



Research into the Subtitling of *Song of the Phoenix* from the Perspective of Manipulation Theory

Ying WEI¹

¹*School of English for International Business, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, E-mail:1482083452@qq.com*

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Abstract

André Lefevere's theory of manipulation emphasizes the close relationship between translation and social culture, arguing that translation is rewriting and rewriting is manipulation. Rewriting treats translations as created or projected images of the original source texts, representing a far more dynamic implementation of translation theory. As one of the most frequent manifestations of global communication today, audiovisual translation (AVT) is able to overcome language barriers when spreading culture around the world. Of the several modes available to translate audiovisual programs, subtitling, grown in visibility and significance, has evolved into a prominent and prolific field of study, with many more scholars devoting to the analysis of audiovisual programs in recent years. This paper takes the subtitle translation of *Song of the Phoenix*, a cinema with strong Chinese characteristics, as an example to explore the embodiment of Lefevere's three elements of manipulation in cinema subtitling. It is found that, under the manipulation of such extra-textual factors as ideology, poetics, and patronage, translators will flexibly adopt certain rewriting devices in subtitle translation to transcend ideological and poetic differences and cater to the patronage's requirements so as to achieve the translation purpose.

Key Words: Audiovisual Translation, subtitling, *Song of the Phoenix*, manipulation theory, rewriting

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the booming social networks as well as streaming platforms, audiovisual works have become a prominent representative of communication in the digital world. Audiovisual productions have become carriers of cultures and languages worldwide due to their ease of dissemination, which in turn has propelled audiovisual translation (AVT) to one of the most predominant translation practices of the 21st century. Movies, like literature and other creative arts, can bring different cultures closer or alienate them. With the potential to reach a wider audience, cinema has a more significant cultural effect than other artistic practices. (Kuo, 2018). And yet, in the existing literature, little attention has been paid to the possible role of translation in the internationalization of Chinese audiovisual productions, with most attention focused on such broader issues as the whole film and TV industry (Keane, 2015), the successes in the box office of Chinese works abroad, and the socio-cultural and political implications of such cross-border exchanges. (Su, 2016; Keane, 2019; Rosen, 2020).

Song of the Phoenix, a literary film directed by Tianming Wu and starring Zeru Tao and Wei Zheng, was released in 2016 in Mainland China. The film, adapted from Jianghong Xiao's novella of the same name, tells the story of the decline of suona, a traditional Chinese folk-art form, in the context of Western culture's impact and China's changing times. In the film, suona represents not only the skills but also the rules and beliefs upheld by generations. The film shows the perseverance of two generations of suona craftsmen, Master Jiao and Tianming You, who endeavor to find a way for folk culture and make every effort to preserve the excellent traditional Chinese culture. The film won the Special Jury Prize and several nominations for the 29th Golden Rooster Award, the Best Feature Film Award at the 1st Silk Road International Film Festival, and the Audience Favorite Film Award at the Tours Film Festival in France. Beyond that, the film became the official screening film of some international film festivals and received rave reviews everywhere it has been screened. Yimou Zhang, Ke Xu and other famous directors in China have voiced their support. Martin Ssecko, director of the Academy Award, praised Tianming Wu as a true giant in the film industry.

With the deepening of cultural exchanges between China and the West, foreign films are constantly pouring into China while domestic films are further going to the international market. In this context, the translation of film subtitles means a lot. For an excellent movie to reach the global market, it must ensure that the recipients of the target language can accurately understand the film's language through English subtitles as well as the images. As a film with strong Chinese characteristics and local flavor, *Song of the Phoenix* contributes significantly to the inheritance and transmission of Chinese culture. A proper translation can effectively promote the dissemination and development of traditional Chinese culture.

According to Lefevere, translation is the rewriting of the source text, rewriting is manipulation, and all translations are the result of manipulation. Ideology, poetics, and patronage are the three primary factors that manipulate translation, and any translation is inevitably influenced by these factors. The translation of the subtitles of *Song of the Phoenix* is no exception.

