subtitles in a faux hieroglyphic font appear in the film The Mummy (1999) (in Figure 6) when the ancient Egyptians in the film talk to each other in their native tongue, while in Stranger than Fiction (2006) more sophisticated visual effects are used to insert texts into the visuals to follow the movement of the main character’s hand when his habit of brushing his teeth is introduced by an off-screen speaker (in Figure 7).
Textual inserts with special visual effects are used frequently in *Sherlock* (2010-2014), a twenty-first century adaptation of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes produced by the BBC, to communicate the thoughts of the detective in visual form (Figure 8). The screenshot below is taken from the scene where Holmes observes a man’s appearance. Captions emerge from different parts of that body and clothing to illustrate the information Holmes obtains from observation.
The series became popular in China immediately after YYeTs produced the Chinese-subtitled version, shortly after the premiere of the original series in Britain in 2010. Chinese translations are placed near to the corresponding SL textual inserts, blending with the “visual surroundings” (Pérez-González 2007: 76). Figure 9 shows the blog written by Dr. Watson about the cases solved by Sherlock Holmes. The translations are in the same colour, font, angle and perspective as the English text.

By complying with the display of SL textual inserts, fansubbers strive to form a “linguistic non-diegetic dimension” for the viewers, who are, in turn, guided to
understand the contextual and narrative information (Pérez-González 2007: 75-76). Therefore, the “non-diegetic dimension” (Pérez-González 2007: 76) moves further into the visuals and becomes diegetic to the audience, as the distinction between the Chinese textual inserts and the visual is neutralised by the fans’ creative intervention. Figure 10 shows a blog in editing, in which information regarding the name of the blogger (Dr. John Watson), the titles of the sections “About me”, “Hit counter” and “My photos” are translated.

(Figure 10: Episode 1, Series 2 of Sherlock [2012]; screenshot take on 15 October 2013.)

To comply with the style of the SL textual inserts, fansubbers often rearrange perspective, angle and/or composition (etc.) of the TL texts, which not only show the meaning of the SL inserts but also adapt the non-linguistic and visual components of the original to the subtitled version. Strict adherence to the display of the written SL messages upholds the principle of authenticity maintained by fansubbing and produces a form of “Hard Translation” which realises the effects of yì-qìng (移情, move-emotion; to experience the foreign) and yì-zhì (益智, enhance-intellectuality; to enhance the knowledge about foreign cultures); while rendering the SL texts,
fansubbers also help the audience to appreciate the creativity of the original series.
The effect of yi-zhi may also further influence the promotion of the film and television industries in China, though this contribution has never been recognised openly. The producers of the Chinese film *shī-liàn-sān-shí-sān-tiān* (*失恋 33 天, Love is Not Blind*) (2011), adopted a similar strategy of textual insertion.

(Figure 11: in Love is Not Blind [2011]; screenshot take on 20 November 2011.)

In Figure 11, the projection of a mobile phone display is placed on the right side of the screen, displaying the text message the character is writing. Thus the audience can read the text message and watch the person’s facial expression at the same time.

This juxtaposition of verbal and non-verbal information saves time and further engages the audience in the viewing process. However, YYeTs may not have been the first to introduce creative subtitling, as texts with special visual effects were adopted at the early phase of film production in China.
The evidence can be found in the romantic musical drama *Street Angel* (马路天使) (1937), in which an animation effect is adopted to show non-verbal information, such as music. For example, when the character begins to sing *The Song of Four Seasons*, a ping-pong ball appears above each line of the lyrics and starts bouncing to the rhythm of the song and making the viewing experience more entertaining (Figure 12). Nevertheless, fansubber must be considered the pioneer of creative subtitling in terms of translation, particularly when considering their explanatory techniques.

### 11.2 Explanatory Notes in Fansubs

Explanatory notes are inserted into the original audiovisual medium to channel the communication between the translator and the viewer, tackling cultural references and language-specific elements and thus contravening the professional code which prohibits any form of “interference and presence of the translator” (Díaz Cintas 2005). These messages may appear next to the translation of an SL line (as in Figure 13), or at the top of the screen when the space at the bottom (as in Figure 14), where the

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56 The video clip can be found at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RlEu2lcE9sg (last consulted on 11.05.2015).
translations of the SL lines are placed, is limited. However, the positioning of notes has become more and more flexible nowadays, as fansubbers seek to maintain the coherence between subtitles and the visuals (as in Figure 15).

(Figure 13: in Episode 3, Series 2 of *Sherlock* [2012]; screenshot taken on 2 February 2014. The speaker on screen says, “Our hands are tied”, which is translated as wō-men-wú-néng-wéi-li [我们无能为力, I-plural maker-no-ability-do-power; we can do nothing to help]. It is followed by a literal translation of “hands are tied”, shōu-bèi-bàng-zhe [手被绑着, hands-passive voice marker-tied-present tense marker], which informs the audience about the metaphor in the ST.)

(Figure 14: in *Captain America* [2011]; screenshot taken on 15 October 2012. The explanation appearing at the top of screen explains what “Yggdrasil” is.)
There are a few exceptions where extra explanation is needed but nevertheless absent in a fansubbed version. In Figure 16, no clarification of the SL metaphor is provided in the subtitled version of *The Big Bang Theory* produced by YYeTs, though the group is well-known for its efficiency in applying explanatory techniques. The subtitle shows exactly the meaning of “but the earth didn’t move” and makes the speaker on the screen unintelligible to the Chinese audience because the literal translation does not contain the implication present in the English words. YYeTs must have noticed the inconsistency in using explanatory notes and later adopted a more diligent procedure of revision to maintain the quality of subtitling. For most popular series at least, the group produces a first version for the latest episode and, several days later, a refined version which is based on a further revision done by group members, using feedback from viewers who often post their comments on the translation on the BBS forums facilitated by YYeTs.
Another favoured method is to display “endnotes” (as in Figure 17) when the background or contextual information does not fit the space and time limits. Fansubbers often write such information in paragraphs and display them on screen while the credits are shown, assuming the audience will be interested in learning more about the background or contextual information. The “endnotes” may be a more functional solution, as they seem less intrusive than other note-displaying techniques.

(Figure 17: in Episode 2, Season 1 of House of Cards [2013]; screenshot taken on 2 July 2014. In this endnote, the information provided is about the positions held by Francis Underwood, the protagonist, and the two politicians who are having lunch with him in the early phase of the episode. In addition, the bottom line refers to the current United States House of Representatives, where the Republicans are the majority, and thereby highlights the difference between the drama and the reality.)
The displaying of notes finds its application in the DVD distributions of anime, where additional cultural and linguistic information is inserted into the “film track” through “optional popups” (Ortabasi 2007: 288). Explanatory notes are also used by television networks in China to produce intralingual subtitles of variety shows (as in Figure 18), in which expressions in regional languages of China and slang which is not widely understood. Explanatory techniques are yet to be used for interlingual subtitling in state-sponsored and commercial productions.

(Figure 18: in Episode 11, Season 1 of bēn-pão-bā-xióng-di [奔跑吧，兄弟!；Run, Brothers, Run!] [2014]; screenshot taken on 11 May 2015. One of the speakers on screen uses a jargon abbreviation from video game programming, “NPC”, often used in the plural: “non-player characters”. In video games, NPCs are those who “act as enemies, partners, and support characters to provide challenges, offer assistance and support the storyline” [Merrick and Lou Maher 2006: 3]. An explanation is provided in brackets, showing yóu-xi-zhōng-fēi-wán-jìā-kòng-zhi-jué-sè [游戏中非玩家控制角色，game-game-inside-not-play-person-control-role-character], meaning those character in video games who are not controlled by the players.)

Despite occasional inconsistencies, the explanatory techniques used by fansubbers conform to the principle of authenticity and “Hard Translation”, as they seek to register rather than neutralise the foreign. In their “co-creational” (Barra 2009:
511) subtitling procedures, fansubbers acquire and apply cultural and genre knowledge, as well as a wide range of technological expertise, in order to provide an in-depth viewing experience (O'Hagan 2008: 178-179). This objective of fansubbing is seemingly at odds with their solutions for verbal and non-verbal features of colloquial language, and humour. These elements can make dialogue less artificial by means of realistic, natural oral features (Chaume 2004), and enrich it for dramatic purposes by using para-linguistic and stylistic features (Remero 2011: 20-21).
Chapter 12. Subtitling Verbal and Non-verbal Features of Spontaneous Speech

Bakhtin (1986) states that film dialogue is a secondary speech genre, maintaining some of the primary functions of daily conversation based on different fictional contexts. Whereas everyday conversation can be formulaic, humdrum and banal, screen conversation must be pertinent, dramatic or intriguing, as it is designed for the purpose of artistic entertainment. Despite its cadences and foibles, dialogue is “written to be spoken as if not written”, while maintaining both oral and spontaneous features (Gregory & Carroll 1978: 42). The audience are eavesdroppers to dialogue on screen, in which characters are addressees to each other (Hatim and Mason 1997: 82). Subtitlers intervene to address TL audiences, mediating the communication and advocating for the creator(s) of the original. In doing this, they need to shift through the multiple layers of meaning within the audiovisual medium to preserve as much as possible of the pragmatic and stylistic function of the original (Pettit 2005).

Creagh (1998; in Venuti 2000: 471-472) considers that translation should establish a relation to the TL’s literary styles, genres and traditions, and give the appropriate styles and tones to different speakers and in this way distinguish them from each other. Subtitlers seek to replicate the rich speech patterns of some characters in subtitles with the best possible TL wording which, in their opinion, assists the audience understand the original to the same extent as the SL audience. Despite their interventions, a subtitled version does not significantly draw the attention of the audience to the subtitles, but rather to the original audiovisual narrative. According to Henri Behar, “[s]ubtitling is a form of cultural ventriloquism, and the focus must remain on the puppet, not the puppeteer” (in Egoyan & Balfour 2004: 85).
The remainder of this thesis is devoted to exploring how Chinese subtitlers, especially fansubbers, perform this act of ventriloquism while facing the challenges arising from specific subjects of translation. Given general concerns (Lee 2011; Dwyer 2012; He 2014), it is important to emphasise here that this discussion is not intended to encourage or justify engagement in AVT and dissemination of audiovisual products by fans. The purpose is to assess fansubbing in light of the translation strategies and techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002), as mentioned in Chapter 5. The assessment may help demonstrate how the key notion of “Hard Translation” is adapted to subtitling and how the less “hard” TL solutions differ from the over-domesticated ones in the state-sponsored translation discussed in Chapter 6. Further, the discussion may also assist in forming alternative views on the quality of fansubbing, of which the understanding is still “anime-centric” (Dwyer 2012: 5), by approaching its heterogeneity in light of the translation from English into Chinese. To begin with, this chapter will focus on the translation of stylistic verbal creations, such as neologisms and ungrammatical utterances.

12.1 Stylistic Verbal Creations

Speech styles can be assessed through a speaker’s phrasing, which corresponds to his or her emotions and intentions at the point of speaking. In the example below, Blackadder mocks Dr Samuel Johnson.
Example 14: Blackadder the Third (1987) Episode 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by the Group “1000fr”</th>
<th>Character-for-Character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Johnson: Here it is, sir, the very cornerstone of English scholarship</td>
<td>给您殿下英国学问的奠基石</td>
<td>Give-you (respective)-palace-under-English-country-study-asking-of-fundamental-stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This book, sir, contains every word in our beloved language</td>
<td>这本书殿下含有我们可爱语言的每一个字</td>
<td>This-bind-book-palace-under-include-have I-plural marker-adorable-love-language-speech-of-every-one-unit of quantity-letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackadder: Every single one, sir?</td>
<td>每一个字先生?</td>
<td>Every-one-unit of quantity-character-sir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Johnson: Every single word, sir!</td>
<td>每一个字先生!</td>
<td>Every-one-unit of quantity-character-sir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackadder: Well, in that case, sir, I hope you will not object if I also offer the Doctor…</td>
<td>那么既然这样先生</td>
<td>That-modal word-have been-this-this-like this-sir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…/…my enthusiastic contrafibularities</td>
<td>…我最热忱的反无聊兴感</td>
<td>My-most-hot-sincere-adjective marker-contra-no-leisure-exciting-exciting-feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Johnson: What?</td>
<td>什么?</td>
<td>What-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackadder: “Contrafibularities”, sir/</td>
<td>“反无聊兴感”先生</td>
<td>Contra-no-leisure-exciting-exciting-feeling-sir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a common word down our way</td>
<td>我们经常这么说</td>
<td>I-plural marker-usually-usually-this-modal word-speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Johnson: Damn!</td>
<td>见鬼!</td>
<td>Meet-ghost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it is impossible to replicate “contrafibularities” in Chinese through lexical means, the subtitle shows făn-wū-liáo-xīng-fèn-găn (反无聊兴感, contra-no-leisure-exciting-exciting-feeling), which is as odd with its SL counterpart. “Hard Translation” is attempted, though not entirely realised, because the TL solution is at least based on the interpretation of the morphological and semantic components of the SL word. The SL coinage consist of two parts: the prefix “contra-“, which is

57 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/a/123183 (last consulted 03.08.2015).
translated as 反 (fǎn), and the word “fibularities”, which has no precise meaning. It is
difficult to explain the meaning of “contrafibularities” precisely, since the word has
been created to enhance humour. It lacks a clear meaning and can be treated as a
nonce-word, which is unlikely to recur, though it is widely used by Internet users
and in popular culture and commercial contexts due to the popularity of the series
Blackadder. The Urban Dictionary, an online dictionary of slang words and phrases,
provides the following explanation, “A form of congratulations as used by Edmund
Blackadder to mock Doctor Samuel Johnson, author of the dictionary”.

The subtitler applies the technique of discursive creation to coin the expression
反-无聊兴奋感, contra-no-leisure-exciting-exciting-feeling) which maintains a positive tone but little meaning. In Blackadder, Dr
Johnson is portrayed as a bookish scholar who likes demonstrating his learning by
using esoteric words and expressions. The complex phonetic structure of
“contrafibularities” makes it comparable with Dr Johnson’s well-known
idiosyncratic use of words and therefore makes the omission plausible. Hence the
TL solution is a temporary functional equivalent to “contrafibularities”, adequately
rendering the tone intended by Blackadder. However, inaccuracy is obvious in the
translation of “word”, which should be 词 (word[s]) rather than 字 (character[s]).

Coinage also applies to a catchphrase used by a character regularly in daily
conversation to enhance the dialogue. These lines may be used in different situations

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58 The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines the word as: “[A] word apparently used only ‘for the
nonce’, i.e. on one specific occasion or in one specific text or writer's works). According to the OED,
“for the nonce” means “For the particular purpose” or “For the particular occasion”. Further
information can be found at: http://www.oed.com.virtual.anu.edu.au/view/Entry/127827?redirectedFrom=nonce-word#eid34582506
(last consulted on 19.05.2015).

59 The definition is found at: http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=contrafibularities (last
consulted on 19.05.2015).
with or without the same meaning or variation of meaning and hence require different translations. In *The Big Bang Theory*, Sheldon celebrates the success of his practical jokes or pranks by exclaiming “bazinga”. The subtitles show different Chinese phrases for the term according to the context in which the word is used.

Example 15: *The Big Bang Theory* (2007-Present)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubbs Produced by YYeTs)</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Season 2 Episode 23: Sheldon: Flash-frozen brown rice, not white?</td>
<td>速冻糙米 不是白米</td>
<td>Fast-frozen-crust-rice-not-is-white-rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: Uh, oh sorry</td>
<td>抱歉</td>
<td>Embrace-apology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Not to worry</td>
<td>别担心</td>
<td>Do not-burden-heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hid it/</td>
<td>我藏起来了</td>
<td>I-hide-rise-come-past tense marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazinga!</td>
<td>气死你</td>
<td>Anger-death-you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Season 3 Episode 4: Rajesh: Sheldon, for god’s sakes, don’t make me beg</td>
<td>谢尔顿 看在老天爷的份上 别逼我求你</td>
<td>Xiè-ér-dún-look-at-old-heaven-grandfather-genitive marker-part-on-do not-force-I-beg-you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Bazinga!/</td>
<td>逗你玩!</td>
<td>Kidding-you-play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re fallen victim…</td>
<td>是你经典实用笑话的…</td>
<td>You-are-my-classic-classic-genitive marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…to another one of my practical jokes</td>
<td>第N个受害者</td>
<td>Marker for ordinal numeral-N-unit of number-experience-damage-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Season 5 Episode 7: Sheldon: Bazinga, punk. Now we’re even</td>
<td>吓到了吧 小混蛋 现在我们扯平了</td>
<td>Scare-arrive-present perfect tense marker-modal word-little-mass-egg-now-in-I-plural marker-tear-even-present perfect tense marker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “bazinga” in (a) is translated as *qi-sī-nǐ* (气死你, anger-death-you; make you angry to death), which is associated with Sheldon’s mood when he clarifies the truth.

The “bazinga” in (b) is used for the same purpose and is translated as *dòu-nǐ-wán* (逗
you play, kidding-you-play; make fun of you) rather than the same TL word used in the first example. In (c), Sheldon is pleased with his revenge for his roommate’s previous prank, in which the translation of “bazinga” is xià-dào-le-bā (吓到了吧, you are scared, aren’t you).

In addition, a character can speak ungrammatically with or without an awareness of such a fault. When ungrammatical, SL use can function as a stylistic trait rather than a fault that must be represented by grammatical TL use. In the example given below, Rajesh cannot form the past tense of “forbid” correctly and this makes his speech sound odd to the others.

