

Ideological and Aesthetic Constraints on Audio-visual Translation: *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* in Chinese

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Abstract: Translation has been recognized as a form of rewriting, which is subject to controlling factors in the systems of patronage and poetics that exist at any time in a given culture. Audiovisual translation (AVT) is no exception. This paper follows Lefevere's literary translation theory (1992, 1998, 2004) and sees the external pressures or constraints on AVT in Mainland China as coming from two sources, namely, the ideological framework and the aesthetic framework ("poetics" in his terminology). While the sustained political ideology and traditional values standardised language usage and "unpolluted" translation content, behind the changing aesthetic motivations lies the commercial drive for box-office success. The film translators are impelled to produce more entertaining elements in their translations through intercultural rewriting. This strategic slant will continue to be favoured in translating imported films from English to Chinese for the mainland Chinese viewers.

Keywords: Aesthetics, AVT, ideology, manipulation, rewriting, cultural approach

1. Background to the Study

The last two decades have witnessed a significant shift in China's AVT domain towards an increasingly open, diversified and flourishing culture. Changes in three interconnected aspects make this clear. Firstly, China has changed from a dubbing-dominant nation up to the mid-1990s into an overwhelmingly pro-subtitling country. Secondly, the older practice of providing the public with limited access to dubbed foreign films and TV programmes has been replaced by a large range of shows on screen, available on a wide choice of media; these include world-class megaplexes and art-house cinemas, hi-tech video and digital products, and household satellite and/or cable TV as well as web portals. All these constitute the current norm in AVT entertainment, increasingly with foreign-language soundtracks combined with Chinese subtitles. Thirdly, China has also benefited from globalisation, especially after the 16th Chinese Communist Party Congress in the autumn of 2002, at which a new "art and commerce over politics" policy was promoted by the top officials in charge of ideological matters (Rosen, 2003, p. 59). Screen translations, as can be seen from the products dubbed and subtitled by the national level professionals such as China Central Television (CCTV) and Shanghai Film Dubbing Studio (上海電影譯製廠 or SFDS), have departed from the conservative modus operandi that prevailed in the past and brought in a more entertaining, viewer-oriented approach to AVT. In part, this was inspired by the popular acclaim for the liberating translation style of the zimuzu (字幕組) – Chinese fan-subtitling teams. A main translation strategy highlighting this approach is "cultural substitution" (Baker, 2011, pp. 29, 36, 243), which has been intensively applied as a vital ingredient in the recipe for AVT, a channel of cross-cultural communication of a monumental scale.

These changes have given rise to the thriving scenes of the AVT industry in China today with more and more people taking part in providing translation services or doing academic research in this fast-growing field, as well as enthusiastic consumers. Its future looks very promising, particularly because professional translators seem to have found a clear sense of priority and direction. Poor quality is the obvious threat from a rapid increase in quantity. For the first time, professional translators have had to face the challenge in a competitive market, and they have felt the need to liven up their translation style to cater for the needs of the audiences of the new century.

However, the climate as described here is not comparable to the rosy picture in “the early years of the Turkish Republic, where an extensive translation activity was systematically organised and conducted by the state with the support...of its people” (Aksoy, 2001, p. 14), “... where translation came to be regarded as an instrument of enlightenment and modernisation...” (Tahir-Gürçaglar, 2003, p. 114). In the case of the young Turkish Republic of the 1940s, translations of Western literature were used by the government as “a vehicle for nation-building” (ibid), an effective means, of “revitalising and recreating a national culture” (Aksoy, 2001, p. 1). By contrast, in mainland China, literary translation from Western languages in general, and cinema translation, which was conventionally subsumed by the former (Díaz Cintas, 2009, pp. 5-6; Lefevere, 1998, p. 41), have never been elevated to such favoured status. On the contrary, cinema translation has been one of the most restricted and tightly controlled areas of all translation activities in China. The procedures for censoring a foreign film or television programme, especially a Hollywood movie, before release, from its importation to its distribution, have always been strict. Translations are particularly susceptible to manipulation to comply with the decrees and ordinances issued by the State Administration of Radio, Films and Television (SARFT), the Central Government’s official watchdog for the mass media. The SARFT influence on AVT in China is a response to the circumstances described by Lefevere (2004): “translation is a channel opened, often not without a certain reluctance, through which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture, challenge it, and even contribute to subverting it” (p. 2).