Due to the influence of these three factors, the translator has to adopt appropriate translation strategies to achieve the translation goals successfully.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Research on Audiovisual Translation

In the context of the rising popularity of audiovisual communication in all spheres of public and private life, it is an indisputable fact that recent decades have witnessed a surge in quantity, both in the production of AVT and in the research into this field.

The late 1950s and early 1960s saw a sluggish start of research on AVT. Luckily, the late 20th century witnessed an unprecedented and significant growth of research in this field, sparked by the digital revolution of the 1990s and translation as an establishment for academic and research subjects at the university level. The work of Fodor (1976), a pioneer in AVT studies, opened the door to research in this area. A few years later, Mayoral, Kelly, and Gallardo (1988), with their detailed contributions, helped lay the foundation for the exploration of audiovisual translation. Encouragingly, interest in this field has grown significantly today. Within the broader discipline of Translation Studies (TS), AVT has emerged as a promising area of academic research, which owes a good deal to the fertile ground provided by the prolific audiovisual industry of Internet, DVD, film, television, 3D, etc. Audiovisual modes from subtitling, dubbing, voiceover, audio description for the blind and the partially sighted to subtitling for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing have captured the interest of academics, allowing AVT to rise to positions of importance and one of the most exciting areas in TS today.

Of the existing modes of translation activities in audiovisual programs, subtitling is arguably the most widespread owing to its cheap and fast characteristics. Its popularity has also been boosted by the availability of free subtitling and video-editing programs online. In addition to its development as a professional activity, subtitling, grown in visibility and significance, has evolved into a prominent and prolific field of study since many more scholars are devoting to the analysis of audiovisual programs in recent years. Examples are the frequently organized international conferences, the publication of collective volumes and monographs on the subject, and the completion of many dissertations. Notable among these are studies on interlingual subtitling (Schröter, 2005; Mattsson, 2009) and on subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (Sahlin, 2001; Neves, 2005).

As with any other field of translation, translators must make language their primary concern, which explains why many scholars choose case study as the ideal approach, often choosing a specific film or sitcom and analyzing the linguistic areas that pose a challenge. Examples range from the translation of humor (Schröter, 2005), compliments (Bruti, 2009), idioms (Gottlieb, 1997), swearing, or taboo language (Chapman, 2004; Mattsson, 2006) to cultural references (Pedersen, 2007). Notably, some scholars focused solely on the language level, ignoring the semiotic complexity of audiovisual productions and the necessary technical factors. In contrast, the idea of using multimodal transcription as a research method for the analysis and subtitling of audiovisual texts was put forward by some scholars (Taylor, 2003; Desilla, 2009).

Influenced by the cultural turn, the scope of research on subtitling has expanded with its socio-cultural embeddedness emphasized. Words are powerful, and the manipulation in the original text and in the translated version comes easily to them. As well as reflecting reality, films distort it by constructing certain images and reinforcing certain stereotypes, thus shaping the audience's perception of the world. It is worth noting that translation activity is not neutral. Translation has turned out not just to be a bridge between cultures, and it can also amplify differences and reinforce false stereotypes, thus blowing up those bridges it was supposed to build. Fortunately, the fact has also alarmed translation scholars who now realize that mass media are a powerful force both in the original context and translation. Nevertheless, censorship forces, power, ideology, as well as manipulation remain a heavily unexplored topic in subtitling.

2.2 A Review of the Manipulation Theory in Translation Studies

The manipulation concept was put forward by Theo Hermans (1985) and his colleagues in the collected essays *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, which marked the formation of the embryonic form of manipulation theory. Later, the translation theorist André Lefevere introduced the concept of cultural turn and manipulation, which greatly enriched this theory. As well as highlighting the fact that translated texts exist exactly within the framework of cultural or power relations, the cultural turn revealed how a text could be exploited and manipulated by a series of external factors in the process of transformation from source to target environment. Lefevere directly presented challenges to the widely-accepted conventions of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). His basic idea is to shift the focus of translation studies from the linguistic structure and linguistic form correspondence, which are the concerns of the linguistic school, to the significance and function of target texts and source texts in their respective cultural systems. Lefevere concerned the interaction between translation and culture, especially the ways in which culture affects and restricts translation, and “the

larger issues of context, history and convention” (1990: 4). He regarded translation as a rewriting and therefore manipulation of the original text with the idea that the text is translated within an imposed ideological framework to ensure that it plays its proper role in a given society (Hermans, 1999; Ndlovu & Sibanda, 2014).