Example 16: *The Big Bang Theory*: Season 4 Episode 16 (2011)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: I just want to talk to her</td>
<td>我只想和他说句话</td>
<td>I-only-want to-with-her-talk-a sentence-utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajesh: I forbid it</td>
<td>我毙之</td>
<td>I-end-it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pryia: Open the door, Rajesh</td>
<td>开门吧，拉杰</td>
<td>Open-door-modal word-lā-jìé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajesh: You heard me</td>
<td>我说过了</td>
<td>I-say-door-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I forbid it</td>
<td>我毙毙之</td>
<td>I-end-end-it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pryia: Forbided it?</td>
<td>“毙毙之”</td>
<td>End-end-it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajesh: Forbaded it?</td>
<td>“吮吮之”</td>
<td>Defame-end-it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pryia: Get out of the way</td>
<td>给我让开</td>
<td>Give-me-step aside-open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The YYeTs’ translation shows a series of odd Chinese expressions which can be considered temporary equivalents for the ungrammatical forms used by Rajesh. “I forbid it” is translated as wǒ-bi-zhǐ (我毙之, I-end-it) from which wǒ-bǐ-bǐ-zhǐ (我毙毙之, end-end-it) and bǐ-bǐ-zhǐ (吮吮之, defame-end-it) are derived. While the preservation of ungrammaticality is unattainable in translation, the two derivations are more nonsensical than their SL counterparts. Despite being a domesticated

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61 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/a/323570 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
translation, wò-bi-zhī can be understood as “I refuse to allow you to talk to her” which clarifies the intension of Rajesh to prohibit Leonard, his friend, from to his sister, Pryia, and hence conforms to the meaning of “I forbid it”.

In facing coinage, subtitlers analyse a stylistic SL expression and the reason a speaker uses it in a particular context. Then they assemble these TL meanings in line with the speaker's intention and manner to make the subtitled version as amusing as the original. With cautious analysis, the SL meaning is partially replicated, if a total replication is impossible, while creativity is essential to representing the linguistically untranslatable part of the SL expression. A TL is reached through discursive creation, maintaining a temporary equivalence with its SL counterparts within a particular context but nowhere else. The same may apply to the solutions for SL ungrammaticalities expressions, and those lacking clear and stable senses, which may also be non-verbal or para-linguistic.

12.2 Subtitling Non-verbal and Para-Linguistic Features

Dialogue in the audiovisual context aims to imitate spontaneous speech by involving some, though not all, of the hesitations, repetitions and syntactic anomalies of real oral discourse. Subtitles are produced to retain the rhythm, cadence and even inflections of the original dialogue, as these extra-linguistic elements are crucial to the integrity of the richness of the film narrative (Hillman 2011: 390). The translation is in many cases domesticated, as it is the only way to make SL para-linguistic features accessible to the TL audience. For example, the subtitler has to represent the speech impediment depicted in The King's Speech in subtitles by conforming to Chinese manners, as the repetition of syllables in English is impossible to replicate, as shown
below. Despite the substitution of Chinese characters, the translation is accurate in terms of semantic meaning.

Example 17: *The King’s Speech* (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-Character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lionel: What was your earliest memory?</td>
<td>请问你最早的记忆是</td>
<td>Please-ask-you-most-early-adjective marker-remember-remember-is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George VI: (Stammers at the beginning) What on earth do you mean?</td>
<td>什 什么意思</td>
<td>Shén-what-modal word-meaning-thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel: Your first recollection</td>
<td>你记得的第一件事</td>
<td>You-remember-obtain-adjective marker-ordinal numeral marker-one-unit of quantity-event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George VI: I’m not… (Stammers)</td>
<td>我不…</td>
<td>I-not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…here to discuss my personal matters</td>
<td>…不是来谈私事的</td>
<td>Not-is-come-talk-privacy-affairs-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel: Why’re you here then?</td>
<td>那您来干什么</td>
<td>That-you-come-do-what-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George: Because I am bloody well stammer!</td>
<td>因为我他妈的结巴</td>
<td>Cause-for-I-his-mother-adjective marker-knot-open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translation above follows each stammer with the repetition of some characters. As the king stammers at “what” in saying “what on earth do you mean”, the translation shows shén-shén-me (什 什么, shén-what-modal word) in which the stammer at [w] is replaced by that at the character 什. While he stammers between “not” and “here” in the original, the subtitle shows the repetition of the character, bù-bù-shi (不 不是, not-not-is) in which bù is one of the established equivalents of “not”; both “not” and bù are used as adverbs in this context. With the domesticated translations, the subtitler demonstrates a comparable situation experienced by a Chinese-speaker suffering a similar impediment. In addition, despite being accurate in transferring the semantic meaning, the translation of “you” is inconsistent in terms of register. The subtitles above show nǐ (你, you) and nín (您, you) in representing the
meaning of “you” (i.e. the way in which Logue addresses the King), while the translation of “you” should be 你 in both places. Logue had stated, in the conversation preceding the one given above, that it would be beneficial for the King’s treatment if the two men could treat each other as equals.

Another type of domesticated translation of para-linguistic features is found in the example below. Mispronunciation is deliberated attempted by the screenwriter, perhaps, for triggering humorous effects and becomes an idiolect of the speaker, Kripke, who is unintelligible to the Siri programme on his iPhone due to his congenital inability to pronounce the sound [r] which he replaces with [w].


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kripke: You got Siwi, huh?</td>
<td>你用 Siwi 对吧</td>
<td>You-use-Siwi-right-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice wecognition on that thing is tewwible</td>
<td>语音“私”别系统真是“罩”透了</td>
<td>Language-sound-private-distinguishing-department-union-really-is-cover-transparent-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wook</td>
<td>“侃”</td>
<td>mocking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siwi, can you wecommend a westauwant?</td>
<td>Siwi 你能“腿”荐个“番”馆吗？</td>
<td>Siwi-you-can-leg-recommend-a-times-place-modal word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subtitles use sī-biè ("私" 别, private-distinguish) instead of shī-biè (识别, recognise-distinguish; recognition) to translate “wecognition” (recognition); zhàō-tōu-le ("罩”透了, cover-transparent-modal word) instead zào-tōu-le (糟透了, terrible-extremely-modal word; terrible) to translate “tewwible” (terrible); kàn (侃, mocking) instead of kàn (看, look) to translate “Wook” (look); fān-guăn ("番"馆, times-place) instead of fān-guăn (饭馆, meal-place; restaurant) to translate “westauwant”

63 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at http://subhd.com/search/the%20big%20bang%20theory (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
(restaurant); and tui-jiàn ( "腿" 茗, leg-recommend) instead of tuǐ-jiàn (recommend, push-recommend; recommend) to translate "wecommend" (recommend). These substitutes help the audience become aware of the fact that Kripke cannot pronounce the words properly; they are coined through discursive creation and applicable in this context only, functioning as temporary equivalents to their SL counterparts in terms of semantic meaning and para-linguistic function.

In comparison, dialect is generally applied only sparingly in subtitling, as subtitlers need to confirm its usage before adopting and continuing to use it. Then viewers can acknowledge the unique sound in a character's speech through the subtitles. Solutions for SL dialectical expressions are mostly associated with the technique of variation, where subtitlers change dialectical variation of English, and grammatical errors, into standard and neutral Chinese expressions, as in the example shown below.

Example 19 Star Wars: The Phantom Menace (1998)⁶⁴

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles on Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jar Jar Binks: Ex-squeeze-me, but de mostest safest place would be Gunga City…</td>
<td>抱歉 但最安全的地方是冈根城</td>
<td>Embrace-apology-but-most-safe-adjective marker-is-gáng-gēn-city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…is where I grew up. 'Tis a hidden city</td>
<td>我是在那里长大的 那城市很隐蔽</td>
<td>I-is-in-that-inside-grow-big-modal word-that-city-city-very-obscure-shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qui-Gon: A city?</td>
<td>城市?</td>
<td>City-city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jar Jar Binks: Uh-huh</td>
<td>是</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qui-Gon: Can you take us there?</td>
<td>你来带我们去吧</td>
<td>You-come-take-I-plural marker-go-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jar · Jar Binks: On second thought, no</td>
<td>那…那可不行</td>
<td>That-that-can-not-can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not really no</td>
<td>我不能带你们去</td>
<td>I-not-can-take-you-plural marker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁶⁴ The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/search/The%20Phantom%20Menace (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
The idiosyncrasies in Jar Jar Binks’ speech are more obvious when the character speaks to Qui-Gon, who speaks with a British accent. The translation does not show this difference between the accents of the speakers, because any attempt to replicate them with Chinese dialects would be impractical. In addition, the majority of the Chinese audience cannot recognise the characteristics and grammatical errors in the speech of Jar Jar Binks (e.g. the sentence “de mostest safest place”).

Omission of para-linguistic features is tantamount to a process of conversion, in which a subtitler not only translates the essential SL meaning but also converts the SL information from one register (dialectical, informal) to another (standard, formal). In doing so, the subtitler adopts the technique of variation in order to produce a domesticated translation, as omission of SL para-linguistic characteristics is made out of consideration for their compatibility with the TL. Hence, omission caused by linguistic differences, and by interchangeability between the para-linguistic features of the SL and those of the TL, is inevitable and acceptable, as long as the subtitles deliver the essential meaning correctly. While a deliberate replication of SL dialect or dialectical features may adversely affect the clarity of translation and thus contrast with the need for the ease of comprehension, the audience should be aware of the lack of clarity when the SL dialogue is deliberately unclear.

In rendering colloquial conversation into written form, the task of subtitlers involves more than a mere change of medium (Schwarz 2002). Efficient subtitlers not only grasp the rhythm of speech but also ensure that the elusive and ephemeral voices of the original are maintained in the written context. They pay attention first to the basic dialogue features, and then to the way they serve the narrative. Understanding SL dialogue correctly, subtitlers have to choose between its propositional content and
the corresponding oral and interactional features which can be easily lost in translation, as is also the case of discourse markers.

12.3 Subtitling Discourse Markers

Discourse markers, a series of expressions used to link the interpretation of a segment to a prior segment (Mattson 2006: 3), are often left out in subtitling. Despite having no stable semantic meanings, they significantly affect the logical composition of speech and textual materials, making the fragments of a text or the whole text understandable. In dialogue, they express the speaker’s attitude, assumptions, intentions or emotions towards what is mentioned in a conversation (Aijmer 2002: 12) and demonstrate the speaker’s relationship to the addressee, to the utterance, and to the entire text (Aijmer 2002: 2). In spite of the high frequency of discourse markers used in informal speech, studies of the subject are still rare in the research on subtitling (Chaume 2004; Chen 2004; Mattson 2006).

Although subtitles are designed to transfer the dialogue from “one sub-code (the seemingly unruly spoken language) to another (the more rigid written language)” (Gottlieb 1994: 106), subtitlers will be better able to realise the pragmatic and sociolinguistic issues of the SL in the TL subtitles if he or she understands the ST thoroughly. However, the norms in the TL culture influence the translation of discourse markers both quantitatively (i.e. the number of discourse markers to be translated) and qualitatively (i.e. the use of the TL features in the TT) (Mattson 2006: 7). While Chinese subtitlers often strive to convey cognitive and emotive values in SL dialogue so as to fill the functional gaps existing between Chinese and English (Fong 2009), they tend to preserve the SL semantic meaning at the expense of its
interpersonal function, as the latter is more difficult to achieve within the space and time constraints.

The collaborative use of different sign systems to aid comprehension in an audiovisual medium cannot always compensate for the omission of pragmatic functions. Although the audience strives to acknowledge the coherence in a particular ST by seeking links between ideas and units of speech, which may in fact have no connection with each other (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 23; Brown & Yule 1983:196; Halliday, 1985:301; Fowler: 1986:106; Hatim & Mason, 1990:194), subtitlers need to be cautious when omitting parts of the meaning of an ST; the decision to omit may not correspond to the expectations of the audience, as Hatim and Mason (1997: 96) state:

It is difficult for the TL audience to retrieve interpersonal meaning in its entirety. In some cases, they may even derive misleading impressions of characters’ directness or indirectness.

This section focuses on the English discourse markers ‘now’, ‘you know’, ‘look’, ‘oh’ and ‘I mean’. The discussion will approach the objects from their functions in maintaining coherence of conversation and clarifying the speaker’s intention. To illustrate the meaning and use of these expressions and their places in the Chinese subtitles – whether they are preserved, transformed, or omitted – examples are selected from dialogue in the fifth season of the American sitcom Two and a Half Men. I will refer to the subtitles provided by the fansubbing group YTET and those used on the DVD distributed by Warner Home Video, in order to identify

65 Since its premiere on CBS in 2003, the show has maintained a high audience rating within and outside the United States. The New York Times called the sitcom “the biggest hit comedy of the last decade” in 2011. The subtitles used in this section are found at: http://subhd.com/search/two%20and%20a%20half%20men/all/page/20 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
differences in discourse markers used by subtitlers from different cultural and working backgrounds. Although the preservation of discourse markers makes a translation seem unnatural, it helps the audience towards an improved knowledge of English (or American English) and its culture, as specified by Lu Xun in the terms yi-qing (移情, move-emotion; to experience the foreign) and yi-zhi (益智, enhance-intellectuality; to enhance the knowledge about foreign cultures) as the effects of translation.

12.3.1 “Now”

Rather than a marker or conjunctive element referring to “the time at which a proposition is presented to be true” (Schiffrin 1987: 230), the discourse marker “now” is a deictic element that “marks a speaker’s progression through discourse time, by displaying attention to an upcoming idea, unit, orientation and/or participation framework” (Schiffrin 1987: 230) and “occurs in discourse in which the speaker progresses through a cumulative series of subordinate units” (Schiffrin 1987: 228). Ball (1986: 85) states that “now is transitional, frequently the opening word from a new speaker, but the same speaker can use it to indicate a new idea or stage within a topic”. In (a) below, “now” is omitted in both versions of the Chinese subtitles because the translation does not need it to signify the speaker’s intention to start a new topic. In (b), Alan uses “well”, “now” and then “hold on” to interrupt Donna in order to say something further about the “motions” mentioned by her. While the DVD subtitles show only the meaning and function of “hold on” by dēng-yǐ-xià (等一下, wait-one-time), YTET’s solution shows all of the three, and particularly “now” which is translated as hǎo-de (好的, good-modal word).

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66 The subtitles can be found at: http://subhd.com/zu/1 (last consulted on 25.05.2015).
Example 20:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>YTET</th>
<th>DVD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Alan: Now, about race riots</td>
<td>关于种族骚动 (relevant-to-race-ethnic-furry-movement)</td>
<td>至于种族暴动的时候 (arrive-to-race-ethnic-explosive-move-adjective marker-time-time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Donna: Come on, Alan</td>
<td>拜托 Alan (worship-entrust-Alan)</td>
<td>少来了，艾伦 (ess-come-modal word-äi-lún)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our sex life is pathetic</td>
<td>我们的性生活太可悲了 (I-plural marker-genitive case marker-sex-life-live-very-functional word [to emphasise]-sad-modal word)</td>
<td>我们的性生活乏味 (I-plural marker-genitive case marker-sex-life-activity-lacking-taste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re just going through the motions</td>
<td>我们仅仅是在做些动作 (I-plural marker-merely-merely-is-present progressive tense marker-do-action-behaviour)</td>
<td>我们只是做完动作而已 (I-plural marker-merely-is-do-finish-action-behaviour-that is-all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan: Well, now, hold on. Those, uh — Those motions are tried and true</td>
<td>哦 好的 停下 (oh-good-modal word-stop-down)</td>
<td>等一下，那些动作都是真心的 (wait-one-time-that-plural marker-action-behaviour-all-is-real-heart-adjective marker)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.3.2 “Oh”

As a discourse marker, “oh” forces or reorients the speaker to something mentioned previously in the conversation, or functions as an information management or repairing strategy. In (a), “oh” is omitted in both translations, though it shows that Charlie does not recognise Julie until she says “Hi” to, in fact, another person. The subtitles need to show ò (哦, oh) in order to deliver this pragmatic function of “oh” to the audience, as the use of “oh” in this situation is commensurable between English and Chinese. In (b), both translations preserve the meaning of “yeah” instead of “oh” — the YTET translation shows shi-a (是啊, yes-modal word), and that on the DVD dui-a (对啊, right-modal word), while the meaning and function of “oh” essentially reflects the way Jake reacts to what his father says, for which ò should be used.
**Example 21:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>YTET</th>
<th>DVD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Julie: Hi</td>
<td>嘿 (hey)</td>
<td>嘿 (hey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie: Oh, hey, Julie</td>
<td>嘿 Julie (hey-Julie)</td>
<td>嘿，茱莉 (hey-zhū-li)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re still on the bus</td>
<td>噢 你还在校车上? (Ow-you-still-in-school-vehicle-on)</td>
<td>你还在校车上啊 (you-still-in-school-vehicle-on-modal word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funny, I don’t hear the other kids</td>
<td>有趣 我听不到其他孩子的声音呢 (have-interest-I-hear-no-arrive-third person pronoun-other-kidson-genitive case marker-sound-sound-modal word)</td>
<td>真奇怪，我没听见 其他小朋友的声音 (really-strange-strange-I-not have-hear-see-third person pronoun-other-little-friend-friend-genitive case marker-sound-sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake: Oh, yeah, it was a tough day/Everybody’s tired</td>
<td>是啊 今天很辛苦 大家都累了 (is-modal word-today-day-very-spicy-bitter-big-family-all-tired-modal word-modal word)</td>
<td>对啊，今天很辛苦 大家都累了 (right-modal word-today-day-very-spicy-bitter-big-family-all-tired-modal word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Alan: Then why don’t you take one of your many…/</td>
<td>你怎么不带你的那些… (you-how-modal word-no-bring-you-genitive case marker-that-plural marker)</td>
<td>好吧，你何不带你的众多… (good-modal word-you-why-no-bring-you-genitive case marker-many-a lot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh, let’s call them girlfriends</td>
<td>哦 就算作是女朋友中的一个 (oh-depending on the present situation-count-as-is-female-friend-friend-in-adjective marker-one-unit of quantity)</td>
<td>就说她们是女朋友好了 (depending on the present situation-say-she-plural marker-is-female-friend-friend-good-modal word)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (c), “oh” is used to signify the speaker’s intention to introduce an idea, which may terminate the continuity of the preceding segment of speech but continues the topic of the conversation in a new segment. The fansubs preserve the meaning and function of “oh” by 你。The translation on the DVD omits “oh” but adopt the TL pattern jiù-shuō- shi…hǎo-le (就说是…好了, depend on the present situation-say-…-good-modal word) as the solution for “let’s call (them)”. This pattern is more colloquial than jiù-suàn-zuò-shì… (就算作是…, depend on the present situation-
count-as-is-… ), which is used in the fansubs. The subtitlers of both versions adopt linguistic amplification and variation by resorting to domestication. To maintain the adherence to the use of “oh” as discourse marker, I would consider the solution below:

Nā-nī-hé-bù-dài-shàn (那你何不带上…， that-you-why-not-bring-up)

Ô-nǐ-zhòng-duō-nǚ-péng-yōu-zhōng-de-yī-gè (哦 你众多“女朋友”中的一个， oh-you-many-a lot-women-friend-friend-one of-one-unit of quantity)

This translation preserves “oh”, and its function, but compresses the SL components by omitting “let’s call them”, of which the meaning is implied by the quotation marks in the Chinese sentence. Thus this solution is reached by adopting the technique of substitution, in which I replace the SL linguistic element with TL punctuation marks that serve a rhetorical function.