That view also fits the approach China has adopted towards Hollywood films in Chinese cinema. China signed a Sino-USA agreement two years before joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on 10th November 2001. Under the terms of that agreement, China was to double its annual quota of imports of US films to China once it had joined the WTO. Importation of 10 “excellent” Hollywood movies per year to the Chinese market started from 1994. Following China’s WTO entrance, China has doubled this annual quota from 10 to 20 for big budget foreign films, most of them American blockbusters. Since then, China has been facing greater challenges from Hollywood on both ideological and economic fronts. There is fierce competition with big-budget foreign films for China’s domestic film market, which has been growing steadily by an average of 35 percent increase in box-office takings each year since 2003. Hollywood blockbusters have attained top rankings in annual revenues (Liu, 2011), but in addition, the ideological influence of US films on the audience has been a major concern to the Chinese authorities.

US films and TV series are widespread and influential. Their rich cultural content encourages emulation and they can be didactic. As a result, they are regarded by the Chinese

government as the most powerful media to inform, persuade and lead or mislead society more than to entertain, particularly younger generations. An influential article that expresses the government stance on the importation of Hollywood movies reflects this ideological mindset: “With China’s entry to the WTO, the Chinese film industry is yet to be faced with an influx of American movies, which, as far as Chinese cinema is concerned, raises issues of protecting its national sovereignty and industrial economy, as well as its cultural self-determination.” (Yin, 2003; translated by Jian Li). This defensive response has consistently been reflected in the rules and stipulations of the SARFT circulars and legislation on the criteria for censorship of film and TV (e.g., SARFT, 2004, 2006; HKTDC, 2008). Obviously, the censor’s grip on content has never been loosened. Before imported films and television programmes are released for screening to the public, they must pass the SARFT’s general and specific criteria to make sure that the content is politically correct, harmless and unlikely to “contaminate” the country or the viewer. Within this political framework, the authorities seem to be more concerned about the risk of adverse indoctrination through AVT than through translations in other media. The official acceptance of, or resistance to, Hollywood blockbusters has been a sensitive barometer of China’s openness and its tolerance of the US beliefs, values and lifestyles, dependent on Sino-US relations at the time (Qian, 2004, pp. 54-55). The translation of Western films has long been situated in a political context in China (Zhang, 2004, p. 190).

Although China is taking steps towards becoming a more liberal society, it is still a developing country without a film rating system, and it sustains its own reasons for treating the importation of foreign films with great caution. Consequently, the gatekeeping and manipulation of AVT that is firm and stringent has become less of a problem for AVT translators; they seek not so much to evade these as to make their translations comply.

2. The Case Study

This study particularly refers to film translation made by SFDS and CCTV, and investigates how external pressures affect the translation of a Hollywood blockbuster into Chinese and their impact on both the translator’s strategic decisions and the final translation. It attempts to present a few insights into the political and socio-cultural manipulation of AVT in China through exploring why and to what extent rewriting takes place in the translation of *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* for dubbing and subtitling. Rewriting is understood in this context as a necessary translation strategy — one of the means by which the survival of a literary work is ensured (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990, p. 10).

2.1. The Theoretical Underpinning

The notion of translation as rewriting, as introduced by André Lefevere in the Manipulation School’s seminal publication (Hermans, 1985), receives its fullest treatment in Lefevere (1992). There, translation comes under closer scrutiny than other forms of rewriting, because “translation is the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting, and ... potentially the most influential...” (ibid, p. 9). Such rewriting, “the basic strategy the translator is going to use” (ibid, p. 42), is dictated by the political and cultural power structures in a society. These lay

down constraints defined by two interlocking sub-systems, ‘patronage’ and ‘poetics’. These sub-systems put into effect on the one hand the ideological context, and on the other hand the social and aesthetic context, in which a translation is being made.