Lefevere has put it that a translation cannot truly reflect the original work mainly because it is always manipulated by ideology, poetics, and patron power. He argued that these specific factors systematically govern the acceptance and rejection of literary texts. For Lefevere, “the most important consideration is the ideological one” (Munday, 2010). In this case, it refers to the ideology of the translator or the ideology imposed upon the translator by the patron. The poetological consideration refers to “the dominant poetics in the TL culture”. Ideology and poetics jointly determine the translation strategy and the solution to specific problems. Translators are no longer perceived as passive transmitters of information, but as active agents involved in shaping the ideological discourse of their culture since they may consciously or unconsciously embrace their value system and contribute to its transmission or subversion.

Manipulation theory puts translation activities in the context of culture, and provides a new perspective for literary translation by thoroughly examining factors other than language. Lefevere’s more systematic discussion of the manipulative view of translation has had a tremendous impact on every branch of the discipline, although it is more obvious in literary translation than in that of specialized translation or AVT, for instance, where scholars have adopted it more slowly (Diaz-Cintas, 2012). Even though there are some works on AVT following the principles of the cultural turn, they are still in infancy.

3. The Embodiment of Manipulation in the Subtitle Translation

3.1 Ideological Manipulation

Lefevere borrowed the idea of Frederic Jameson and added that ideology should be the “grillwork of form, convention, and concepts which can influence people’s actions” (2004: 125-126). At last, Lefevere’s definition of ideology is not limited to politics, which he argued is the concept grid of attitudes and opinions acceptable in a given society at a given time, through which readers and translators engage with the text (2004).

According to Lefevere, ideology is composed of social ideology and the ideology of the translator. Social ideology usually refers to some beliefs held by a group or society, including religion, politics, ethics and aesthetic tastes, etc., which will change with the development of human beings. The translator’s ideology that comes from his or her life and educational experiences is an essential factor influencing the choice of translation strategy and is susceptible to the social ideology. Considering the different ideologies, the translator will inevitably make corresponding manipulations to the original text to achieve the stated purpose and make the translation conform to the mainstream ideology. The manipulation and rewriting of ideology in the subtitle translation of *Song of the Phoenix* are mainly reflected in the culture-loaded words in the movie.

Culture-loaded words are words, phrases, and idioms that indicate things specific to a culture, reflecting the unique ways of behavior gradually accumulated by a certain group over the course of history, which distinguishes them from other people (Liao, 2000). Culture-loaded words are susceptible to the exoticism and diversity of cultural factors. Due to the vast differences between Chinese and Western cultures and ideologies, it’s hard to find equivalents for some culture-loaded words in the translation process. Therefore, translators need to take the differences between Chinese and Western ideologies into full consideration and adopt the translation strategy of domestication for reasonable rewriting. As an excellent Chinese film, *Song of the Phoenix* presents traditional folk music culture and large amounts of culture-load words with strong Chinese characteristics related to social customs. Here are some specific examples.

Translation Example 1.

ST(Source Text): 师娘, 你们家就你和师父两个人吗?

ST in pinyin: shī niáng, nǐ mén jiā jiù nǐ hé shī fù liǎng gè rén ma?

TT(Target Text): Auntie, is it just you and the master here?

Translation Example 2.

ST: 天鸣: 爸, 这是我师弟蓝玉, 师父也给他放假了。

蓝玉: 大叔, 师父给我们俩放假了, 我来看看我师兄。

ST in pinyin: tiān míng: bà, zhè shì wǒ shī dì lán yù, shī fù yě gěi tā fàng jià le.