12.3.3 “You know”

When functioning as a discourse marker, “you know” diverges from its literal sense. Pragmatically, it is used to indicate that the information mentioned is shared knowledge between the speaker and the addressee, or between the speaker and the rest of the members of their cultural community. Schiffrin (1987: 274) describes such shared knowledge as “the general consensual truth”, the implication for which is often conveyed in colloquial Chinese discourse through the popular expression nǐ-dǒng-de (你懂的，you-understand-modal word), which, as a discourse marker, appears frequently in formal and informal conversation, TV interviews and even press conferences hosted by high-level officials (etc.). It has not been considered an
equivalent to "you know", perhaps due to its short period of use by Chinese speakers in only the past few years. Subtitlers tend to use the more literal translation nǐ-zhī-dào (你知道, you-know-the way), as shown in the fansubs of (a) in Example 22 below. Both versions ignore "you know" in (b) where nǐ-dōng-de should have been used.

Example 22:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>YTET</th>
<th>DVD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Berta: Wow, I never thought I’d see Charlie Harper on his knees.</td>
<td>迩... (er)</td>
<td>我没想过 我会看见查理哈波卑躬屈膝 (I-not-think-present perfect tense marker-I-can-see-chà-lǐ-hā-bō-humble-bent-yielding-kneel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>从来没想过你会下跪求饶 (from-come-not-think-present perfect tense marker-you-can-down-kneel-beg-mercy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You know, figuratively</td>
<td>那只是一种比喻 (that-only-is-one-kind-comparison-metaphor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(you-know-the way-this-is-comparison-metaphor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(that-only-is-one-kind-comparison-metaphor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Alan: Uh, Cynthia and her husband were good friends with me and Judith...</td>
<td>迩 当我和 Judith 还没离婚的时候 (er-when-I-and-Judith-still-not-depart-marriage-adjective marker-time-time)</td>
<td>辛西雅和她先生 以前是我们的朋友 (xīnshíyà-and-hers-ahead-life-in-before-I-plural marker-genitive case marker-friend-friend)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cynthia and her husband had been good friends with me and Judith...</td>
<td>当时我跟我蒂丝还在一起 (when-time-I-and-qīú-di-still-in-one-group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...back in when we were, you know, me and Judith. Ha, ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
meaning as its English counterpart, which is uttered as a statement rather than a
question which, however, is shown by zhī-dào-ma. Hence, nǐ-dǒng-de (你懂的, you-
understand-modal word) should be used as an established equivalent to “you know”
when being used as discourse marker.

Example 23:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>YTET</th>
<th>DVD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(b) Alan: You know, it’s possible you might enjoy your dates more if you went out with women...</td>
<td>你知道吗 你可能会觉得约会更有趣 (you-know-the way-modal word-you-can-possible-can-feel-obtain-date-meeting-comparative degree marker-have-interest)</td>
<td>如果跟你出去的女人可以用她的脑袋 (if-consequence-and-you-out-go-adjective marker-woman-people-can-can-use-she-genitive case marker-brain-bag)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...who are capable of using their head other than a place to rest their ankles

而不只把脑袋当作放脚踝的地方 (but-not-only-use-brain-bag-use as-as-put-feet-ankles-adjective marker-ground-square) 你可能会喜欢约会 (not-is-only-can-use-feet-ankles-open-at-ground-above-you-can-possible-can-love-love-date-meeting)
"Look" can be used to highlight information “which might otherwise get overlooked amongst other more important matters” (Ball 1986: 140). This function is inapplicable in the TL context and is therefore omitted in both translations below.

Example 24:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>YTET</th>
<th>DVD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlie: I’m in a very sensitive place and I will kick your ass</td>
<td>我现在很敏感 我会揍你的 (I-now-in-very-sensitive-feeling-I-can-beat-you-modal word)</td>
<td>我现在非常敏感 我可能会痛扁你一顿 (I-now-in-very-sensitive-feeling-I-can-possible-can-pain-flat-you-one-unit of quantity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By using “look”, the speaker adds emphasis to this point which is felt to be not clear or convincing enough. In other cases, the speaker may feel that his or her point of view is not as convincing or explicit as he or she intended. Thus it is necessary to return to the topic to add further explanation or to correct the listener’s misunderstanding of a particular point. While the fansub omit it, the subtitles on the DVD show tìng-zhe (听着, listen-modal word) which is literally different from its SL counterpart but signifies the speaker’s intention to clarify and emphasise his unwillingness to go on a blind date. The solution represents a combination of modulation, which changes the cognitive category of the SL information, and variation, which changes the SL semantic meaning, and hence is an outcome of domestication.
Example 25:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>YTET</th>
<th>DVD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlie: Charlie Harper does not go on blind dates ...</td>
<td>Charlie Harper 不相亲 (Charlie Harper-not-inspect-relations)</td>
<td>查理哈波不需要相亲 (chā-Il-hā-bō-not-need-want-inspect-relations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan: Okay, but does he have to say it in the third person?</td>
<td>好吧但是他一定要用第三人称说吗？ (good-modal word-but-he-one-determination-want to-use-ordinal numeral marker-three-person-address-say-modal word)</td>
<td>好吧但他一定要用第三人称说吗？ (good-modal word-but-he-one-determination-want to-use-ordinal numeral marker-three-person-address-say-modal word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie: Look, I don’t need anybody to get me dates</td>
<td>我不需要别人给我安排约会 (I-not-need-want-other-people-give-I-put-arrange-date-meeting)</td>
<td>听着，我不需要别人帮我找女人 (listen-modal word-I-not-need-want-other-people-help-I-find-woman-people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can get my own dates</td>
<td>我自己能找到约会 (I-self-can-find-arrive-date-meeting)</td>
<td>我可以自己找 (I-can-use-self-find)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These translation techniques are also applicable to a context in which “look” is used to indicate a speaker’s intention to change the topic, especially to a topic that is more important than that which preceded it. In Example 26, the fansubs omit all the discourse markers in (a) and (b). In the translation on the DVD, “I mean” is translated as wǒ-de-yí-sī-shí (我的意思是, I-genitive case marker-meaning-is) but omits “look”. In (b), the translation replaces “look” with tīng-wǒ-shuō (听我说, listen-I-say).

Example 26:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>YTET</th>
<th>DVD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Charlie: I mean, look, getting hit in the face hurts</td>
<td>被人一拳打在脸上可能会痛 (passive voice marker-people-one-fist-beat-at-face-surface-can-possible-can-pain)</td>
<td>我的意思是脸挨打固然会痛 (I-genitive case marker-meaning-is-face-endure-beat-solid-certainly-can-pain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But you know what hurts more?</td>
<td>但你知道什么更痛？ (But-you-know-the way-what-modal word-comparative degree marker-pain)</td>
<td>但你知道什么更痛吗？ (But-you-know-the way-what-modal word-comparative degree marker-pain-modal word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan: You don’t know how you got a girlfriend?</td>
<td>你不知道你有女朋友的？</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>女朋友怎么到手的你也不知道? (woman-friend-friend-how-modal word-get in-hands-modal word-you-still-not-know-the way)</td>
<td>(you-not-know-the way-you-how-modal word-have-woman-friend-friend-modal word)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake: No, it just kind of happened</td>
<td>对啊，一切很自然就发生了 (right-modal word-one-all-very-self-this-occur-birth-modal word)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>是啊 这我最了解不过 (yes-modal word-this-I-superlative degree marker-know-understand-not-surpass)</td>
<td>对，我知道那是什么意思 (right-I-know-the way-that-is-what-modal word-meaning-thought)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wake up in the morning, and there she is. (early-morning-wake-come-occur-reveal-side-side-lie-present progressive tense marker-unit of quantity-woman-people)</td>
<td>一早醒来，她在那里 (one-early-wake-come-she-in-that-inside)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(To Alan) Shut up, I know that was wrong</td>
<td>闭嘴！我知道错了 (shut-mouth-1-know-the way-wrong-modal word)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>闭嘴，我知道那是不对的 (shut-mouth-I-know-the way-that-is not-right-adjective marker)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look, Jake, who is the cutest girl in your class?</td>
<td>你们班最漂亮的女孩是谁? (Jake-you-plural-class-superlative degree marker-beautiful-bright-adjective marker-woman-child-is-who)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>听我说，杰克 你班上最可爱的女孩是谁 (list-I-say-jie-ke-you-class-on-superlative degree marker-can-love-adjective marker-is-who)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 12.3.5 "I mean"

As Schiffrin (1987: 295) states, the literal meaning of the expression “I mean” is subservient to the pragmatic function of the phrase. It indicates the speaker’s intention to modify, clarify, or further explain a previous statement before any questions are heard from the listener. Sometimes, the phrase may not be used for these purposes and delivers no meaningful message but fulfils a certain interpersonal function (Ball 1986: 54). This can be a possible explanation for the omission of the phrase in translation.
Charlie: You just love seeing me unhappy
(you-certainly-is-love-see-I-difficult-feel)

Alan: Well, yeah
(that-unit of quantity)

I mean, did you feel sorry for me when I had to wear that cowboy outfit...
(you-whether-have-for-I-difficult-pass-modal word)

...to her celebrity AIDS hoedown?
(When-I-wear-present progressive tense marker-cowboy-coat-join-add-she-genitive case marker-prevent-ài-zǐ-disease-declare-transfer-dance-meeting-time)

Both translations in Example 27 omit “I mean”. The fansubs preserve the original order of elements, while the translation on the DVD reverses it to bring out the meaning of Alan’s lines. However, without discourse markers, Alan’s utterance is seemingly inconsistent and unclear. I propose the translation below, in which wò-shí-shuō (我是说, I-is-say) functions as a link between the preceding utterance and the following part, signifying the speaker’s intention to explain himself to the listener.

Ó-shí-a (哦 是啊, oh-yes-modal word)


Ni-yòu-wèi-wò-gàn-dào-nán-guò-ma (你有为我难过吗, you-have-for-I-difficult-pass-modal word)
The meanings and functions of discourse markers, among other SL elements featuring the colloquial conversation on screen, are preserved, replicated or omitted in subtitling. Subtitlers either translate them literally or omit them rather than adopt a range of settled equivalents which are commensurable with their SL counterparts in colloquial contexts. However, they need to estimate the effects that omission may cause; when omission is inevitable, they need to ensure that the loss of interpersonal meaning is kept to a minimum. But different languages have different means to convey interpersonal meanings. The representation of characteristics of the SL colloquial languages in subtitles can help the audience recognise the similarity and differences between the SL and TL and improve their interlingual and intercultural knowledge. While realizing the effects of translation, yi-qíng (移情, move-emotion; to experience the foreign) and yi-zhi (益智, enhance-intellectuality; to enhance the knowledge about foreign cultures), as expounded by Lu Xun, subtitlers may also utilise TL means of expression in conversation to enhance colloquialism when the corresponding elements in the original are linguistically and culturally universal. This is especially true of swearing, which may be tolerant of the strategy of domestication.
Chapter 13. Subtitling Swearing

Swearing is generally considered to be improper or offensive language consisting of taboo words. However, a speaker who swears must use taboo words in a non-literal, formulaic and emotive fashion, rather than for literal or descriptive purposes (Ljung 2011: 4). This distinguishes swearing in academic terms from that of the common sense. Foul language, as an outlet for frustration or pent-up emotion, can be used to identify a social group and express solidarity (Crystal 1978: 61), while a person who swears usually speaks with stress or intonation accompanied by a series of gestures and facial expressions for purposes such as insult. Excrement, parentage and copulation are common sources of swearing. Yet the challenge remains in matching the TT to the ST with the right tone, force, nuance and meaning, not to mention that swearing can be as intolerable in the TL culture as it is in the SL culture. While swearing can be deliberately toned down or made euphemistic in the original, toning down or neutralising it in translation may have deleterious effects. With reference to his failure to produce an expurgated version of his novel Lady Chatterley’s Lover, D. H. Lawrence stated, “I might as well try to clip my own nose into shape with scissors. The book bleeds!” (In Draper 1970: 21).

Despite being marked by ethno-cultural or, in many cases, religious influences, swearing has much in common in different cultures and may be subdivided into categories such as cursing, profanity, oaths, taboos, obscenity, vulgarity, slang, epithets, insults, scatology and so on. It is important to discern what is to be transformed and why (Gambier 1994: 278). This chapter will evaluate potential TL solutions for subtitling on the basis of the typology of swearing proposed by Ljung (2011), who categorises it through its functions (i.e. the actual patterns used by the speaker) and themes (i.e. references contained within the taboo words) (Ljung 2011: 191).
I argue that TL solutions for swearing should conform to the corresponding SL functions, although themes and semantic meanings are often changed in translation.

13.1 Typology of Swearing

On the typology of swearing, different methodologies have been proposed (Montagu 1967; McEnery 2006; Pinker 2007), many of which, if not all, either fail to distinguish swearing from the more general concept of “bad language” or maintain no exclusivity between the two. In his corpus-based study, Ljung (2011) categorises swearing through its functions and themes. There are four primary taboo themes in swearing – the religious theme, the scatological theme, the family theme and the sexual theme (Ljung 2011: 35) – and several minor themes such as animals and death. The category of function includes replacive swearing, stand-alones and slot-fillers (Ljung 2011: 30). Replacive taboo words are used in place of other words and given new meanings that correspond to the context (Ljung 2011: 35). Such new meanings are not associated with any swearing attempted by the speaker, but with the listener’s interpretation of these newly generated literal meanings (Ljung 2011: 35). Stand-alones function independently, whereas slot-fillers function as modifiers (i.e. adjectives and adverbials) in longer strings of words (Ljung 2011: 33-35).

Despite its social and pragmatic functions, swearing may still have to be diluted or omitted in Chinese subtitles. Subtitlers are faced with two conflicting obligations – their civic obligations underlying cultural principles moderated by the state through censorship, and their professional obligations to the pragmatic functions of the SL dialogue. To the Chinese audience, some swearing is still too strong to be fully preserved in any context aimed at public exhibition, though swearing occurs with high frequency in informal, colloquial contexts and vernacular speech. However, swearing
is less offensive in writing than in speech, as a speaker's tones of voice contribute significantly; subtitling therefore automatically tones down swearing, regardless of the typology of swearing and the techniques adopted by the subtitler.

13.2 Stand-Alones

Swear words are used as stand-alones for expletive interjections, curses, affirmations, unfriendly suggestions and ritual insults (Ljung 2011: 31-33). Some English swearwords are subject to socio-geographical restrictions. For example, “bloody” is used by American English speakers less than by Australian English speakers. This is obvious in the dialogues in The Inbetweeners, in which “fuck” and words derived from it appear frequently, as well as other offensive words which are more typical of British English, as shown below.