The primary constraint on translation is ideological “the conceptual [framework] that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time” (Lefevere, 1998, p. 48). The patron at whose bidding this is imposed is “an absolute monarch” (Lefevere, 2004, p. 7), exerting power to regulate the release and distribution of literary works in the service of ideology. Ideology in our context means the ruling official ideology, which in most cases is reflected by censorship. In translations, various forms of censorship can be identified. “Censorship itself was thus seen as an expression of ideology of those who wish to consolidate their power in order to dominate and exert control over others” (Leonardi, 2008).

Poetics is the other concept in Lefevere’s division of power variables that directly causes rewriting. It is actually the prevailing aesthetic standard for literary creations dominant in a culture at a given time. Constraints on literary translation are mainly reflected in deviation from the established or conventional norms of translation from the source language text (ST) “to shore up ... an existing poetics” (Lefevere, 2004, p. 10). They occur to the form as well as the content at various levels of language re-formulation, from use of diction and rhetorical devices, to register and style, and even to the whole discourse. Thus, as far as translation is concerned, the aesthetics of the two different cultures as “different generic [frameworks]” are mainly responsible for “the tension between the poetics of the source literature and that of the target literature — a tension that needs to be resolved by the translator” (Lefevere, 1998, p. 49) by means of rewriting.

Table 1. Lefevere’s Division of Power Variables that Manipulate Translation as Rewriting

<u>Patronage</u>	<u>“Poetics”</u>
➤ The conceptual framework	➤ The generic framework
➤ Ideology and opinions deemed acceptable by officials and the translation commissioner – the patron	➤ Values shaped by the targeted reader/ audience and the current professional code of practice — the critics
➤ Constraints as a result of censorship and political intervention	➤ Constraints arising from social acceptability and commercial trends

This dual system concept has offered valuable insights into film translation, or more broadly, AVT, as a special form of literary translation. Although AVT as a type of translation of polysemiotic discourse allows little room for rewriting except for the human language portion, it has to operate under the constraints shown in Table 1. The translator’s ideological and aesthetic choices are restricted by the patron and the critics (Lefevere, 2004, p. 8). The rewriting that often happens to the original speech is caused not so much by the technical constraints as by the external pressures, which come from the manipulative forces at work in the context of AVT for the target culture, including film censorship, ideological tolerance, and box-office-driven competition. These compel translators to accept the translation norms laid down by the patron,

the audience and other sources of criticism, and so push translators into innovative rewriting. Translators have to take more initiative and bring their creativity and experience into play in order to strike a balance between adequacy and acceptability.

2.2. Methodology

Using the analysis of rewriting summarised above, we can approach extra-textual determinants on AVT in China within two systems, namely, the ideological and the aesthetic frameworks. The former is generated by the ideological influences that prevail in China's socio-political environment, regulated by the rules and policies of the SARFT. These are implemented mainly through the translation commissioner's cuts and interventions, and translators' self-censorship. The latter is a response to what is generally and professionally held to be acceptable in contemporary Chinese society with respect to "yizhipian" and "zimupian" (dubbed and subtitled foreign films) as a type of translation and/or a variety of performing arts aimed at mass entertainment, the success of which depends on audience reactions and expectations, as well as critics' evaluations against existing artistic and commercial standards.

In line with this framework, there are two types of rewriting to be identified in the data film, each to be justified by a compelling reason, i.e., being motivated either to comply with the ideology or to comply with aesthetic standards. Rewriting can be defined as any translation that has deviated from the original form and/or meaning by way of substitution, adaptation, paraphrasing, omission, etc. The various forms of rephrasing or restructuring in the target language (TL) reinterpret or replace ST fundamentally, performing a broadly similar function to that of the ST, for example, being funny or talking about a certain subject, etc.