Lán yù: dà shū, shī fù gěi wǒ mén liǎ fàng jià le.

TT: Tianming: Dad, this is my fellow student, Lanyu. Master gave him a vacation, too!

Lan Yu: Uncle, our master gave us a break, so I came to see my *senior classmate*.

There are a series of complex appellations unique to Chinese culture in the movie, such as 师父(shī fù), 师娘(shī niáng), 师兄(shī xiōng), 师弟(shī dì) and so on. The translator adopts the strategy of domestication to rewrite the source text so as to conform to the Western mode of thinking. In traditional Chinese culture, people used to call their master's wife or teacher's wife as 师娘(shī niáng) or 师母(shī mǔ); call the one who studied from the same teacher earlier than themselves as 师兄(shī xiōng); call the one who studied from the same teacher after themselves as the 师弟(shī dì). These appellations are a reflection of the characteristics of Chinese kinship terms, which pay special attention to the position in the family hierarchy. In contrast, western kinship terms are far less complex than ours. In addition to showing the relationship of generation, their appellations can only be inferred from the context, which requires translators to look at the different ideological characteristics of the appellations and carry out a reasonable and appropriate conversion. The word 师娘(shī niáng) is also a unique Chinese term, and in English, there is only an explanation of the meaning "the wife of a master" but no specific corresponding one. Therefore, in the English translation, the term "auntie" is selected as a broad and ambiguous term used by Westerners, and the terms 师兄(shī xiōng) and 师弟(shī dì) are translated as the broad terms "senior classmate" and "fellow student" respectively, regardless of gender. Such translations take into account the two different ideological characteristics and respond to the Westerners' emphasis on individuality and independence, as well as the ambiguous kinship system.

Translation Example 3.

ST: 从今往后, 无双镇就没有焦家班了。从今往后, 无双镇只有游家班。

ST in pinyin: cóng jīn wǎng hòu, wú shuāng zhèn jiù méi yǒu jiāo jiā bān le. cóng jīn wǎng hòu, wú shuāng zhèn zhǐ yǒu yóu jiā bān.

TT: From today, there is no more "Jiao Dynasty" in the Wushuang villages. From now, it's the "You" (Tianming's surname) Dynasty - the You Suona Ensemble.

In traditional Chinese culture, the word 班(bān) in 焦家班(jiāo jiā bān) and 游家班(yóu jiā bān) refers to an organization organized according to position or for certain needs, and also refers to the old term for a theater troupe, such as the 戏班(xì bān), 文班(wén bān), 武班(wǔ bān). However, there is no equivalent of 班(bān) in Western culture, so the translator chooses the broad word "dynasty" to express this approximate meaning, cleverly borrowing from the change of dynasties to express that the era of the "Jiao Dynasty" led by Master Jiao has become a thing of the past. At the same time, the translator successfully avoids the confusion between the pronunciation 游(yóu) and the English personal pronoun "you" by using a phonetic transliteration with a note when the term 游家班(yóu jiā bān) first appeared.

Translation Example 4.

ST: 你何必一条道跑到黑呢?

SS in pinyin: nǐ hé bì yì tiáo dào pǎo dào hēi ne?

TT: Why should you *trap* yourself sticking to one path?

Tianming chooses suona and goes forward on the road of inheritance, and his determination is fully reflected in the translation. The use of the word "trap" vividly conveys the spirit of the character and creates emotional resonance for the audience, making it easier for the target language audience to interpret Tianming's character. The word "trap" is more emotionally charged than "run" with accurate wording and strong language acceptability. In consideration of the social differences, the translator does not translate the word 黑(hēi) in the source text as "black", but adopts a strategy of reduction, so as to enable the target language audience to accurately understand the emotions of the character, at the same time, the cultural factor of the difference in urban construction design is neglected. Because in ancient China, the Lifang unit system was implemented and the alleys were closed, so if people kept walking along a road, there would be no way out.

Translation Example 5.

ST: 哟, 那你们游家班祖坟上该冒青烟了。

ST in pinyin: yo, nà nǐ mén yóu jiā bān zǔ fén shàng gāi mào qīng yān le.