In translating “wanker”, different TL words are used, depending on the context in which the SL swearwords are used. The subtitles tone down words, such as “fuck-shit” (which is translated as hún-dàn [混蛋, mass-egg]) and “fuck off” (translated as gūn-kāi [滚开, roll-open]), to less offensive levels. The word “wanker” is translated as wēi-suǒ-nán (猥琐男, timid-unimportant-man), sè-guǐ (色鬼, colour-ghost), chūn-huò (蠢货, stupid-cargo), and hún-dàn (混蛋, mass-egg), according to who or what the speaker intends to insult. In fact, Chinese does not have a specific word that exactly corresponds to the meaning of “wanker”. Hence, the only solution is to convey part of its meaning to the audience by using the four Chinese words

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67 The Chinese audience who have viewed this series mostly rely on resources online or on satellite TV. The subtitles of the dialogue given in the forthcoming pages are produced by a fan-subtitling group called 破烂熊 (Rag Bear). The relevant information about this fan-subtitling group and its translation of the series can be found through this link: http://hi.baidu.com/plxuktv/blog/item/f9966ed36485b1d9572c84af.html ; http://www.ragbear.com/
mentioned above, each of which convey some of the connotations of “wanker”, though none of them denote masturbation.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by Rag Bear</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Series 1 Episode 2: Student: Briefcase wanker!</td>
<td>提公文包的猥琐男</td>
<td>carry-public-text-adjective marker-timid-unimportant-man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Series 1 Episode 2: Soccer Player: Those wankers are nicking that girl's Frisbee</td>
<td>那个色鬼在抢女孩的飞盘</td>
<td>that-quantity unit-colour-ghost-present progressive tense marker-female-child-genitive case marker-fly-plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Series 1 Episode 3: Jay: What, for a wank? You wanker</td>
<td>干嘛 打飞机? 你个蠢货</td>
<td>do-modal word-beat-fly-machine-you-quantity unit-stupid-cargo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Series 3 Episode 1: Jay: Fuck off, you fat wanker</td>
<td>滚开 胖混蛋</td>
<td>roll-open-fat-mass-egg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Bumder" is coined to refer to homosexual men, as below, and its use outside the context of *The Inbetweeners* is yet to be confirmed. The subtitler needs to be aware of these vernacular terms and assign different TL words to them according to the situation in which they are used. The word “bumder” blends “bummer” and “bender”. As shown below, the coinage tóng-lài (同赖, same-rogue) combines tóng-zhi (同志, gay) and wù-lài (无赖, none-rogue) to replicate the speaker’s purpose to accuse someone of being both a hypocrite and gay. The reference to homosexual men is obvious to the TL audience, as the sentence yī-gè-kē-yī-ràng-nǐ-duò-qī-lái-dě-bi-chú (一个可以让你躲起来的壁橱, one-quantity unit-can-can-allow-you-hide-rise-come-adjective marker-wall-wardrobe) leads to the phrase chū-gui (出柜, come out-

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68 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/search/the%20inbetweeners (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
69 This word was initially used as the translation of “comrade” but is now used more often in colloquial contexts to refer to gays.
wardrobe), which has the same implication as the English expression “coming out of the closet”.

Example 29: *The Inbetweeners* Series 1 Episode 2 (2008)\(^7^0\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by Rag Bear</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will: A closet for you to hide in, you bumder?</td>
<td>一个可以让你躲起来的壁橱你这个同赖?</td>
<td>one-quantity unit-can-can-allow-you-hide-rise-come-adjective marker-wall-wardrobe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When a speaker swears for affirmation, he or she usually uses the taboo word for purposes other than expressing agreement. In the conversation below, ḍ-gāi-sī (哦该死, oh-ought to-die) reflects Simon’s reaction to the situation, as gāi-sī (该死, ought to-die) is regarded as an established equivalent to “shit!” However, chè-tōu-chè-wēi-dē-gōu-shī (彻头彻尾的狗屎, thorough-head-thorough-tail-adjective marker-dog-shit) cannot reflect the satirical response made by Mr Gilbert; this translation is not a satirical response to Simon’s interjection. To replicate the interaction between the two speakers in the TL context, it is essential to recreate the repetition of “shit” with proper modulation.

Example 30: *The Inbetweeners* Series 1 Episode 2 (2008)\(^7^1\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by Rag Bear</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simon: Oh, shit</td>
<td>哦 该死</td>
<td>oh-ought to-die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Gilbert: Shit indeed</td>
<td>彻头彻尾的狗屎</td>
<td>thorough-head-thorough-tail-adjective marker-dog-shit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^7^0\) The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/search/the%20inbetweeners (last consulted on 03.08.2015).

\(^7^1\) The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/search/the%20inbetweeners (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
Mr. Gilbert’s line may be translated as bù-sī-jìù-guài-lè (不死就怪了, no-death-must be-strange-modal word), in response to ô-gāi-sī (该死, oh-ought to-die). In doing so, the repetition of “shit”, which conveys a scatology theme in English swearing, is changed into that of sī (死, death), replicating the interpersonal function of affirmation. This translation matches the characterisation of Mr Gilbert, who is sardonic to Simon and the other leading characters in The Inbetweeners. Similar to affirmation, in replying to what has been said by others, a speaker usually offers an unfriendly suggestion, as the following example shows. The phrase qu-nǐ-dē (去你的, Go-you-modal word) is less vulgar than “fuck you”, as the Chinese phrase is used so frequently in oral contexts and literature that its offensiveness is almost disregarded by contemporary Chinese speakers. A literal translation, cáo-nǐ (操你, fuck-you), can precisely replicate the meaning and purpose of the speaker and less obtrusive.

Example 31: Pulp Fiction (1994)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vincent: Would you give a guy a foot massage?</td>
<td>你会给男人按摩足部吗？ You-can-give-male-people-press-touch-feet-place-modal word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jules: Fuck you 73</td>
<td>去你的</td>
<td>Go-you-modal word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word “motherfucker” in Example 32 is used as a ritual insult which often aims at someone’s mother. The subtitles the repetition in the SL speech but condenses

72 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/1291832 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
73 Before the conversation above, Jules and Vincent were talking about a man who massaged their employer’s wife’s foot and the violent end he met in consequence. Jules thinks that their employer over-reacted, but Vincent tries to convince him that to other people, the man’s behaviour was a sign of potential intimacy.
the sentence: “And when I get nervous, I get scared. And when motherfuckers get scared, that's when motherfuckers accidentally get shot”.

Example 33: *Pulp Fiction* (1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now, when you yell at me it makes me nervous</td>
<td>你这样叫 我会紧张</td>
<td>You-this-way-shout-I-can-tight-stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And when I get nervous, I get scared/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And when motherfuckers get scared...</td>
<td>我紧张就会怕 怕了就会杀人</td>
<td>I-tight-stretch-must-can-afraid-modal word-must-can-kill-people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…that's when motherfuckers accidentally get shot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would use the translation below, in which “motherfucker” is translated as tā-mā-dē (他妈的, his-mother-adjective marker):

Nǐ-zhè-yàng-hǒu-wǒ-huí-jīn-zhāng (你这样吼 我会紧张, you-this-way-yell-I-can-tight-stretch)
Wǒ-yī-jīn-zhāng-jìù-huí-fā-huǒ (我一紧张就会发火, I-once-tight-stretch-must-can-occur-fire)
Wǒ-tā-mā-dē-fā-huǒ-lè (我他妈的发火了, I-his-mother-adjective marker-occur-fire-modal word)
Tā-tā-mā-dē-jìù-dēi-āi-qǐāng (他他妈的就得挨枪, he-his-mother-adjective marker-must-can-endure-gun)

However, it is obvious that Jules uses the first “motherfuckers” to refer to himself, and the second to his captive. This use cannot be precisely replicated in the Chinese translation. Changes need to be made if the subtitle is to preserve the strong language. The SL swearword is used as substitute to words such as “I” and “you” and hence functions as replacive swearing.

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74 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/1291832 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
13.3 Replacive Swearing

The subtitler has to scrutinise the usage in order to distinguish metaphorical swearing from metaphors and similes involving taboo words. Phrases referring to excrement such as “shit happens” and “be shitting someone” are figurative idioms maintaining unpleasant senses rather than swearing. Compared to these, phrases such as “the shit out of...” or “be shit out of luck” can be used as expletive interjections to indicate surprise, frustration or anxiety, among others. Similarly, words such as “screw” and “fuck” can also be used metaphorically to indicate the meanings of “cheat” and “swindle”, as shown by the example below:

Example 34: *Pulp Fiction* (1994)$^{75}$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles on Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jules: Does he look like a bitch?</td>
<td>他模样很贱吗?</td>
<td>His-model-appearance-very-indecent-model word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett: No</td>
<td>不像</td>
<td>No-like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jules: Then why you trying to fuck him like a bitch, Brett?</td>
<td>那你干嘛要他</td>
<td>That-you-do-what-cheat-he</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Fuck” is used as a metaphorical substitute for words such as “cheat” and “betray”. “Fuck” can be translated as piàn (騙, cheat) or shuā (耍, chat) – both words are considered equivalent to “cheat” – depending on the subtitler's preference. However, neither of them is expletive, so they neutralise the SL swearing. “Bitch” can be translated as shā-zi (傻子, stupid-person) or, as shown above, jiàn (賤, indecent). I would prefer to use words such as shā-bī (傻屄, stupid-cunt) to compensate for the omission of swearing in translating “fuck”. The character bī (屄, cunt) is generally

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$^{75}$ The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/1291832 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
taboo in print and is a key component of swearing in Mandarin and its vernacular variations. Fansubbers often replace this character with the capital “B”, or use bǐ (逼, force) as a substitute, of which the pronunciation is identical to that of bǐ (屄, cunt), in order to avoid excessive explicitness which may cause offence in the TL. To replicate both function and theme of the SL swearing, the solution for “Then why you trying to fuck him like a bitch” should be:

nà-nǐ-gàn-má-bā-tā-dāng-shǎ-bǐ-shuā (那你干嘛把他当傻逼耍, that-you-do-what-positive voice marker-he-treat...as-stupid-cunt-cheat)

As the other variation of replacive swearing, euphemistic varieties of some swearwords (e.g. “shoot” for the more vulgar “shit”) – when the speaker “almost swears” – have no semantic connection with the actual swearwords but are chosen by the speaker as expletives (Ljung 2011: 79). These non-taboo words are in turn assigned to convey new meanings in different situations, where the realisation of swearing relies on the listener’s interpretation. This is more than “creating a nonsense equivalent of a swear word” (McArthur 1992: 661), since the word “shoot”, for example, also maintains its literal senses and has a similar sound and length to the word it is replacing. In other cases, the so-called “nonsense equivalent” is not a substitute for any specific word but a conjunction of the meanings or concepts contained by a group of words. Some euphemistic terms are eventually categorised as interjections due to frequent use. For example, in uttering “Holy smoke!”, an interjectional context emerges to convey the meanings of expletive phrases, such as "Holy shit!" and “Holy crap!”, which came after “Holy smoke!”.
Euphemistic swearing can be figurative if it is intended for humour. As given below, the translation made by YYeTs demonstrates a creative solution to the translation of euphemistic swearing. Howard compares Sheldon to “an obnoxious, giant dictator” and explains to Rajesh that he uses “-tator” to make his speech “gentle”. This substitute is not a nonsensical equivalent to a swearword. Nor has it got a similar sound and length to the swearword (i.e. dick) representing the speaker’s intention. This substitute is typical wordplay attempted by the speaker (or the screenwriter).

Example 35: *The Big Bang Theory* Season 3 Episode 1 (2010)\(^76\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard: Sheldon, you remember the first few weeks...</td>
<td>谢尔顿 你还记得开始几周...</td>
<td>Xiè-èr-dùn-you-whether-remember-obtain-start-beginning-many-week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...we were looking for magnetic monopoles...</td>
<td>...我们在探测磁单极子...</td>
<td>I-plural marker-present progressive tense marker-explore-measure-magnet-single-pole-particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...and not finding anything and you were acting like...</td>
<td>...结果一无所获</td>
<td>Knot-fruit-one-none-passive voice marker-obtain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...an obnoxious, giant dictator?</td>
<td>你变成面目可憎的大 JJ 霸主吗</td>
<td>You-change-become-face-eyes-can-hateful-adjective marker-big-J-J-hegemonic-host-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajesh: I thought we were going to be gentle with him</td>
<td>我以为要婉转点跟他说呢</td>
<td>I-think-is-should-euphemistic-turning-a little-with-he-talk-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard: That’s why I added the “-tator”</td>
<td>所以我加了“霸主”</td>
<td>So-because-I-add-past tense marker-hegemonic-host</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The TL phrase miàn-mù-kě-zèng-dē-dà-J-J-bà-zhǔ (面目可憎的大 JJ 霸主, face-eyes-can-hateful-adjective marker-big-J-J-hegemonic-host) contains precisely the meanings of “obnoxious” (which is translated as miàn-mù-kě-zèng-dē [面目可憎

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\(^76\) The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/3990470 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
In replicating the wordplay contained in “dictator”, the subtitler preserves the reference to the male sex organ by using “JJ” which stands for jǐ-jī (鸡鸡, chick-chick). The word jǐ-jī is a euphemistic form of jī-bā (鸡巴, chick-auxiliary word [no solid meaning]), a word used most frequently to refer to the penis. However, to replicate the figurative style in the ST, the subtitler further euphemises the word as “JJ”. This pattern can be considered a kind of acronym, which consists of the first letters in the Romanised transcription of jǐ-jī (鸡鸡, chick-chick). The meaning of “dictator” is also retained in the word bà-zhū (霸主, hegemonic-host), which is an established equivalent to the English word. In this way, the subtitler adapts the pattern J-J-bà-zhū (JJ霸主, J-J-hegemonic-host) to Howard’s wordplay “dic-tator”; “JJ” corresponds to “dic-”, and bà-zhū (霸主, hegemonic-host) to “dictator”. However, “JJ” and bà-zhū (霸主, hegemonic-host) can be used independently and maintain solid semantic meanings and references in the TL context, while “dictator” is a single word. Thus in translating the SL euphemistic swearing, the subtitler adopts linguistic amplification to comply with the SL wordplay and thereby resorts to substitution by using “JJ” to convey the implication of “dic-”, and bà-zhū (霸主, hegemonic-host) to translate “dictator”. Howard uses “dictator” as a single euphemistic swear word in which “dic-” becomes a punning effect (implying the meaning of “dick”); the two parts of the word (i.e. “die-” and “-tator”) are not independent words. Hence, both the initial and secondary meanings of “dictator” are obvious to the TL audience, though the TL solution also functions as euphemistic swearing.
This solution, and the use of substitutes, is not included in the list of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). The use of “B” in particular seems to realise both foreignisation and domestication in the same TL solution. In doing so, the subtitler would initially resorts to domestication, as the SL word “bitch” is adapted to the TL context by using the word shā-bī (傻屄, stupid-cunt). However, when “B” is used to signify the meaning of a sensitive Chinese character (or the meaning of a character) such as bǐ (屄, cunt), a sense of foreignness is introduced to the TL context.

13.4 Slot-Fillers

Swear words, and particularly “fucking”, are inserted into a phrase or sentence as an intensifier. As below, the translation erases all the swearing in the SL speech. The interjection “Jesus Christ” is transformed into a domestic expression wǒ-dē-tiān (我的天, My Heavens!) which not comply with the SL religious reference. In reacting to mishaps in daily situations, a Chinese speaker is more likely to say, wǒ-cào (我操, I-fuck), wǒ-ri (我日, I-sun [which also means “fuck”]) or simply cāo (操, fuck). Despite retaining the sex-related theme, these expressions do not contain the religious scheme conveyed by the reference to Jesus Christ, of which the audience should be informed so as to understand the specific way of swearing depicted in the original. I propose the foreignised translation yē-sū-tā-mā-dē- jī-dū (耶稣操他妈的基督, ye-sū-fuck-his-mother-adjective marker-jī-dū), in which tā-mā-dē (他妈的, his-mother-adjective marker), an established equivalent to “fucking”, is inserted into the usual translation of “Jesus Christ”.

Example 36: *Pulp fiction* (1994)\(^\text{77}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Vincent: Oh, Jesus fucking Christ</td>
<td>我的天！</td>
<td>I-genitive case marker-sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Eddie: ...he says Daddy's coming down here, and he's fucking pissed</td>
<td>...告诉我我爸就要到了，他很生气</td>
<td>Tell-narrate-I-my-father-will-will-arrive-modal word-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, “he’s fucking pissed” is translated into a much milder expression tä-hèn-shēng-qì (他很生气, he-very-produce-anger), omitting the intensifier “fucking”. In English, taboo words conveying the scatological theme are mostly based on references to excretion in words such as “shit”, “piss”, and “bullshit”. In Chinese, swearing conveying the scatological theme usually contains the characters pì (屁, fart), shǐ (屎, shit), and niào (尿, urine). However, they may not be used as solutions for their English counterparts. The word “pissed” in … means not only “angry” but also “anxious”. Thus the translation should use the TL word jí (急, haste) which can also be used to reveal the co-existence of different negative emotions such as impatience, anger, and anxiety. Thus the translation may be tā-jí-dē-yī-bǐ-diào-zào (他急地一屄屌糟, he-anxious-adverb marker-one-cunt-dick-shit). In this translation, the vernacular term yī-bǐ-diào-zào (一屄屌糟, one-cunt-dick-shit) is used to replicate the sex-related theme represented by “fucking” (as bǐ [屄, cunt] and diào [屄, dick] imply) and the scatological theme conveyed by “pissed” (as being implied by zào [糟, shit]).

Emotions are conveyed with denotative referents involving irony, under- and over-statement, humour, idiomatic usage and implied requests, which enable swearing

\(^{77}\) The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/1291832 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
to be used metaphorically. Subtitlers need to understand how native speakers of both languages swear, in order to retain the perlocutionary\textsuperscript{78} effect of swearing on the hearers. While respecting norms of good usage by avoiding the elements that might be considered as excessively vulgar or offensive (Roffe & Thorne 1993: 258), they should also bear in mind that what is intolerable to one may be acceptable to another.

To prevent over-stating the offensiveness of SL swearing in translation, it is feasible to use TL substitutes having the same pronunciation as the actual Chinese characters used for swearing. In this way, Chinese subtitlers try to maintain the verisimilitude of the narrative, while also complying with local language policies. The meanings of TL solutions with substitute characters were once not straightforward, and the audience had to realise the connection between the actual character(s) corresponding to SL swearing and those substitutes appearing on screen. However, they become familiar with these substitutes due to the frequent use of substitutes in fansubbed versions which form the majority of the audience’s experience of foreign-language swearing.

This outcome in subtitling swearing conforms to the Darwinian view held by Lu Xun in using inventive means of expression, that it is feasible to take the risk of offending, rather than hiding the offensiveness away from the audience. As Wallace Stegner (1965;\textsuperscript{79} 2002 in Lynn Stegner (ed.): 90-91) states:

> Words are not obscene: naming things is a legitimate verbal act. And “frank” does not mean “vulgar,” any more than “improper” means “dirty.” What “vulgar” does mean is “common”; what “improper” means is “unsuitable.” Under the right circumstances, any word is proper. But when any sort of word, especially a word hitherto taboo and therefore noticeable, is scattered across a page like chocolate chips through a tollhouse cookie, a real impropriety occurs. The sin is not the use of an “obscene” word; it is the

\textsuperscript{78} The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics (2nd edition 2007, by P.H. Matthews) defines “perlocutionary” as “[A] term applied in the theory of speech acts to the effect brought about by an utterance in the particular circumstances in which it is uttered” (Page 294).