2.2.1. The Data for Analysis

For this study, the American blockbuster film *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* (2005)¹, dubbed and subtitled in Chinese Mandarin, which was released in cinemas throughout China on 8 July 2005 with the Chinese title "史密斯行動" (*Operation Smith*), provided the data for analysis. This film's Chinese mainland version (CCTV version) was chosen for study for the following reasons:

Firstly, the CCTV version, dubbed and subtitled with the same translation, represents the state of the art of AVT in China. The selected version of this film recorded for this study was a CCTV-6's Entertainment Centre of the Movie Channel release (電影頻道節目中心引進) re-broadcast on 11th December 2010. The translation was made by Mr. Gu Qiyong (顧奇勇), a celebrated film translator dedicated to this profession for the prestigious SFDS for many years. He has translated many major Hollywood films for dubbing and subtitling successfully into Mandarin Chinese to universal acclaim. SFDS is one of the top professional AVT producers in China and China's only dedicated film dubbing studio, mostly from English to Chinese. Almost all of these dubbed films made for cinemas throughout the country are later

¹ Starring Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, the original film was directed by Doug Liman, copyrighted Regency Entertainment (USA) Inc. and released by Twentieth Century Fox.

turned into authorised DVD releases and aired repeatedly on CCTV-6 afterwards; the subtitles are verbatim records of the dubbed dialogues. CCTV-6 is the movie channel of the national television network, and has high ratings.

Secondly, a month after *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* was premièred in the USA, its SFDS dubbed version was released to Chinese cinemas, which turned out to be another blockbuster following “星球大戰前傳3：西斯的反擊” (*Star Wars Episode 3: Revenge of the Sith*) which had started showing in the cinemas three months earlier and reaped an unprecedented 75.36 million *yuan* (US\$ 9.32 million). “史密斯行動” easily exceeded the box-office target of 50 million RMB *yuan* (US\$ 6.18 million) in the first 17 days after its release² and hit the highest weekend sales record of the year³. As a modern, naturalistic film, this was the most successful hit at the box-office that year and one of the most entertaining US movies for its translation.

Finally and most importantly, the CCTV version typifies a new style in rendering source language dialogues into idiomatic Chinese: it sounds natural and fresh as the result of an unconventional approach to film translation. The lively, hilarious dialogue in Chinese matches the pictures perfectly and was applauded by the audience for the colloquialisms and in-vogue expressions — a pleasing departure from the stilted style that had prevailed in dubbing Western films. As a report from a Beijing newspaper on entertainment news puts it:

the dubbing for the Chinese version of this film ... has for the first time pulled out of the rut by putting Chinese slang expressions into the translation, with punch-lines popping up every now and then and greeted by viewers with waves of laughter. (Zong 2005; my translation)

In another news report, Yang (2005) comments on the journalists’ reaction to the dubbed film at the pre-release screening:

Having watched the whole movie, the journalists present at the preview found the dubbed version of *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* fascinating! The dubbing performance is first-rate, as always, while the spoken lines are composed superbly, not straining for effect at all, as they used to. The audience was rendered helpless with laughter throughout by Americans talking wittily in idiomatic Chinese. We didn’t have any trouble whatsoever understanding the translation; in fact, we appreciate the easy-flowing dialogues that give us the illusion of watching a Chinese movie. (Translated by Jian Li).

To sum up, the CCTV version of *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* is recognized to be one of the most successful new-era AVT products in China to usher in the new orthodoxy of exercising more

² 《史密斯行动》三天狂收1692万 周末票房超星战 [*Operation Smith* Reaped Box-office Revenue ¥16.92 m. in First 3 Days]. *京华时报* [*Jinhua Times*]. 13th July 2005. Retrieved April 5th, 2011 from <http://www.g-film.com/news/hqnewshow.asp?id=6356>.

³ 《史密斯行动》中国票房五千万 [*Operation Smith* Hit ¥50 m. Box-office Record in China]. *北京晨报* [*Beijing Morning Post*], 26th July 2005. Retrieved April 5th, 2011 from <http://www.g-film.com/news/hqnewshow.asp?id=6426>.

freedom in rewriting in order to comply with the ideological and aesthetic criteria. The frequent and timely use of idiomatic TL colloquialisms and in-vogue expressions in this dubbed-cum-subtitled film, as well as in other CCTV translations of American films, highlights the most progressive state of the art.