TT: Wow, there must be *holy smoke clouds* pouring forth from your ancestors' tombs.

The traditional Chinese patriarchal ideology and others' teasing of Tianming's father contained in the culture-loaded words 祖坟冒青烟(zǔ fén mào qīng yān) are difficult for the target audience to interpret, because it does not fit the mindset and language expression habits of the target audience in this context. 祖坟冒青烟(zǔ fén mào qīng yān) belongs to Chinese geomantic culture, and in the eyes of ancient Chinese, the color "cyan" represents auspiciousness and sacredness. However,

the style of “tombs” in China and the West is very different, and the phenomenon of 祖坟冒青烟(zǔ fén mào qīng yān) does not usually occur in foreign countries, and “tomb” is also taboo in most countries, so the translator has chosen appropriate modifiers to indicate the positive aspects of this sentence. Therefore, the selection of the word “holy” is consistent with the cultural color of the source language.

Translation Example 6.

ST: 所以呀，在咱们的这块地盘上 唢呐不能断了种。

ST in pinyin: suǒ yǎ ya, zài zán men de zhè kuài dì pán shàng suǒ nǎ bù néng duàn le zhǒng.

TT: Thus, we can't let the sound of *suona* be absent from this area.

The transliteration of “suona” is in line with the perception of the target language audience, because suona was introduced to China from Persia during the Jin and Yuan dynasties, and most countries also have a concept of it, so the transliteration does not cause ambiguity and achieves the purpose of material culture dissemination. After a long period of development, suona has become one of the most important folk instruments in China, and it has continued to integrate with many traditional cultures in China, spreading widely in all areas of China (Zhou, 2018). Because Chinese suona has its own material and cultural characteristics, Chinese weddings and funerals, festivals, operas and literature are all closely related to it, and it often appears in film and television productions, the transliteration of “suona” preserves the Chinese cultural heritage and is conducive to the understanding of our Chinese culture by the target language audience.

In addition, ideological differences are also presented in the translation of the film title *Song of the Phoenix*. As a piece of traditional Chinese folk music, 《百鸟朝凤》(bǎi niǎo cháo fēng) is not unfamiliar to many Chinese people, and about its name, there are several different translations in existence, typical of which are: *A Hundred Birds Worshipping the Phoenix*; *Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix*. However, when translating the title of the film, the translator does not directly choose the original translation, which is determined by the linguistic characteristics of film and television translation on the one hand, and the ideological differences on the other.

The connotation of “phoenix” in Chinese and Western cultures varies in certain degree. Phoenix is the king of all birds in ancient Chinese legends, and is considered the most honored of all birds, with the saying “hundreds birds paying homage to the phoenix”. In Chinese ideology, “phoenix” has been the most auspicious bird in the legend since ancient times, and is a symbol of good luck and harmony, so Chinese people hold a reverential attitude towards phoenix. Therefore, the name of the song 百鸟朝凤(bǎi niǎo cháo fēng) is translated as *Hundreds Birds Worshipping the Phoenix* or *Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix*. The selection of “worship” and “pay homage to” respectively expresses the nobility of the phoenix and convey the Chinese people's reverence for it, and such a translation will not cause Chinese readers any trouble in understanding. However, if the title of the film is translated into English in the same way, the audience may be misled. Although there is a myth legend of “Phoenix Nirvana” in the West, the phoenix is not the one in the traditional Chinese sense, but an immortal firebird in Western mythology. “Phoenix Nirvana” is often used as a metaphor for an indomitable spirit and a strong will. The degree of sacredness and reverence of phoenix in the ideology of Chinese and Westerners is different. From this aspect, the choice of “worship” and “pay homage to” may cause misunderstanding or even confusion to Western audience.