\textsuperscript{79} This argument was first published in The Atlantic Monthly by Wallace Stegner in 1965 to criticise the tendency of “many fledgling writers to substitute a surfeit of profanity for powerfully crafted prose” (http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2005/08/wallace-stegner-on-profanity/4116/).
use of a loaded word in the wrong place or in the wrong quantity. It is the sin of false emphasis, which is not a moral but a literary lapse, related to sentimentality.

Thus a proper understanding of the offensiveness of the SL swearing is essential to an appropriate translation without overstatement or understatement. No matter how sensitive the language is, it must be used when, and only when, the ST contains the same elements. Whereas the problem of acceptability is the main obstacle faced in subtitling swearing, challenges posed by subtitling humour are mainly associated with accessibility. I turn to the transmission of SL humour in Chinese subtitles in the next chapter.
Chapter 14. Subtitling Humour

John Schmitz (2002: 90) identifies three categories of verbal humour. Universal humour is based on common knowledge and the universal experience of mankind and henceforth shared among different cultures. Cultural humour is attached to the history, customs, traditions, social systems, and so on, of a specific culture. This kind of humour is often realised in culturally loaded expressions such as idioms, proverbs and proper nouns. To understand cultural humour, one must be proficient in both the language in which humour manifests itself, and the culture(s) in which this language is used. While explanatory notes are often used by translators to explain cultural references, they are less applied as solutions for linguistic humour which is realised by the creative use of language in terms of phonetics, lexicography and grammar (e.g. puns and wordplay). Compared with the other two, linguistic humour is the most bound to the language used and hence a complete TL representation of corresponding SL linguistic humour is impossible in many cases.

Schmitz’s categorisation corresponds with Dong’s (2007) category of audiovisual humour. There are: visual non-verbal humour, which involves the body language of characters and objects in the visuals; visual textual humour, which refers to the written or printed information which triggers humorous effects; aural non-verbal humour, which includes non-verbal sounds and para-language; and verbal humour, which includes situational humour, conceptual humour, cultural-specific humour and wordplay. According to her, situational and conceptual humour fall into the category of universal humour, wordplay corresponds to linguistic humour, and culturally specific humour belongs to the category of cultural humour. As for visual non-verbal humour, it can be either universal or culturally rooted, depending on the way it is represented. So can visual textual humour, which involves written or printed...
information triggering humour in an original. Aural non-verbal humour is linguistic humour and sometimes culturally specific; a random sound used by a speaker in a particular situation may be a well-known cultural reference (e.g. the catchphrase of a famous character). These kinds of audiovisual humour occur less frequently in the audiovisual context than verbal humour. When they do occur, it is often to support the realisation of verbal humour.

The following discussion will mainly conform to Schmitz’s categorisation, while taking into account Dong’s categories of audiovisual humour as relevant factors arise. It seeks to gauge the extent to which subtitlers have to diverge from the English-language humour in order to provoke laughter by using the strategy of domestication, the extent to which the original humour is reduced or enhanced in translation, and the omission of English-language humour in Chinese subtitling. I argue that overall domestication is less effective because it maintains the clarity and logical structure of the TT (as is expounded by Lu Xun as yì-jìě [易解, easy-explain]) but disregards the charm and style of the original humour (i.e. fēng-zī [丰姿, full-shape]).

14.1 Universal Humour

Humorous dialogue does not always contain jokes. It is contextual and, as Mark Twain (1897) states, can be “told gravely” as the “teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it” (in Cooper 2000: 18). Situational humour often describes a scene in daily life; the humour does not arise from language but from the situation represented mostly by dialogue, as shown below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STuart: Oh, I see you guys have found my little treasure</strong></td>
<td>两位发现了我的小宝贝</td>
<td>Two-unit for number of people-open-appear-l-genitive case marker-little-treasure-currency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leonard: Yeah</strong></td>
<td>是啊</td>
<td>Yes-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>It’s okay, I guess</strong></td>
<td>看着还行</td>
<td>Look-present progressive tense marker-fairly-well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sheldon: Okay? It’s magnificent</strong></td>
<td>什么叫还行 它简直了不起</td>
<td>What-modal word-shout-fairly-well-it-simple-straight-entirely-no-rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leonard: Bur-bur-bur-bon</strong></td>
<td>多少钱？</td>
<td>Lot-few-money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you want for it?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STuart: Oh, it’s hard to put a price on something…</strong></td>
<td>很难给 本尊出现在电视上…</td>
<td>Very-difficult-give-this-thing-go out-appear-in-electronic-visual-above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>…that’s a copy of something that was on pay cable</strong></td>
<td>其复制品出现在店里的东西定价</td>
<td>Its-replicate-produce-product-out-appear-in-this-shop-inside-adjective marker-east-west-settle-price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>But for my friends, let’s say 250?</strong></td>
<td>不过卖给朋友嘛 就二百五吧</td>
<td>No-surpass-sell-to-friend-friend-modal word-simply-two-hundred-five-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leonard: Oh, that’s pretty steep</strong></td>
<td>你还真是狮子大开口</td>
<td>You-even-really-is-lion-modal word-large-open-mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STuart: Well, it’s a limited edition</strong></td>
<td>这可是限量版</td>
<td>This-surely-is-limited-quantity-version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>They only made 8,000 of these bad boys</strong></td>
<td>只生产了八千把哦</td>
<td>Only-give birth-produce-pass tense marker-eight-thousand-unit of quantity-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sheldon: Only 8,000?</strong></td>
<td>只有八千把</td>
<td>Only-have-eight-thousand-unit of quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We’re wasting precious time. Buy it</strong></td>
<td>我们在浪费宝贵的时间 快下</td>
<td>We-plural marker-present progressive tense marker-wave-consume-treasure-expensive-adjective marker-time-space-quick-buy-down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leonard: Hang on</strong></td>
<td>等等</td>
<td>Wait-wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can you do any better?</strong></td>
<td>还能少点吗</td>
<td>Even-can-few-little-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STuart: Are you kidding?</strong></td>
<td>开什么玩笑</td>
<td>Open-what-modal word-play-laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I’m already giving you the friends and family discount</strong></td>
<td>这已经是亲友折扣了</td>
<td>This-has been-pass by-family-friend-bend-reduce-modal world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sheldon: Oh, did you hear that?</strong></td>
<td>听见了吗</td>
<td>Hear-see-present perfect tense marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We’re getting the friends and family discount</strong></td>
<td>人家都给我们亲友折扣了</td>
<td>People-family-already-give-I-plural marker-family-friend-bend-reduce-present perfect tense marker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/6557005 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
The speakers are seemingly unaware of the comic effect created by the scene while the viewers in the studio are laughing. The subtitles replicate the situation by resorting to domestication. One typical example is the translation of “that’s pretty steep”, which is nǐ-hái-zhēn-shì-shī-zǐ-dà-kāi-kǒu (你还真是狮子大开口, You-even-really-is-lion-modal word-large-open-mouth). The Chinese expression is usually used to complain about someone’s greedy nature and often used by a customer to bargain with the seller. However, by adopting this expression, the meaning conveyed literally by “steep” (i.e. unreasonable) becomes metaphorical in the TL context; tài-gui-la (太贵啦, very-expensive-modal word) is more appropriate, as it corresponds with the speaker’s purpose of using “steep”. In addition, the omission of Leonard’s intentional meaningless babbling (“Bur-bur-bur-bon”) does not affect perception of the humour, as the audience can still recognise the funny tone of voice in Leonard’s speech, or, at least, the canned laughter.

Story-tellers may give themselves away and fail to amuse the listener. The screenwriter uses such anecdotal phenomena in social life to create greater humour. The laughter is heard on cue throughout Sheldon’s speech, as given below.

Example 38: The Big Bang Theory Season 5 Episode 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As is the tradition</td>
<td>按照传统习惯</td>
<td>Depend on-comply with-transfer-uniformity-custom-habit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

81 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/6557005 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
I have prepared a series of disrespectful jokes... 
...which generate humour at Howard’s expense 
Prepare to have your ribs tickled 
I always thought you’d be the last one of us to ever get married... 
...because you are so short and unappealing 
Am I right? 
Let’s see here 
Oh, seriously though, Howard 
You’re actually one of the most intelligent people I know 
And that’s a zinger, because you’re not 
I’ve always thought that you’d make... 
...someone a fine husband someday 
...assuming you’d be able to get the parts... 
...and develop the engineering skills... 
...to assemble them, which I don’t see as likely 
Hatcha! 
Okay...Let me see here 
Okay, kidding aside... 
Howard, you are a good friend... 
...and I wish you nothing but happiness 
Bazinga, I don’t! 
Double bazinga! I do!
The subtitles reflect what a Chinese-speaker is supposed to say at the same occasion and thereby replicate the mood of the speaker in the recipient context. In retaining the jokes, the subtitler precisely domesticates some SL expressions and gives conciseness to the translation at the right places. For example, “Prepare to have your ribs tickled” is translated as zhùn-bèi-xiào-dào-dù-zǐ-téng-bǎ (准备笑到肚子疼吧，allow-prepare-laugh-arrive-stomach-modal word-pain-modal word). This expression is more likely to be used by a Chinese-speaker in a comparable situation; it modulates the reference to “ribs” into dù-zǐ (肚子, stomach-modal word), and “tickled” into téng (疼, pain). However, a closer translation, which is zhùn-bèi-bèi-náo-yāng-yāng-bǎ (准备被挠痒痒吧, allow-prepare-passive voice marker-scratch-itch-itch-modal word), is also easy to comprehend, as it contains a reference of ribs (where the action of tickling targets) implied by náo-yāng-yāng (挠痒痒, scratch-itch-itch). In addition, the habitual gags of Sheldon such as “Hatcha!” and “Bazinga!” are translated as hǎo-xiào-bǎ (好笑吧, Good-laugh-modal word) and dòu-nǐ-wán (逗你玩, kidding-you-play). The subtitler maintains coherence by translating “Double bazinga” into hǎi-shí-dòu-nǐ-wán (还是逗你玩, also-is-kidding-you-play), which corresponds to dòu-nǐ-wán, and hence clarifies Sheldon’s attempt to repeat his jokes. In this way, the audience is aware of the enthusiasm of the speaker and his perception of the situation which is in contrast to that of the others’.

Conceptual humour represents a unique and bizarre way of thinking which functions in a created universe where rules and logic are crooked. An incongruity
exists between bizarre ways of thinking and universally recognised patterns of behaviour or social etiquette, as in Example 39.

Example 39: The Big Bang Theory Season 5 Episode 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Hello, I’m here for my haircut with Mr D’Onofrio</td>
<td>嗨 我来找诺费奥先生为我理发</td>
<td>Hey-I-come-find-nuò-fèi-ào-before-birth-for-I-sort-hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’s pretty sick</td>
<td>他病得很厉害</td>
<td>He-ill-adverbial marker-very-danger-harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Oh, dear, Mr D’Onofrio’s in the hospital/</td>
<td>天啊 诺费奥先生在医院</td>
<td>Heaven-modal word-nuò-fèi-ào-before-birth-in-doctor-institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do these things always happen to me?</td>
<td>我的命运为何如此多舛</td>
<td>I-genitive case marker-life-fortune-for-what-like-this-lot-catastrophe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: Sheldon, it’s okay, he can do it/</td>
<td>谢尔顿 没关系 他能行</td>
<td>Xiè-èr-dùn-not have-relevance-relation-he-can-can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’s a barber</td>
<td>他也是理发师</td>
<td>He-also-is-sort-hair-professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: He’s not a barber, he’s the nephew</td>
<td>他不是理发师 他是理发师的外甥</td>
<td>He-no-is-sort-hair-professional-he-is-sort-hair-professional-genitive case marker-outside-nephew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’s an example of the kind of nepotism</td>
<td>他就是理发界日益猖獗的…</td>
<td>He-surely-is-sort-hair-field-day-more-spread-rising-adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…that runs rampant in the barbering industry/</td>
<td>…裙带关系的典型范例</td>
<td>Skirt-belt-relevance-relation-adjective marker-classic-type-typical-example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besides, Mr D’Onofrio knows exactly how I like my hair done...</td>
<td>另外 诺费奥先生很清楚我喜欢什么样的发型</td>
<td>Extra-outside-nuò-fèi-ào-before-birth-very-clear-see-I-like-like-what-modal word-adjective marker-hair-type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…because he has all my haircut records from my barber in Texas</td>
<td>因为他有我在德州理发时的理发记录</td>
<td>Because-because-he-have-I-indé-state-sort-hair-time-adjective marker-sort-hair-memorise-record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: What are you talking about?</td>
<td>你在瞎扯什么啊</td>
<td>You-present progressive tense marker-blind-talk-what-modal word-word-modal word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subtitles above inform the audience, first of all, of the incongruity in Sheldon’s understanding of his haircut routine, which is the core of the humour of this

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82 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.eom/d/6557005 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
scene and corresponds to his rigid routine and egotism. The subtitler resorts to domestication in translating the dialogue above, giving the following solutions. Firstly, “Why do these things always happen to me?” is translated as wǒ-dē-míng-yùn-wèi-hé-rú-cǐ-duō-jie (我的命运为何如此多舛, I-genitive case marker-life-fortune-for-what-like-this-lot-catastrophe), which is an expression used to complain about situations which run counter to one’s expectations. This translation particularises the meaning of the SL sentence by amplifying the negative opinion expressed by the speaker in regard to the situation. This is conveyed by the character jie (舛, catastrophe), which means “misfortune” or “catastrophe”. Secondly, the word “nepotism” is translated as qún-dài-guǎn-xì (裙带关系, Skirt-belt-relevance-relation), which narrows the meaning of its SL counterpart to relatives who are initially connected by marriage. This TL solution explains the reason why the subtitler translates “Uncle Tony” as tuō-ní-jìù-jìù (托尼舅舅, tuō-ní-uncle-uncle) rather than tuō-ní-shū-shū (托尼叔叔, tuō-ní-uncle-uncle). In Chinese kinship terms, jìù-jìù (舅舅, uncle-uncle) is used to address the brother of one’s mother, while shū-shū (叔叔, uncle-uncle) addresses the younger brother of one’s father. Thirdly, “What are you talking about?” is translated as nǐ-xiā-chē-shén-me-a (你在瞎扯什么啊, You-present progressive tense marker-blind-talk-what-modal word-modal word), which clarifies Leonard’s negative opinion of Sheldon’s talk. Amplification induces the TL solution to adopt the word xiā-chē (瞎扯, blind-talk), rather than shuō (说, talk).

In addition, conceptual humour often depicts a character’s refusal to follow social rules of propriety and politeness, as in irony, which can also be situational.83

83The Oxford English Dictionary defines “irony” as “A figure of speech in which the intended meaning is the opposite of that expressed by the words used; usually taking the form of sarcasm or ridicule in which laudatory expressions are used to imply condemnation or contempt.” The definition is found at: 213
Humour is often realised by the failure to recognise attempted irony rather than by the irony itself, as the following conversation shows. The ironic effects are recognisable to the Chinese audience since the situation depicted is universal to different cultures. It is notable that the word yà-yì (讶异, surprise-difference) is rarely used in the colloquial contexts and hence may be unclear to the TL audience. In comparison, the corresponding line is translated as wō-yī-diān-yē-bù-gǎn-dào-qí-guài (我一点也不感到奇怪, I-one-dot-even-no-feel-arrive-strange-bizarre) in the fansubs produced by YYeTs, in which gǎn-dào-qí-guài (感到奇怪, feel-arrive-strange-bizarre) is closer to the meaning of “be surprised” and the colloquial registers of the SL dialogue.

Example 40: The Big Bang Theory Season 1 Episode 2⁸⁴

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles in Official Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: I have to say I slept splendidly</td>
<td>我得说我说得很好</td>
<td>I-must-say-I-sleep-adverbial marker-very-good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granted, not long, but just deeply and well</td>
<td>虽然睡眠时间不多 但睡得很熟</td>
<td>Although-yes-sleep-sleep-time-space-no-lot-but-sleep-adverbial marker-very-ripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: I'm not surprised</td>
<td>我一点都不讶异</td>
<td>I-one-dot-even-no-surprise-difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A well-known folk cure for insomnia...</td>
<td>治疗失眠非常有效的传统疗法...</td>
<td>Heal-cure-lost-sleep-not-usual-have-effect-adjective marker-transfer-uniformity-heal-method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...is to break into your neighbor's apartment and clean.</td>
<td>...就是溜到邻居家打扫</td>
<td>Surely-is-slip-arrive-adjacent-residence-home-beat-sweep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Sarcasm?</td>
<td>这是讽刺吗?</td>
<td>This-is-irony-sting-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: You think?</td>
<td>你觉得呢</td>
<td>You-feel-get-modal word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The recognition of irony depends not on the understanding of the opposite of the literal meaning, but on the ability to recognise the thought that the speaker attributes to someone or something as a dissociative attitude (Sperber & Wilson


⁸⁴ The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/2156528 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).