2.2.2. Research Questions and Data Analysis Procedures

Questions for the present investigation include:

- (1) What types of rewriting are made to the translation?
- (2) To what extent is rewriting to the ST due to the constraints of ideology or to aesthetic choices?
- (3) What are the translation strategies and tactics involved?
- (4) Why has the change occurred from the conventional style of excessive formality in dubbing Western films to the tendency to use language that is more natural to the audience?

By analyzing all the instances of rewriting which occur in the translated film, these questions can be addressed.

The analytical model consists of two paradigms within the two frameworks of ideology and aesthetics. The first paradigm, emanating from patronage, is specified in the context of this study as ideological constraint, which leads to rewriting for 3 main reasons: political, moral and ethical. The second paradigm, the “Poetics”, refers in essence to the socio-economic pressures motivating the translator to meet the audience’s needs and expectations, as well as to the artistic standards and the professional norms dominant in Chinese culture at the time of translation. The aim here is to achieve box-office success. The translator’s rewriting is realised mainly by three linguistic means, namely, contemporary TL expressions, typical Chinese colloquialisms, and Chinese set phrases (the four-character idioms).

These paradigms serve as yardsticks, in the CCTV version, of translation decisions about how they solve the problems caused by the constraints. In the first step of the data analysis, translation that fits the definition of “rewriting” in AVT will be sorted and categorised by how they comply with either ideological or aesthetic constraints. Then for each group of data that comes under each type of constraint, further classification will be made. The next step is to find out the degree and the cause of deviation of the translation from the SL dialogue in each example by checking it against the original text and context.

3. Rewriting in the Translation of Mr. and Mrs. Smith

Two types of rewriting have been found in the data from the film, either to satisfy the dominant ideology or to satisfy the dominant aesthetics. Space permits only a sample of the data to be included in this article. Since the CCTV version combines dubbing and subtitling in one translation, the target language text (TT) as shown in the examples throughout this section represents both the dubbed dialogue and the subtitles which are presented in exactly the same way as they appear on the screen.

3.1. Rewriting Under the Ideological Constraint

Rewriting is done mainly to pass the censorship from the initiator of the translation (the “patron”) or to avoid controversy by exercising self-censorship. There are three types of rewriting: for political, ethical and moral reasons. All are subject to the norms of the mass media concerning political correctness, ideological purity and language standardisation imposed by external authorities.

3.1.1. Rewriting for Political Reasons

The ordinances and regulations set by SARFT lay down that any use of language, image or content in the media products that may distort, damage or demonise the reputation of China, its government or its people must be prohibited.

Example 1.

Context: Identifying the owner of the blown laptop computer for John. Technician: Chip’s Chinese. Imported by Dynamix.	
芯片是亚洲的 进口商是丹纳·麦克斯	[The chip was made in Asia, and the importer was Dynamix.]
Translation Strategy	Substitution

3.1.2. Rewriting for Ethical Reasons

This category includes rewriting to avoid mentions of a specific nationality or the name of a person or country.

Example 2.

Context: John told Eddie about the killer he had met in the crossfire but failed to identify Eddie: Maybe he’s Filipino!	
矮个儿小子	[A short guy.]
Translation Strategy	Substitution

Here is another example:

Example 3.

Context: to John speculating on his wife’s spy life Eddie: (Her job is a spy to get information from people.) French Riviera, a yacht? An Iranian prince? She’s supposed to get close to him and gain his trust. It’s disgusting.	
在度假胜地 游艇上 陪那些男人	[At a holiday resort, on a yacht, entertaining those men.]
Translation Strategy	Substitution, Generalisation, Omission

3.1.3. Rewriting for Moral Reasons

References to sex and the use of swear words fall into this category, which is considered to be a highly sensitive area in AVT.