Therefore, when translating the title of the film, the translator does not directly choose the original translation for ideological differences but subtly retranslates it as *Song of the Phoenix*. On the one hand, it avoids the possible misunderstanding of the audience due to the difference in the connotation of “Phoenix” caused by the difference of Chinese and Western ideologies, and at the same time cleverly retains its commonality. Although there are some differences in the connotation of the phoenix, the myths and legends of “phoenix” in China and the West share the same feature, that is, the phoenix symbolizes vitality and beauty. From this point of view, it is understandable for the Western audience to keep the “phoenix”. On the other hand, the translator chooses “song” as the central word of the title, which could help highlight the film's subject. This makes it easier for the Western audience to infer the general content and theme of the film based on the title, which is conducive to the formation of a certain expectation of the audience.

3.2 Poetics Manipulation

Lefevere (1992) has detailed that a poetics specifically consists of two components: one is a list of literary devices, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, genres, as well as symbols; the other is a concept of the role literature plays, or should play, in the overall social system. Poetics is considered to be the yardstick against which current production is measured, and exerts a tremendous influence on the selection of themes and the acceptance of literary works by the social system. Therefore, the translation should conform to the target dominant poetics. In a certain socio-cultural context, in order to ensure the successful implementation of translation activities, the translator will take the initiative to manipulate and rewrite the original

text to make the translation conform to the pursuit and claims of the mainstream poetics of the translated language. A comparative analysis reveals that this rewriting and manipulation in the English translation of the movie subtitles of *Song of the Phoenix* is mainly manifested through two types of poetics expressions, that is wording and syntax.

English and Chinese are formed under different historical backgrounds and social forms, reflecting the features of their respective national cultures. Chinese belongs to the ideographic writing system, while English is the phonetic writing system. Chinese attaches great importance to parataxis, and the sentences are linear and loosely structured, with each clause connected by meaning. English emphasizes hypotaxis, and clauses are connected by explicit grammatical means. Therefore, in the translation process, considering the differences in English and Chinese grammatical norms, translators must adapt the linguistic forms and styles of the two languages in order to conform to their expression habits and adapt to the mainstream poetic forms of the target language.

Translation Example 7.

ST: 狗日的, 你这是烂泥扶不上墙啊, 你这是。

ST in pinyin: gǒu rì de, nǐ zhè shì làn ní fú bù shàng qiáng a, nǐ zhè shì.

TT: *Fuck. You worthless, dumbass kid!*

狗日的(gǒu rì de) is a vulgar word with regional characteristics. The cultural image of “dog” differs in different cultural environments, and the attitudes of Chinese and Western people toward “dog” are very different. The author’s use of corresponding translation fits the cultural values of Western countries, and the derogatory attitude is accurately conveyed, which is in line with the cognition of the target language audience. In the film, Tianming’s father mistakenly believes that his son has been driven home by the master, and the choice of the word “worthless” reflects the father’s reproach to his son, conveying the his anger and helplessness. The original sentence is a typical Chinese one, with a loose structure and many repetitions. In the translation, the translator takes into account the expression habits of the target language and transforms it into an exclamatory sentence in English, using the strategy of free translation and reduction, which is strict and concise, and easy for the target audience to accept.

Translation Example 8.

ST: 我快要吹不动了, 可咱这黄河岸上不能没有唢呐。别说婚丧嫁娶弄几杆唢呐闹闹, 就是平时干活累了, 大伙听一段也能解解乏。

ST in pinyin: wǒ kuài yào chuī bù dòng le, kě zán zhè huáng hé àn shàng bù néng méi yǒu suǒ nǎ. Bié shuō hūn sàng jià qǔ nòng jǐ gǎn suǒ nǎ nào no, jiù shì píng shí gàn huó lěi le, dà huǒ tīng yí duàn yě néng jiě jiě fá.

TT: *Soon, I won’t be able to play anymore, but the banks of the river can’t be without a suona player. We are not just for funerals and weddings, but we also play the suona music for people when they are exhausted from work. It helps everyone to relax.*

The sentence is likewise retranslated in terms of linguistic form and style. The very colloquial and loosely structured sentences of Chinese are translated into the compact and logically related sentences of English, which conform to the poetic form and grammatical norms of the target language.