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1981). In echoic use, the speaker either gives an overt indication of his attitude or leaves the listener to interpret the indication from paralinguistic or contextual clues. A speaker often adds further verbal or other clues. For example, a speaker says the words with a particular inflection or a superlative while displaying a wry facial expression. These non-verbal actions contribute to the realisation of the original irony, and the translation of ironic speech needs to cooperate with these non-verbal actions in order to demonstrate the intended meaning of a speaker, as shown below:

Example 41: *The Big Bang Theory* Season 4 Episode 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zach: You know, I saw this great thing on the Discovery Channel</td>
<td>我在探索频道 看到一个很棒的东西</td>
<td>I-at-explore-seeking-frequency- path-see-arrive-one-unit for quantity-very-good-adjective marker-east-west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turns out that if you kill a starfish... ...it'll just come back to life</td>
<td>原来你杀死一只海星之后 它还会复活</td>
<td>Original-come-you-kill-death-one-unit of quantity-sea-star-adjective marker-after-it-still-can-repeat-live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Was the starfish wearing boxer shorts?</td>
<td>那只海星是穿短裤的吗？</td>
<td>That-unit of quantity-sea-star-is-wear-short-pants-adjective marker-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because you might have been watching Nickelodeon</td>
<td>因为你看的可能是东森幼幼台</td>
<td>Because-because-you-see-adjective marker-possibility-can-east-forest-kid-kid-channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zach: No, I'm almost sure that it was the Discovery Channel</td>
<td>不，我几乎可以肯定是探索频道</td>
<td>No-I-many-modal word-can-modal-word-sure-determinative-is-explore-see-frequency-path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a great channel</td>
<td>节目很棒，他们同时说 海豚可能比人类聪明</td>
<td>Festival-eye-very-good-he-plural marker-same-time-say-sea-dolphin-possibility-can-in comparison-human-species-clever-bright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They also said dolphins might be smarter than people</td>
<td>可能比某些人聪明</td>
<td>Possibility-can-in comparison-certain-many-human-clever-bright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: They might be smarter than some people</td>
<td>他们可能比某些人聪明</td>
<td>Possibility-can-in comparison-certain-many-human-clever-bright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zach: Maybe we can do an experiment to find out</td>
<td>或许我们可以做实验来验证</td>
<td>Or-maybe-I-plural marker-can-can-do-real-test-come-test-prove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Uh, that's easy enough</td>
<td>那还真简单啊</td>
<td>That-surely-real-simple-single-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need a large tank of water, a hoop to jump through...</td>
<td>我们需要一大缸的水 一个跳圈...</td>
<td>I-plural marker-need-want-one-big-tank-adjective marker-water-one-unit for quantity-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

85 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/2156528 (last consulted on 03.08.2015). (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
The reference to “Nickelodeon” is domesticated in the subtitles given above, which are in the DVD released by Warner Home Video, by the reference to Yo Yo TV (i.e. dōng-sēn-yòu-yòu-tái (东森幼幼台, east-forest-kid-kid-channel), a Taiwanese TV network. This translation maintains its geographical constraint, which potentially excludes viewers in Mainland China, to whom that channel is inaccessible. Adaptation is unnecessary in translating this SL cultural reference, as the essential factor in this conversation is irony. In YYeTs’ translation, it shows yě-xǔ-nǐ-kàn-dě-shí-ní-kè-pǐng-dào-ér-tóng-pǐng-dào (也许你看的是尼克频道［儿童频道］, still-maybe-you-look-adjective marker-nǐ-kè-frequency-path) which retains the reference to Nickelodeon and provides additional information about the TV channel in an explanatory note next to the translation of the SL line. In this way, the translation fulfils the purpose of foreignization by adopting the strategy of description. In addition, the subtitles in Example 41 match the tone and rhythm of the SL speech, especially that of the ironists, to make clear their sarcastic intent. For example, Leonard stresses the word “some” when saying “They might be smarter than some people”, of which the translation, kě-néng-bǐ-mǒu-xiē-rén-cōng-míng (可能比某些人聪明, possibility-can-in comparison-certain-many-human-clever-bright), replicates this inflexion in tone. In saying this, the speaker intentionally stresses the character mǒu (某, certain). Leonard’s last remark would be better translated as yě-xǔ-hài-tún-néng (也许海豚能, still-maybe-sea-dolphin-can), rather than hài-tún-kě-néng-tǐng-dé-
dōng (海豚可能听得懂, sea-dolphin-possibility-can-hear-get-understand). The former matches the pace of the speaker better because it is not only more concise but also closer to what Chinese-speakers tend to say in the same situation, stressing nénɡ (能, can).

Visual elements in the audiovisual context contribute to the original humour with or without verbal information; in both situations, information provided by the visual channel is indispensable. As for visual-verbal information such as written words, the information should be presented in subtitles. In Example 42 below, Sheldon sees no sarcasm when Penny says “what kind of doctor remove shoes from asses”, but rather, turns the conversation to exaggerated and irrelevant issues until a third person, Leonard, raises a sign saying “sarcasm”, which is not present in subtitles. The translation of the conversation above follows the pace of the original and lets the visuals carry the humorous function at the relevant point. It also helps the audience recognise the opposing reactions to the on-going event – Sheldon’s indifferent manner contrasts with Leonard’s guilt and Penny’s outrage. It should be noticed that Penny’s sarcastic question is clarified as shé-me-yànɡ-de-yī-shēnɡ-huí-zhī-líáo-hún-dàn (什么样的医生会治疗混蛋？, what-modal word-appearance-adjective marker-heal-cure-mass-egg) which changes the SL meaning completely, while a more literal translation would retain the sarcasm more efficiently, such as nà-zhònɡ -tī-shēnɡ-cónɡ-pì-gū-lǐ-qū-chū-xiè-zi (哪种医生从屁股里取出鞋子？, which-kind-doctor-practitioner-fromasses-hips-inside-take-out-shoe[s]-modal word).
### Example 42: The Big Bang Theory Season 1 Episode 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: You might want to see an otolaryngologist</td>
<td>你该去看耳鼻喉科医生</td>
<td>You ought to leave see ear-nose-throat-discipline-doctor-practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A throat doctor</td>
<td>治疗喉咙的医生</td>
<td>Heal-cure-throat-adjective-doctor-practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny: And what kind of doctor removes shoes from asses?</td>
<td>什么样的医生会治疗混蛋?</td>
<td>What-modal word-appearance-adjective marker-heal-cure-mass-egg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Depending on the depth</td>
<td>那得视问题的严重度而定</td>
<td>That-should-see-title-adjective marker-strict-heavy-degree-in order to-define</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That's either a... proctologist</td>
<td>直肠科医生或一般外科都可以</td>
<td>Straight-gut-discipline-doctor-practitioner-one-kind-outside-discipline-all-can-can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or a general surgeon</td>
<td>(Leonard raised a piece of paper with the word “sarcasm” written on it)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example 43: Two and a Half Men Season 8 Episode 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jake: How are we supposed to split this?</td>
<td>我们该如何分这笔钱?</td>
<td>I-plural marker-ought to-like-what-divide-this-unit of quantity-money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldridge: I don’t know, dude</td>
<td>我不知道，老兄</td>
<td>I-no-know-the way-old-brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter how I figure it, there’s gonna be one left over</td>
<td>不管我怎么算 总是多一张出来</td>
<td>No-constrain-I-how-modal word-calculate-always-is-more-one-unit of quantity-out-come</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example 44: The Big Bang Theory Season 5 Episode 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernadette: Ooh, look at this pretty purple robe I just got</td>
<td>看我拿到的这件漂亮的紫色长袍</td>
<td>Look-I-get-arrive-adjective marker-this-unit of quantity-beautiful-bright-adjective marker-purple-colour-long-coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should put on yours and then we’ll match</td>
<td>你也该穿上你的 咱俩多搭配呀</td>
<td>You-also-ought to-wear-up-you-genitive case marker-we-two-very much-pair-modal word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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86 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/2156528 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
87 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/a/171014 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
88 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/6557005 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
Howard: But I worked hard to get this armour

I-consume-present perfect tense marker-good-big-energy-eventually-get-arrive-this-body-helmet-armour

Bernadette: Sorry, I just thought it’d be nice...

抱歉 我只是觉得...

Embrace-apology-I-only-is-feel-get

...if people knew we are a couple

...让别人看出咱俩是一对很有爱

Let-other-people-see-out-we-two-is-one-pair-very-have-love

Howard: Fine, I’ll change

好吧 我换

Good-modal word-I-change

If example 42 still relies on information in the dialogue for its humour, Example 43 above shows a situation where the visuals – 150 US dollars in three fifty-dollar notes – are vital to the humour. The subtitler acknowledges the function of the visual clue and lets the subtitles remain secondary in generating the humorous effect. However, the translation of Eldridge’s line could be shorter. The first personal pronoun “I” can be omitted in the Chinese translation and the line reduced to wǒ-bù-zhī-dào-lǎo-xiōng-bù-guǎn-zěn-mé-suàn-zǒng-duō-chū-yī-zhāng (我不知道 老兄 不管怎么算 总多出一张, I-no-know-the way-old-brother-no-constrain-I-how-modal word-calculate-always-is-more-one-unit-of-quantity-out-come), further condensing the part corresponding to “there’s gonna be one left over”. In comparison, aural non-verbal humour involves either artificial sound or para-linguistic expressions. Here, I refer to the use of artificial sound, while para-linguistic expressions should be considered as linguistic humour. In Example 44 above, Sheldon produces a sound of whipcracking by using the “Pocket Whip” application on his iPhone when Howard yields to his fiancée’s request. The whipcracking is performed to satirise Howard’s subservience to Bernadette. The translation helps the audience understand the context and recognise the humour which is realised by the non-verbal sound (i.e. whipcracking).

14.2 Cultural Humour
Subtitlers seek to negotiate between two languages and relevant cultures, as decisions are made between preserving the foreign culture in a film and manipulating the original to enhance familiarity or intimacy in the recipient culture. González Davies and Scott-Tennent (2005) define cultural references as:

[A]ny kind of expression (textual, verbal, non-verbal or audiovisual) denoting any material, ecological, social, religious, linguistic or emotional manifestation that can be attributed to a particular community (geographic, socio-economic, professional, linguistic, religious, bilingual, etc.). Expressions of this kind would be admitted as a trait of that community by those who consider themselves to be members of it.

Cultural references usually present obstacles to comprehension by an audience from a foreign culture. In Nida’s (1999) categorisation, cultural references may, firstly, involve material subjects (e.g. food and drink, games, units of measure), as in Example 45 below.

Example 45: *The Big Bang Theory* Season 5 Episode 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: I want to build a road</td>
<td>我想修条路</td>
<td>I-want to-build-unit of quantity-road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I need wood</td>
<td>但是我需要硬木（wood 亦指勃起的阴茎）</td>
<td>But-is-I-need-want-hard-wood-wood-also-refer-to-erect-rise up-adjective marker-Yin-stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do either of you fellows have wood?</td>
<td>你俩谁有硬木吗？</td>
<td>You-two-who-have-hard-wood-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand the laughter</td>
<td>我不知道你们在笑什么</td>
<td>I-no-know-the way-you-plural marker-present progressive tense marker-what-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The object of Settlers of Catan…</td>
<td>《卡坦岛》的目标…</td>
<td>Kà-tān-dào-genitive case marker-eye-target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…is to build roads and settlements</td>
<td>…就是修建道路和房屋</td>
<td>Surely-is-build-construct-path-rod-and-building-room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do so requires wood</td>
<td>所以需要硬木</td>
<td>So-for-need-want-hard-wood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/6557005 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
Sheldon amuses his friends by frequently using the words “wood” and “sheep” while unaware of their sexual connotations. In contrast, his friends are familiar with the connotations and thus laugh at his innocence. This scene delivers the anecdote of “wood for sheep” in the popular board game “The Settlers of Catan”. “Wood” implies the meaning of “erect penis”, and “sheep” alludes to “some furry female body-part”. In translation, such references cannot provoke laughter, as they are unfamiliar to the TL audience. Even many in the SL audience may wonder about the meaning, since the references are not universal in English-speaking cultures. The YYeTs’ translation above provides explanations – as the information given in the parentheses shows – at the top of the screen. They appear at the same time as the translation, neutralising the exotic elements of the humour. This explicit solution induced by amplification enables the TL audience to recognise Sheldon’s innocence of the double meaning perceived by his friends. Although the explanations cannot guarantee comprehension of the intended humour by the TL audience, it is the responsibility of the subtitler to explicate the cultural references.

Secondly, cultural references may involve geographical subjects, as in the example below, in which Joey refers to two different continents (i.e. Europe and North America) when he tries to comfort Ross who is lamenting Rachel’s departure for France. The Chinese audience may not be able to recognise the obvious weakness

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90 The phrase “wood for sheep” refers to a situation where a player intends to trade his or her resource card showing a sheep against another player’s resource card showing a piece of lumber. Then a joking hint arises among players of the board game.
in Joey’s geographical knowledge by reading the subtitles, but the laughter heard on
cue may help them recognise the humour.

Example 46: *Friends* Season 10 Episode 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Subtitles in officially released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joey: Maybe that’s okay, you know?</td>
<td>也许没关系的</td>
<td>Also-maybe-no-relevance-relation-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe it is better this way</td>
<td>也许这样更好</td>
<td>Also-maybe-this-appearance-more-good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mean, now… now you can move on</td>
<td>现在…现在你可以向前继续生活了</td>
<td>Present-in-present-in-you-can-toward-front-continue-continue-life-live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mean, you’re been trying to for so long</td>
<td>你已经努力适应这么久了</td>
<td>You-present perfect tense marker-pass-exert effort-strength-adapt-comply-this-modal word-long time-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe now that you’re on different continents…</td>
<td>现在你们俩身在不同的大陆…</td>
<td>Present-in-you-plural marker-body-in-no-same-adjective marker-big-land-is-modal word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirdly, cultural references may also involve forms of social organisation and
their manifestations in the arts, politics, history, leisure and so on, as shown in
describes the meaning of “rosary rattler” but has no implication of the prejudice
towards Catholics. Thus an explanatory note is added to the translation, zhī-tiān-zhū-
jiāo-niān-méi-guī-jīng-shí-yòng-yī-chuàn-niān-zhū (指天主教念玫瑰经时用一串念
珠, point to-heaven-master-religion-read-rugoserose-marvellous), distinguishing the
reference in the original from the praying action of counting beads in a Buddhist
ritual, which is more familiar to the Chinese audience than the Catholic reference in

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91 The subtitles are retrievable via: http://subhd.com/a/296654 (last consulted on 15.06.2015).
the original. Hence, description is used in this and other comparable cases, while the
explanatory note is adopted as an additional technique in order to guarantee that the
Chinese audience receives the correct message.

Example 47: *The Big Bang Theory* Season 5 Episode 6\(^\text{92}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Cooper: Oh, this one’s sweet</td>
<td>这间挺漂亮的嘛</td>
<td>This-pace-very-beautiful-bright-adjective marker-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You know, for your rosary rattlers</td>
<td>对你们这种拿着念珠念经的人来说不错了</td>
<td>To-you-plural marker-this-kind-take-present progressive tense marker-read-beads-read-scripture-adjective marker-people-come-talk-no-wrong-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: Mrs Cooper, we say “Catholics” not “rosary rattlers”</td>
<td>库珀太太 那些是天主教徒 不是 “拿着念珠念经的人”</td>
<td>Kù-bó-madam-madam-that-many-heaven-master-religion-follower-no-is-take-present progressive tense marker-read-beads-read-scripture-adjective marker-people-point to-heaven-master-religion-read-rose-scripture-when-use-one-strip-read-beads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Translators often avoid direct representation of ethnic and cultural prejudice when this is offensive to the TL audience, while the example below demonstrate the opposite. The YYeTs’ subtitles do not cope with the escalation of offensiveness in Mrs Cooper’s speech. However, an additional note at the top of the screen reminds the audience of the denigration implied by the word “ching chong”, showing ching-chong-wài-guó-rén-mó-fāng-zhōng-guó-huà-fā-yīn-biàn-xiāng-duì-yà-zhōu-rén-dě-zhōng-zú-dī-huí-dě-cí-yǔ (ching chong: 外国人模仿中国话发音 变向对亚洲人的种族诋毁的词语, Ching-chong-outside-country-people-module-imitate-central-country-talk-pronounce-sound-change-direction-to-Asia-continent-people-adjective marker-race-ethnic-defame-destroy-word-language). In this way, the subtitler adopts

\(^\text{92}\) The subtitles are retrievable via: http://subhd.com/a/296654 (last consulted on 15.06.2015).
amplification to clarify and overstate the racial insult which is not primarily intended in the original. The explanation lacks accuracy and is misleading, as the term wài-guó-rén (外国人, outside-country-people) should have a more extensive meaning but initially and in many cases refers to white people exclusively. Despite this, this term conveys the cultural and ethnic context associated with the use of “ching chong”, which is mainly used by speakers of English to mock Chinese or play on the Chinese language.