Example 4

Context: the couple are seeing a marriage counsellor at the beginning of the film Doctor: How often do you have sex? Jane: Like, is one very little, or is one nothing? Because, you know, tech-technically speaking...the zero would be nothing. Doctor: How about this week? John: Including the weekend? Doctor: Sure.	
[cut]	-----
Translation Strategy	Deletion of the whole segment

At the end of the film, the scene of the couple seeing the marriage counsellor again is not cut, but the line is rewritten in TT to avoid the word sex, as shown in the example below.

Example 5.

Context: the couple is seeing a marriage counsellor again towards the end of the film Doctor: And do you feel that your relationship styles... are more conducive to the free flow ... John: Ask us the sex question.	
你们是否觉得 你们现在的关系有助于进行流畅的..... 就直截了当的问吧	[Do you think your relationship now is conducive to a free-flowing ...] [Just ask the question.]
Translation Strategy	Omission

Even the word date is kept off in the following example:

Example 6.

Context: talking about his divorced life to John Eddie: Now I'm great. I got dates all the time. I just woke up from a thing. I'm in my robe.	
现在好了 我能成天和别人在一起 我刚才做梦和别人在一起	[Now I am fine. I can stay with others all the time. I just dreamed about being with others.]
Translation Strategy	Substitution, Omission, Generalisation

Swearing occurs frequently in this film, as in many other American action movies. Generally speaking, the obscene expressions or words of graphic vulgarity are either deleted or changed for soft Chinese expletives. The swear words in the following five examples have all

been excluded in translation, some replaced with an euphemistic paraphrase and some adapted to something nonexistent in ST (Example 11).

Example 7.

Context: talking to John who is being told to get out of a private room in a bar Gangster: What part of “piss off” do you not understand?	
你是听不懂还是怎么的	[You don't understand or what?]
Translation Strategy	Paraphrase, Omission

Example 8.

Context: While playing a poker game in a bar John: Sweet Jesus. Mother of God.	
我的天 见鬼了	[Heavens! What the devil!]
Translation Strategy	Substitution

Example 9.

Context: While playing a poker game in a bar Man: I'll match your — What the hell? What's this shit?	
好吧 怎么回事 搞什么呀?	[OK... What is this? What are you doing?]
Translation Strategy	Substitution, Paraphrase, Omission

Example 10.

Context: Talking to Jane about John Eddie: I've been in his life for a long time. I'm pissed off.	
他和我多年的哥儿们了	[He and I have been old pals for years.]
Translation Strategy	Paraphrase, Omission

Example 11.

Context: Neighbour visiting John's house Neighbour: Oh. Nice floors. They are teak or something? John: Fuck if I know, Martin.	
- 这地板真好 柚木的吧	[Nice floors. Are they teak?]
- 是红橡木	[Red oak.]
Translation Strategy	Omission, Adaptation

The above examples show the rewriting forced by the censorship. It takes place mainly in areas that are sensitive ones in the dominant Chinese ideology, namely political,

ethical and moral. Scenes that contain sexual references or acts seem to be the No. 1 culprit to be banned or forbidden; however, politically undesirable or unsuitable content has always been absolutely taboo in the Chinese media, including AVT. In general, rewriting for political reasons has undoubtedly been more prevalent than for ethical or moral reasons in AVT.

3.2. Rewriting Under the Aesthetic Constraint

The other type of rewriting is motivated by the social climate, i.e. the approval or disapproval of the society of the translation consumer and the critics, who include not just professional critics, societies and institutions, journalists and reviewers but also netizens and microbloggers. Together, they set the current translational norms or aesthetic standards, at the time of translation. In contrast with ideological manipulation, the aesthetic constraint serves as a positive factor, motivating translators to be more creative, by staying in tune with the entertainment trends of the times.

From this case analysis, it is apparent that the success of the CCTV version was achieved through applying a vastly different approach to film translation from the previous conventional *modus operandi*. Entertainment is prioritised through making the TL dialogue more natural and idiomatic to the Chinese ear, humorous and familiar when and wherever appropriate. To achieve this end – keeping the TT as entertaining as the ST – the translator has used witty utterances and dialogue studded with currently popular expressions.