3.3 Patronage’s Manipulation

Translation is an orchestrated activity with many interested parties involved. As Lefevere (1992) has put it, patronage means something like the power (people, institutions) that can facilitate or hinder literary reading, writing, and rewriting. The patronage can be an individual or a religious group, a social class, a political party, publishers, as well as the media including newspapers and magazines and major television companies. It can be seen that the scope of patronage is very extensive and has different expressions in different works.

The influence of patronage on film subtitle translation is mainly reflected in film censorship, the content and standards of which in turn reflect certain aspects of the dominant ideology at a certain period of time. In the words of Billiani (2007), censorship remains a pervasive phenomenon that operates in many ways with different forms presented, and... translation remains one of the most powerful tools we currently have for shaping intercultural interactions. In order for a film or TV production to successfully march into foreign markets and gain the expected ratings, translators must take measures to avoid ideological conflicts with sponsors when translating film subtitles. Translators usually adopt such means as complete deletion, transformation and weakening when translating movie subtitles to avoid conflicts, successfully pass the examination and achieve the set translation purpose.

As a film inheriting traditional Chinese culture, *Song of the Phoenix*, if translated properly, would contribute to the globalization of Chinese culture and promote foreign audiences' awareness and understanding of traditional Chinese culture. In the process of foreign translation of film and television works, influenced by various aspects of the patronage, translators should take the national image into full consideration and reduce or avoid conveying a negative national image. Therefore, whether it is from the perspective of the national image or the patronage, translators should consciously adopt appropriate translation strategies when performing subtitle translation so as to successfully achieve their translation purposes. In the English translation of *Song of the Phoenix*, the translator mainly focused on the deletion and weakening of some vulgar and offensive words in the film, so as to purify the work and successfully pass the examination.

Translation Example 9:

ST: 天鸣说, 天鸣说……他游家班出活跟我屁相干呢?

ST in pinyin: tiān míng shuō, Tiān míng shuō... tā yóu jiā bān chū huó gēn wǒ pì xiāng gān ne?

TT: Tianming says, Tianming says! *His business is none of mine!* I am retired!

This dialogue takes place when the You Dynasty first takes up a job, and Tianming You asks Si Xi to invite Master Jiao to come, but the attentive Master Jiao considering not to affect Tianming's performance, firmly refuses Si Xi. In translating the reply of Master Jiao, the translator adopts a weakening translation strategy, using "none of my business" to deliberately distance the relationship between the two, while reducing the vulgarity of the text.

Translation Example 10:

ST: 别他妈太当回事了, 随便吹吹就得了。

ST in pinyin: bié tā mā tài dāng huì shì le, suí biàn chuī chuī jiù dé le.

TT : Hey, *no need to go crazy*. Just play something simple, whatever.

This dialogue takes place when Tianming's best friend, Changsheng, is getting married, and in accordance with the traditional custom, he invites You Dynasty to perform. When the You Dynasty is playing vigorously, Changsheng comes over and tells Tianming that he doesn't need to play so hard. Since Tianming and Changsheng are friends who grew up together, they have a very close relationship, so Changsheng and Tianming talk very casually. The simple, crude language in the original text successfully conveys the character traits. The translator removes the vulgar word 他妈(tā mā) from the translation. Such treatment is necessary from the point of view of purifying the film subtitles and avoiding ideological conflicts with the patronage.

4. Conclusion

As well as unleashing great potential in promoting Chinese culture to the world and strengthening the country's soft power, audiovisual translation could be employed as a tool to promote foreign trade in creative industries and increase economic returns. Based on André Lefevere's manipulation theory, this paper probes into the manifestation of manipulative factors in the English translation of the subtitles of *Song of the Phoenix* as well as the translators' flexible strategies of translation in response to these manipulative factors. Through the analysis, it is found that the translator is also influenced and manipulated by ideology, poetics and patronage in the translation process. Under the influence of these manipulative factors, translators will inevitably take the initiative to rewrite the original text properly in order to avoid ideological conflicts, to meet the mainstream poetics, and to uphold the will of the patronage, so as to achieve the desired translation goal smoothly.

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