Example 48: *The Big Bang Theory* Season 5 Episode 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Cooper: This is exciting</td>
<td>真令人激动</td>
<td>Real-command-people-resounding-move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back home, the diner on Route Four serves sushi</td>
<td>咱家四号公路线那的馆子也卖寿司</td>
<td>We-family-four-number-route-line-that-genitive case marker-mansion-modal word-also-sell-shòu-sī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But it’s just cut up fish sticks...</td>
<td>但他们只是把炸鱼排切碎</td>
<td>But-he-plural marker-only-is-positive voice marker-fry-fish-fillet-cut-minced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...and a side of Uncle Ben’s</td>
<td>再配上“本恩大叔”牌速食米饭</td>
<td>And-paired-up-bēn-ēn-big-uncle-brand-rapid-eat-rice-meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They put it on the menu in those kung fu letters</td>
<td>即使他们用“功夫文”写菜单</td>
<td>Though-if-he-plural marker-use-skill-work-characters-write-food-list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But that don’t make it sushi</td>
<td>但假货就是假货</td>
<td>But-fake-goods-surely-is-fake-goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: Uh, kung fu letters might not be politically correct</td>
<td>额“功夫文”好像有点种族歧视吧</td>
<td>Err- skill-work-characters-well-like-have-little-race-ethnic-discriminate-view-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Cooper: Oh, I thought the one we couldn’t say was “ching chong”</td>
<td>我还以为只有“ching chong”是不能说的呢</td>
<td>I-also-think-is-only-have-ching-chong-is-no-can-speak-adjective marker-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: Yeah, yeah, that, too</td>
<td>额对那个也不能说</td>
<td>Err-right-that-individual-also-no-can-speak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

93 The subtitles are retrievable via: http://subhd.com/a/296654 (last consulted on 15.06.2015).
Subtitlers need to deliver the SL message in full but also need to ensure the accuracy of their explanations, if such additional messages are necessary. Despite the lack of accuracy, the subtitles above and the additional notes help the viewers understand Mrs. Cooper’s intention in violating social propriety so as to confront Leonard. If they are tolerant enough, they will appreciate the humour in this scene rather than being irritated by the offensive words. However, the translation often moderates such SL elements so as to avoid exaggerating them or even offending the viewers, even though the relevant SL expressions are not initially associated with such offensiveness.

Finally, cultural references may involve ritualised and ideological manifestations which have forged stereotypes in the worldview and religious beliefs of a person. In example 49, Rajesh is dissatisfied with the character “Hellephant”, which is in the category of “Satanimal” in that game. The two terms represent a paradox to Rajesh because of his Hindu background; the elephant is worshipped as a divine creature in Hinduism. The Chinese audience may not be able to recognise the information implied, as they do not have the relevant knowledge. Such information may also escape the SL audience. The Chinese phrases di-yù-dà-xiāng (地狱大象, earth-prison-big-elephant) and xié-è-sā-dàn (邪恶撒旦, wicked-evil-să-dăn) are induced by discursive creation, corresponding to the SL phrases (i.e. “Hellephant” and “Satanimals”) and describing their meanings. The off-screen laughter may be helpful, but it can also tell the TL audience that they have missed a joke.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rajesh: Remember the Satanimals pack with the Hellephant?</td>
<td>记得那个有“地狱大象”的“邪恶撒旦”包吗</td>
<td>Still-remember-get-that-individual-have-earth-prison-big-elephant-adjective marker-wicked-evil-sä-dän-pack-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why, absurd/</td>
<td>太扯淡了</td>
<td>Very-tear-tasteless-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was he, a bad elephant who died and went to hell?</td>
<td>他算个啥死了以后下地狱的邪恶大象吗</td>
<td>He-count-individual-what-die-past tense marker-there-after-go down-earth-prison-adjective marker-wicked-evil-big-elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of thing could an elephant possibly do...</td>
<td>一头大象能干出啥坏事</td>
<td>One-unit of quantity-big-elephant-can-do-out-what-bad-event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…that would cause him eternal damnation?</td>
<td>死了以后还要被打下地狱</td>
<td>Die-past tense marker-there-after-still-have-to-passive voice marker-beat-down-earth-prison</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, cultural references can be implicit, as in a parody which is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as:

A literary composition modelled on and imitating another work, *esp.* a composition in which the characteristic style and themes of a particular author or genre are satirized by being applied to inappropriate or unlikely subjects, or are otherwise exaggerated for comic effect. In later use extended to similar imitations in other artistic fields, as music, painting, film, etc.⁹⁴⁻⁹⁵

Verbal parody contains intertextual references and enhances humour especially when they are repeated. In the conversation below, Sheldon modifies a line from T.S. Eliot’s *The Hollow Men* – “This is the way the world ends/Not with a bang but a whimper” – by replacing “a whimper” with “a nephew”. This modification of the original poem directly targets the barber’s nephew and, presumably, his haircutting skills. The screenwriter uses this parody to realise the incongruity between the

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⁹⁴ The subtitles are retrievable via: http://subhd.com/a/296654 (last consulted on 15.06.2015).
⁹⁵ This definition is found at: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138059?rskey=6yJGji&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
reference to the end of the world and the change in Sheldon’s routines. Information about the source of the reference (i.e. *Hollow Men* written by T. S. Eliot, the Nobel Laureate for Literature) appears at the top of the screen, helping the TL audience recognise a parody which might otherwise have been lost.

Example 50: *The Big Bang Theory* Season 5 Episode 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Excuse me, do you have access to my haircut records?</td>
<td>打扰一下</td>
<td>Beat-disturb-one-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nephew: To what?</td>
<td>你的什么</td>
<td>You-genitive case marker-sort-hair-remember-record-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…this is the way the world ends</td>
<td>世界就是这样告终的</td>
<td>World-dimension-surely-is-this-appearance-tell-end-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…not with a bang but with a nephew</td>
<td>不是砰的一声而是一个外甥（这句话改自他的作品《空心人》 原文为“世界就是这样告终的 不是砰的一声而是一声抽泣”）</td>
<td>No-is-bang-adverbial marker-one-sound-but-is-one-individual-outside-nephew</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation may still be insufficient when parodic humour is attempted without a specific source of reference. In the example below, when playing the role of narrator in the game *Dungeon and Dragons*, Howard imitates the speaking styles of Nicolas Cage. The TL audience may still laugh at the changes in Howard’s tones of voices and his mimicry, without the additional information being supplied in the parentheses.

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96 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/6557005 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
However, the originally intended humour is almost totally lost, as most TL viewers are unlikely to recognise what is being parodied.

Example 51: *The Big Bang Theory* Season 6 Episode 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard: You find yourselves in...</td>
<td>你们发现自己身在一个...</td>
<td>You-occur-reveal-self-self-body-in-one-unit of quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...an overgrown old forest</td>
<td>巨木参天的原始森林里</td>
<td>Giant-wood-reach-sky-adjective marker-origin-beginning-forest-forest-inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before you is a giant oak tree...</td>
<td>在你们面前 有一个巨型橡树</td>
<td>At-you-plural marker-face-front-have-one-unit of quantity-giant-type-oak-tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...with a face on it...</td>
<td>树上有张脸</td>
<td>Tree-up-have-unit of quantity-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...that looks a lot like Nicholas Cage</td>
<td>看起来很像是尼古拉斯. 凯奇</td>
<td>Look-rise-come-very-resemble-is-ni-kè-là-sī-kǎi-qi-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He says, “Travel with caution”</td>
<td>他说 “请小心路上”</td>
<td>He-speak-please-small-heart-road-on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These woods are home to the bones</td>
<td>这片森林是许多陨落于此的...</td>
<td>This-unit of quantity-forest-forest-is-lot-lot-fall-fall-at-here-adjective marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…of many a fallen…</td>
<td>各路英雄的...</td>
<td>Each-path-courage-hero-genitive marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…hero!” (Rises his voices in saying this last word)</td>
<td>理骨之地” [模仿凯奇声音]</td>
<td>Bury-bone-adjective marker (archaic)-ground-module-imitate-kǎi-qi-genitive marker-sound-voice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cultural references representing the speaker’s pragmatic intentions should be understood correctly and preserved in translation. These SL elements challenge the subtitler with the in-built difficulties of the process. A literal translation is necessary when the allusion or reference in the original is essential to the plot. When it is merely used as a common expression, an equivalent expression in the TL can be used to replace the original reference. However, the original reference is essential to the nature of the ST and is truer than any equivalent in the TL. The TL audience will be

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97 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/a/294435 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
puzzled by any domestic substitution for the SL cultural references, as this widens the credibility gap between the SL and the TL cultures. Thus, when the intention of the SL speaker is unclear, literal translations may provide better solutions than other techniques (e.g. adaptation), though they might also hit the wrong note. The same principle applies to the translation of linguistic humour.

14.3 Linguistic Humour

Linguistic humour is mainly realised in various kinds of wordplay, particularly in punning, which consists of two distinguishable but inseparable elements, meaning and sound. Puns take advantage of homonymy to create ambiguity, euphemism or metaphor. Homonymy refers to words that have the same or similar spelling but different meanings, while homophony refers to words that have the same or similar pronunciation but different meanings; punning in Chinese is realised through homophony. A punning effect can be achieved by taking the middle ground between the two phenomena. A punning effect can also be achieved through the modification of sound and spelling. In doing so, a speaker’s intention highlights the punning effect and distinguishes it from the literal meaning formed by words which have identical spelling and sounds (Culler 1988: 3).

An exact match between an English punning effect and its Chinese solution can rarely be found because, most obviously, a polysemous term in one language may not be polysemous in another. Besides phonological differences, the same linguistic meaning can represent different emotions across languages. The translatability of puns has been the subject of endless debate in the field. Scholars have been struggling “between acceptability and rejection, nonsense and point, decency and obscenity” (Redfern 1984: 1), while, in translation, “puns and other kinds of play with language
will have to be ignored to a great extent so as to keep the content invariant” (Reiss 2000: 169). As below, the primary meaning of “screwed” has no semantic relevance to the situation Sheldon has been involved.

Example 52: *The Big Bang Theory* Season 4 Episode 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Fansubs Produced by YYeTs</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: All right, well, let me see if I can explain your situation using physics</td>
<td>好吧，我尝试用物理学来解释你现在的处境</td>
<td>Well-modal word-I-taste-try-use-object-theory-learning-come-explain-describe-your-present-in-adjective marker-place-situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you be if you were attached to another object by an inclined plane, wrapped helically around an axis?</td>
<td>如果你被绑在…</td>
<td>If-consequence-you-passive voice marker-tied-at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…一个轴心成螺旋状的斜面上，下场会是什么？</td>
<td>One-unit of quantity-axis-centre-form-spiral shell-twisting-shape-adjective-incline-surface-on-down-ground-can-is-what-modal word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon: Screwed</td>
<td>完蛋</td>
<td>Finish-egg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard: There you go</td>
<td>这就对啦</td>
<td>This-surely-correct-modal word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word wán-dàn (完蛋, finish-egg) does not produce any punning effect but rather clarifies the secondary meaning of the SL pun, corresponding to the consequences of the situation described by Leonard. An explanatory note as below could be displayed to show the initial and secondary meaning of the SL pun:


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98 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/d/4804079 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
Instead of clarifying SL wordplay, the example below represents a rare correspondence between the source and target text, though the subtitler obviously resorts to domestication. Charlie and Alan talk in riddles to keep Herb in the dark. In the story, Alan somehow revives the affections of his ex-wife Judith (who has since married a man named Herb). The couple (i.e. Judith and Herb) is living apart due to a family dispute, which gives Alan the chance to re-establish his relationship with Judith. When Alan leaves for Judith’s place, Herb, who has no idea about the affair between Alan and Judith, calls on Alan and Charlie. Charlie in turn sees an opportunity to play a prank on Alan.

Example 53: *Two and a Half Men* Season 6 Episode 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herb: Oh, got a date?</td>
<td>你要去约会？</td>
<td>You-need-to-go-date-meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie: Yeah, Alan, you got a date?</td>
<td>是啊，艾伦，你有约会？</td>
<td>Yes-modal word-ai-lün-you-have-date-meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan: No, no, a date? Pfft! Not likely, ha-ha-ha</td>
<td>不，约会？不是</td>
<td>No-date-meeting-no-is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I have a meeting with the, uh, thing about the—About the group</td>
<td>不，我要参加一个团体的聚会</td>
<td>No-I-need-to-participate-add-one-unit-of-quantity-group-body-adjective-marker-gather-meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I told you, remember?</td>
<td>我告诉过你，记得吗？</td>
<td>I-tell-narrate-past tense marker-you-remember-get-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie: No, tell me again</td>
<td>没有，你再说一次</td>
<td>None-have-you-again-speak-one-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan: He’s a little pickle</td>
<td>他有点醉了</td>
<td>He-have-little-drunk-present perfect tense marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uh, well, if you must know …</td>
<td>如果你想知道</td>
<td>If-consequence-you-want-know-the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...uh—I—I belong to a book club that I am going to</td>
<td>我要去一个读书会</td>
<td>I-need-to-go-one-unit-of-quantity-read-book-meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie: Oh, that’s right</td>
<td>没错</td>
<td>None-wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What book are you reading again?</td>
<td>你们今天要念什么书？</td>
<td>You-plural marker-present-day-want-read-what-modal word-book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan: It—it’s a mystery</td>
<td>是推理小说</td>
<td>Is-push-theory-small-talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uh, called Why Are You Doing This to Me</td>
<td>叫做《为何这样搞我？》</td>
<td>Called-do-for-what-this-appearance-fuck-me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/a/191823 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
| Charlie: Oh, yeah | 没错 | None-wrong |
| It’s by the same guy who wrote Because It Amuses Me ... | 《因为我爽》的那个人写的 | Because-for-I-exciting-adjective marker-that-unit of quantity-person-write-adjective marker |
| Alan: Well, there you go. Good night ... | 这就是了，晚安 | This-surely-is-modal word-evening-safe |
| Herb: You talk much to Judith? | 你最近有跟裘蒂丝说话？ | You-most-near-have-with-qiū-di-speak-talk |
| Alan: Nope. See you | 没有，再见 | None-have-again-meet |
| Herb: Oh, well, if you speak to her, tell her I said hi | 如果你有跟她说话 帮我跟她问好 | If-consequence-you-have-with-she-speak-talk-help-me-with-she-ask-well |
| Alan: Okay | 好的 | Good-modal word |
| Herb: And that ... | 还有… | Still-have |
| ...the time we spent together is very special to me... | …我们一齐的时光 对我来说非常特别 | I-plural-once-together-adjective marker-time-light-to-I-come-speak-not-usual-special-distinguish |
| ...and if she needs anything, uh, just call me | 如果她需要帮忙，可以找我 | If-consequence-she-need-want-help-busy-can-can-find-I |
| I’m there | 我会在那等她 | I-will-in-there-wait-she |
| Under the Dining-Room Table by Richard Gobbler | 姚你爽写的《餐桌下的秘密》 | Yáo-you-arousing-write-adjective marker-meal-table-below-adjective marker-secret-secret |
| Alan: But—But it does not compare to... | 但是比不上... | But-is-compare-not-up |
| Wait Till Your Liver Fails by Hope Udai | …王你死的《等你爆肝吧》 | Wáng-you-die-adjective marker-wait-you-explore-liver-modal word |

The translation introduces extraneous sexual allusions which are not intended in the original, but remind the TL audience of the previous events. The translation of “Because It Amuses Me” responds to that of “Why Are You Doing This to Me” as the SL lines do to each other. However, the Chinese audience are likely to understand wèi-hé-zhè-yàng-gào-wǒ （为何这样搞我, for-what-this-appearance-fuck-me) as “Why do you fuck me in this way?” rather than the meaning intended by the original. In the response, the translation of “Because It Amuses me”, yīn-wéi-wǒ-shuǎng （因为我爽, because-for-I-exiciting), will be understood as “Because I enjoy it so much”.

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This potential initiative-response pair is not elicited in the SL context, though it further enhances the humorous effect. Thus the translation should be reconsidered so as to avoid the potential sexual allusions. I suggest translating the phrases as below. These translations avoid the problems in the translation given above and retain the humorous flavour of the original dialogue. By adopting yín-wéi-wǒ-gāo-xǐng (因为我高兴, because-for-I-high-exciting), I change the meaning of “Because It Amuses Me” into “Because I am Happy” by using, firstly, modulation which changes the subject from “it” to wǒ (我, I); and secondly, amplification which clarifies what has been implied by the SL sentence and hence complies with the TL convention.

wèi-hé-zhè-yàng-duí-wǒ (为何这样对我, Why Are You Doing This to Me)

yín-wéi-wǒ-gāo-xǐng (因为我高兴, because-for-I-high-exciting)

In translating the wordplay the subtitler adapts the personal names in the original to the TL context. However, this domestication strategy realises punning effects that are not intended by the original. Richard Gobbler is transformed into yào-ní-shuāng (姚你爽, Yao-you-arousing) which alludes to yào-ní-shuāng (咬你爽, bite-you-arousing). The character sounds close to yào (咬, bite), particularly in the context of this conversation. The subtitler might have taken account of the meaning of “gobbler” and the association between “Richard” and “Dick” in choosing to create the punning effect represented by yào-ní-shuāng. The translation corresponds to the meaning of “Under the Dining-Room Table” – of which the translation is cā-zhuō-xià-dé-mí-mí (餐桌下的秘密, meal-table-below-adjective marker-secret-secret) – to remind the audience of a previous encounter between Alan and Judith.
Adaptation is also used to translate “Hope Udai” which indicates the meaning of “hope you die”. The word “hope” can be translated as wàng (望, hope) of which the pronunciation is close to wáng (王), a common Chinese surname. Thus “Hope Udai” is translated as wáng-nǐ-sǐ (王死, wáng-you-die), which implies wàng-nǐ-sǐ (望你死, hope-you-die) and corresponds to děng-nǐ-bào-gān-ba (等你肝爆吧, wait-you-explore-liver-modal word), the title invented by Alan. The subtitler also applies substitution in translating “Udai”, which is not a recognisable English name. On the basis of its pronunciation, the subtitler chooses the TL solution nǐ-sǐ (你死, you-die). In this way, a valid TL word replicates the meaning alluded to by its SL counterpart which is a paralinguistic expression. However, such paralinguistic expressions may not be associated with any solid semantic meaning but with a reference (e.g. a popular film character) from which the meaning can be induced in accordance with the varying context, as in Example 54.

Example 54: Two and a Half Men Season 5 Episode 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Dialogue</th>
<th>Subtitles in Officially Released DVD</th>
<th>Character-for-character Back Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan: Oh, Charlie, even for you, this is ridiculous</td>
<td>查理,就算是你这也太扯了</td>
<td>Chà-li-even-count-is you-this-still-very-tear-modal word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie: Hey, one man’s “ridiculous” is another man’s “yabba dabba doo”</td>
<td>你觉得我很扯 有人可羡慕得很呢</td>
<td>You-feel-get-l-very-tear-have-people-surely-admire-complement-admire-adverbial marker-very much-modal word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subtitles above fail to deliver the hidden meaning of the original. Charlie dismisses Alan’s concern, using Fred Flintstone’s catchphrase “Yabba dabba doo!”, which Fred utters at the height of excitement or pleasure. It implies that what Alan

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100 The subtitles used in this discussion are found at: http://subhd.com/a/193788 (last consulted on 03.08.2015).
considers “ridiculous” behaviour has always been a great pleasure to Charlie. The subtitler may have considered that the reference should be abandoned in the translation and replaced the SL information with nǐ-jué-dé-wǒ-hěn-chě-yǒu-rén-kē-xiè-mù-dé-hěn-ne (你觉得我很扯 有人可羡慕得很呢, you-feel-get-I-very-tear-have-people-surely-admire-complement-adverbial marker-very much-modal word) which is not what Charlie means but resonates with a Chinese speaker’s reaction to Alan’s concern. An explanation should be provided because realisation of the linguistic humour relies on the reference to Fred Flintstone. Although it may not assist in the realisation of the humour in the Chinese context, the audience will know at least that the nonsensical utterance of Charlie at the end of his line is a popular-culture reference, which is the cause of the off-screen laughter. Thus, I propose the solution below, which is closer to the SL meaning. “Yabba dabba doo!” is translated as hāi-sēn (嗨森), a popular slang expression of excitement, which can be adopted as a temporary equivalent. Like its SL counterpart, hāi-sēn consists of random sounds without conveying definite meaning. A note may be added to the translation, explaining that “Yabba dabba doo!” is the catchphrase of the main character of The Flintstones (1960-1966), which is known to the Chinese audience as mó-dēng-yuán-shī-rén (摩登原始人, mó-dēng-origin-beginning-human beings).
Some coincidental correspondences between the SL and the TL may preserve the effect and connotations of the original in translation; the TL audience’s ability to understand the meaning and contextual effect is crucial. In seeking such coincidental correspondences, subtitlers need to assess the cognitive environment of the TL audience precisely so as to reproduce the humour in a specific context. The loss has to be compensated for in one way or another so as to make the hidden meaning accessible to the audience, who would otherwise lose confidence in the subtitles, particularly when the studio audience laugh. While many have agreed on their necessity in the Chinese context (Guan 2013; Hei 2013), explanatory notes should be used when and only when, in the opinion of the subtitler, SL humour is unclear to the audience. Without additional explanation, the notions of yi-jiě (易解, easy-explain) and fēng-zī (丰姿, full-shape) are mutually contradictory, particularly in domesticated translations of linguistic humour. Domestication can be used without eradicating the foreignness, as long as the differences between the SL and TL systems of thoughts are explained with details (Cheung 2014: 187).
Part 5. Conclusion

1. A Revision to Translation Strategies and Techniques

I would like to propose some revisions to the techniques and explained by Molina and Albir (2002) in light of subtitling. Some translation techniques are associated with more than one translation strategy, but each of these techniques can realise only one strategy at a time. Established equivalence can be associated with foreignisation, domestication or neutralisation, depending on the extent to which the TL equivalent of an SL meaning or concept has been adapted to the TL convention. Discursive creation is associated with foreignisation when SL meanings, concepts or references are absent in the TL and its culture, but with domestication when the SL meaning (and concept) conveyed, or reference involved, is familiar to the TL audience but lacks a TL word or expression comparable to the original one, which, in many cases, is a coinage restricted to the context of the original. Description may produce foreignised translations when SL meanings and concepts described are either absent in the TL culture or lacking specific words or expressions in the TL. In comparison, subtitlers adopt amplification and linguistic amplification to create domesticated or neutralised translations which either supply the details which are implicit in the original, or show some TL information, or linguistic components, which have no counterparts in the original. In subtitling, compensation is a translation strategy rather than a translation technique, by applying which a translator maintains dynamic equivalence between the original and its subtitled version on the macro-discursive level, rather than between the corresponding SL and TL units. Compensation is realised in many cases as expansion, which should be included as a translation strategy, and which includes amplification, description and linguistic amplification, and which expands the original information, and hence is contradictory to prioritising conciseness. However, some examples quoted have confirmed that
Chinese subtitlers adopt expansion in many cases where the SL information, such as cultural references and wordplay, lacks established TL equivalents. In addition, euphemisation is a translation technique adopted by Chinese fansubbers to comply with their social, cultural or political norms, and particularly in translating SL swearing.

2. In Support of Chinese Fansubbing

Subtitling represents a vast frontier to practitioners and researchers of translation in the Chinese context. A great number of people are making significant efforts to produce subtitles for a considerable number of foreign audiovisual programmes in a wide variety of languages. Most of these people are working voluntarily outside the officially sanctioned distribution channels; they have brought the fansubbing phenomenon into China. While being pressured by copyright protection and official prosecutions, fansubbing has brought world media and cinema into the daily life of Chinese people. There are fansubbing groups sharing subtitled popular foreign-language films and TV series, and there are also some groups formed by intellectuals seeking greater access to world cinema and media broadcasts. The participants in these unofficial subtitling activities work with or without translation qualifications, thus erasing the boundary between amateur subtitling and professional practice. Members of fansubbing groups do not consider their activities to be associated with bootleg productions. Rather, they consider subtitling as an essential way to introduce foreign cultures to the audience in Mainland China, and some even regard subtitling as a way to extend public knowledge of modern literature (Western literature in particular), and in turn exert further influence on film-making in Mainland China.
While creativity in fansubbing endow subtitlers with more freedom in handling SL elements, traditional methods are often insufficient in dealing with paralinguistic features; written text is unable to fully represent hidden information, particularly when translating between languages such as English and Chinese. Fansubbers compensate by adopting alternative visual means here referred to as 'creative subtitling'. It is still for future research to determine the degree to which the audience can comprehend the paralinguistic information delivered by creative graphic or visual effects, but these effects are evidence of a wish to conform to the vary style of the original audiovisual product.

Further, to the Chinese audience, fansubs provide more comprehension assistance than conventional subtitling, by using explanatory notes, which are essential for a full understanding of the information in the original, particularly when that information is unfamiliar or unknown to the TL audience. However, fansubbers are somewhat inconsistent in using this technique, and it is difficult to gauge the extent of viewers' reliance on explanatory notes. In addition, a subtitle with an explanatory note attached occupies more space on the screen (and intrudes into the visual field further if the note appears on the top of the screen), which may cause the audience to have difficulty in following the pace of the narrative, as they have to make an extra effort to read the notes. However, as far as linguistic and cultural otherness is concerned, the subtitler’s priority is to enhance the audience’s access to the original in the most accurate way, rather than the conciseness and readability of subtitles, in the Chinese context at least. Thus, it is necessary to consult viewers on the extent to which explanatory notes assist them, by conducting surveys in different media (e.g. printed questionnaires, emails and online forums), or trial exhibitions with
volunteers who also agree to partake in eye-tracking analysis and provide feedback
during or after viewing.

Explanatory techniques enable Chinese fansubbers to represent SL speech with
expressions and registers used in daily situations without eradicating the foreignness
of the original. Fansubbers opt to remain in the middle ground between the audience
and the original by adopting a strategy combining domestication and explanatory
notes which essentially highlights the foreignness of the original. Their domesticated
translation should be distinguished from the inaccuracy in state-sponsored translation.
While acknowledging the popularity fansubbing enjoys, those participating in
authorised translation have deliberately over-domesticated, often in places where
domestication is inappropriate. This is mainly associated with the use of
domesticating elements, including TL dialects, popular TL slang expressions, TL
cultural references, references to those events which caught the public attention in
quite recent years, and third-culture elements which are popular in the TL context.
While making a distinction between fansubs and the subtitles produced for cinema
exhibition, the Chinese audience are also increasingly aware of the otherness
represented by foreign originals which are at odds with elements found only in the
Chinese context, and consider subtitles containing such elements to be unfaithful to
the originals.

3. Principles and Norms for Accurate Subtitling as “Hard Translation”
The audience’s response to over-domesticated translation has drawn Chinese
subtitling into a long-running debate over the choice between zhí-yì (直译, straightforward translation) and yì-yì (意译, sense-translation). It was in this debate that Chinese scholars and translators began to propound their ideas and theories of Chinese translation. Two figures stood at the
centre of this debate: Yan Fu, who has been eulogised as the “founder of modern Chinese translation theory” (Chan 2004), and Lu Xun, whose writings and translations paved the way for the development of the modern Chinese language.

The three principles proposed by Yan Fu, xin (信, faithfulness), dá (达, intelligibility) and yā (雅, refinement), are insufficient to support comprehensive and accurate subtitling. Some of his followers at present have sought to justify the soundness of the principles by expanding yā (雅, refinement) into the notion of style in order to encompass the diverse media and textual types involved in translation today. Their arguments remain unconvincing, however, due to the fact that precise definitions of the three terms affording a systematic and consistent theoretical framework are not given in Yan Fu’s original work, or that of his followers. In addition, the three principles cannot guide subtitlers and translators properly, particularly when facing the dilemma between the faithfulness to the original and the comprehensibility of the translation to the audience, something unexplored by Yan Fu and his followers.

While fansubbing elsewhere is generally regarded as “resolutely esoteric, niche activities” (O’Hagan 2012: 31), Chinese fansubbers, though not deliberately attempting to do so, have followed a set of norms which can be explicated in light of ying-yi (硬译, hard-translation; “Hard Translation”), propounded by Lu Xun. However, it is necessary to emphasise that whereas Lu Xun lived and worked during a period when the Chinese people were making an effort to accept linguistic and cultural otherness after a long period of isolation, fansubbers have similarly been fulfilling their voluntary tasks for the Chinese viewers, who have become increasingly aware of the linguistic and cultural otherness depicted in foreign originals, due to their more frequent contact with world cinema. Despite their different objectives, like Lu
Xun, fansubbers aim primarily at viewers who are well-educated and seek a greater variety in their artistic and cultural consumption, and who are capable of coping with the extra information in explanatory notes. Fansubbers therefore aim to highlight the foreignness in originals even if that means sacrificing fluency.

Reflection on the analysis of subtitling in the foregrounding chapters affords a set of norms to further guide subtitlers towards accuracy and authenticity in their translations. Like screenwriters, they aim to achieve a working compromise between the audiovisual medium and genuine oral exchange in any situation or genre. The dialogue in audiovisual texts is an imitation of reality. (Norm 1.) Apart from verbal information, subtitlers should take into account visual and auditory content (e.g. body language, gestures, colour codes, music and facial expressions), and paralinguistic features (e.g. voice quality, intonation and stress). The subtitler’s choice of translation techniques is determined by commercial considerations, censorship, and the linguistic and cultural norms of the TL culture. (Norm 2.) With adaptation and discursive creation, subtitlers can replace a SL paralinguistic expression with a TL linguistic expression, but must base such replacement on a thorough and correct understanding of the context in order to convey accurately the meaning implied by the SL paralinguistic expression.

Humorous effects are often either lost or shown differently in Chinese subtitles. (Norm 3.) Subtitlers should recognise the primary intention of a speaker (or text-creator or a screenwriter), and identify the shared cognitive background between the creator of an original and the TL audience, in order to recreate humorous effects in various accommodating ways. As in other forms of translation, the wording and structure of the SL dialogue can be sacrificed for the purpose of transferring the implicit meanings of the original humour. Thus, subtitlers infer the intention of the
communicator (e.g. the speaker on screen) and then estimate the accessibility of that intention to the recipient of the translation. (Norm 4.) Subtitlers may simply translate a humorous expression literally and expect the TL audience to recognise the hidden meaning. Although this places greater demands on the TL audience, a significant amount of contextual information will carry over into the subtitled version.

Chinese subtitlers often adopt the following techniques in translating verbal humour. Adaptation leads to a TL solution represents the SL humour with the same use and function but is more closely associated with the TL context. It makes the TL audience more aware of the credibility gap between the original and the subtitles. The materials at hand have shown that adaptation is mostly applied to the translation of linguistic humour. It is rarely used to reach solutions for cultural humour, though its initial function is to replace the SL cultural elements with those associated with the TL. Description neutralises SL humour with a non-humorous TL expression which retains the primary meaning of the original word(s) but delivers no humorous effect and hence results in a diffuse paraphrase. Description is mostly used to translate cultural humour and to neutralise SL cultural references in the original, making the original humour and cultural connotations less explicit to the TL audience than they are to the SL audience. In fansubs, description is often used together with explanation which provides information about the cultural references or terms to further understanding. (Norm 5.) By adopting explanation, subtitlers can explain SL cultural references with additional notes and thus highlight the foreignness of the SL element described in the translation. The contrast between neutralisation and foreignisation is obvious when this technique is used together with description.

Omission of linguistic humour occurs when a subtitler abandons part of the SL humour and therefore leaves it incomplete in translation. (Norm 6.) This strategy
should be distinguished from neutralisation, which, while giving up the humorous effect and thereby pragmatically reducing the dynamic of the original, still communicates the SL meaning to the TL audience. (Norm 7.) Omission must be compensated with explanation. Although most viewers will not be aware of the loss unless they have a good command of the SL, they will suspect the quality of subtitling if a loss in translation is frequently exposed, particularly in sitcoms with off-screen laughter.

(Norm 8.) Taboo words should be handled faithfully, but solutions should also be subject to the cultural, ethnic or social characteristics of the TL context. The motivation of swearing is rooted in context, which in turn implies place and time. By place, I refer to contextual elements such as the physical location, social event, the relationship of the speaker to the listener, and the intent of the speaker. The subtitler should also maintain the time perspective, since the meaning and function of swearing are more or less unstable. The offensiveness or vulgarity of some words and expressions may be eliminated or minimised due to their frequent use in everyday speech and changes in socio-cultural perspectives. Some words remain taboo, despite high frequency in colloquial contexts.

(Norm 9.) Modulation should be used, if seeking to maintain an equivalent level of vulgarity in the TL. However, the SL swearing in the examples discussed in Chapter 13, as shown in the DVD subtitles, is either completely omitted or rendered without using the TL swearwords corresponding to their SL counterparts. In this case, the subtitlers tend to “purify” the language or only preserve in translation a minimum of the SL swearing. Given the universal nature of swearing, most TL solutions I proposed are initially reached through adaptation, which is occasionally adopted along with a typical kind of modification which is not among the translation
techniques introduced by Molina and Albir (2002). *(Norm 10 a.)* Subtitlers should euphemise the corresponding SL swearing without sacrificing its vulgarity in order to strike a balance between representing the SL wording closely and offending at least part of the audience. This may be done by replacing a Chinese taboo word with another Chinese character of the same or identical pronunciation. However, compliance with this norm poses two challenges. To the subtitler, it is difficult to find substitutes for all Chinese swearwords, as a substitute should be pronounced the same as the corresponding swearword. The match between (屄, pussy) and (逼, force) is the only example I have found. To the audience, characters substituted for Chinese swearwords may be unclear and thus take more effort to understand. While clarity, conciseness and ease of reading are the primary priorities of subtitling, the euphemistic representation of Chinese taboo characters is the only effective and acceptable approach to the problem of aligning TL solutions with SL swearing. *(Norm 10 b.)* For comprehensibility, subtitlers should reach an agreement on a consistent correspondence between taboo characters and their substitutes, as well as proper usage of these substitutes in subtitling, rather than resorting to personal preferences and decisions varying from case to case.

I propose the following principles for accurate subtitling as “Hard Translation”. The first principle is ning-xīn-ér-bù-shùn (宁信而不顺, would rather-faithful-but-not-fluent; to be faithful rather than fluent). Subtitlers eschew the fluency of a viewing process with explanatory notes, among other forms of textual inserts, while accord less importance to fluency. The spatial and temporal constraints in the audiovisual media should not be considered restrictions to a subtitler’s potential solutions but motivations for creativity in seeking alternative methods to enhance accuracy, given the overt nature of subtitling. The subtitles should accurately convey the original
information which they serve to explain, and be compatible with its genre and appropriate and thorough in reflecting its style. This second principle can be conveyed by the term zhōng-shí-dé-tǐ (忠实得体, loyal-faithful-appropriate-genre) which encompasses the notion of fēng-zī (丰姿, full-shape; charm).

The third principle, jiǎn-míng-jìn-yì (简明尽异, concise-clear-exhaust-difference), requires that the subtitles on the screen should be concise in form and comprehensive in representing the foreignness of the original, in order to enable the audience to experience it in full and improve their knowledge of the foreign culture. If the original dialogue is shallow and artificial, as in some popular TV series, the subtitles should replicate this, and if it is thoughtfully and skillfully constructed, subtitlers should consider the potential solutions carefully in terms of yì-jì (易解, easy-explain), yì-qíng (移情, move-emotion) and yì-zhí (益智, enhance-intellectuality). To comply with the overt nature of subtitling, subtitlers should strike a balance between cultural adaptation for the sake of comprehensibility and cultural explanation for the sake of authenticity. A subtitled version should then involve the audience in a process of intercultural communication. The original and the target audience are adapted to each other through the linguistic and cultural mediation of the subtitler. On the one hand, the meaning of the original is translated through conventional subtitling methods with means of expression conforming to the TL context, channelling the communication between the twin contexts and showing where they overlap. On the other hand, the subtitler seeks to highlight the differences between the SL and TL context by means of explanatory notes and other creative methods. Hence, a fourth principle, qú-tóng-cún-yì (求同存异, seek-sameness-preserve-difference[s]), is proposed here to guarantee the realisation of “Hard Translation” in subtitling.
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