Rewriting to meet the audience expectations, the film translator of Mr. and Mrs. Smith has adopted a refreshing style, using Chinese idioms, set phrases and, especially, neologisms or familiar buzzwords from contemporary media, including the internet. Generally, in so doing, the dubbed film has proved to be more appealing to the audience, who welcome the new style of translation.

The following examples show how rewriting the original dialogues with the relevant strategies (linguistic means) is reflected in three interconnected functions.

Function A: intensifying the humorous effect by borrowing or imitating trendy ways of speaking;

Function B: harmonising the words with the camera shots by adaptation; and

Function C: making the dialogue more casual and familiar by sinicising.

The linguistic means can be categorised into three main translation strategies: rewriting with TL expressions in vogue, i.e., lively or trendy Chinese expressions popular in today's society; rewriting using idiomatic Chinese colloquialisms; and rewriting with Chinese set phrases (*chengyu* or four-character idioms) that typify the domesticated usage.

3.2.1. Rewriting with TL Expressions in Vogue

This is one of the most welcome strategies employed in translating US films into Chinese by Mr. Gu, the translator. He is admired by the dubbing crew of SFDS as well as audiences for his resourcefulness and how he adapts the translation of the dialogue appropriately, using a

rich lexicon with 21st-century characteristics⁴. They found it so refreshing and ingenious that the translator was able to merge everyday Chinese modes of speech with foreigners' talk so seamlessly. The few examples below illustrate the effectiveness of this usage of TL in bringing about added entertainment value for the audience.

Example 12.

Context: At amusement park Shooting Game Owner: Ladies and gentlemen, try your luck...	
走过路过别错过 女士们 先生们 试试运气	[You come, you see it, but don't miss it! Ladies and gentlemen, try your luck]
Functions	B, C

By adding a popular sales chant that is heard all over the country, not only does the speech become more entertaining, but also the camera shot and the dialogue become complementary.

Example 13.

Context: Responding to John's sudden revelation of getting married soon Eddie: You have to have a foundation of friendship, brother. The other stuff fades.	
你们得有个牢固的友情基础 毕竟会有审美疲劳	[You have to have a solid foundation of friendship. In the end, you will get tired of appreciating beauty.]
Function	A

The second sentence has been adapted to “畢竟會有审美疲劳” (“In the end, you will get tired of appreciating beauty”), where “审美疲劳” literally means “aesthetic fatigue”. This added wit to the talk without changing the original meaning of “The other stuff fades”: pleasures from admiring Jane's physical appearance do not last, referring specifically to John's earlier account of his impression of Jane that she is charming and attractive. Being “tired of appreciating beauty” (审美疲劳) is a recently coined phrase often used in relation to one's life partner. Here, it fits into the context perfectly and so the humour is intensified.

The following example shows how the dialogue is translated with expressions often heard in China nowadays, while it retains the metaphor in the SL.

⁴ 译时代的e语言：网络词流行语跳进电影对白 [E-language to Translate Our Times: Web and Chic Lingoes Glittering in Film Dialogues]. 青年周末 [Youth Weekend], 6th April 2007. Retrieved April 5th, 2011 from http://cul.sohu.com/20070406/n249245424_4.shtml.

Example 14.

Context: talking about stock trade at a house party Man: How'd you make out last quarter? You take a beating? John: Actually, I got all my dough buried under the toolshed.	
上个季度你的投资怎么样 是不是亏了 投什么资啊 有钱就藏着	[What about your stock performance last quarter? Did you lose? What's the point of investing? Stash the money (if you ask me).]
Function	A, C

Throughout the dubbed film, there are numerous instances of using lively Chinese expressions popular in today's society, such as: 大赢家 (big winner), 向她请示 (check in with her), 自己人玩 (private game), 哥兒們 (I've been in his life for a long time; man), and 進了管理層 (bump me to a desk). Other examples of popular Chinese expressions used in the translated film include: 挺養眼啊 (This looks nice), 開飯 (shall we [start eating]), 怎麼又不爽了 (what's wrong with you), 老媽 (my mom), 老爸 (your dad), 打翻身仗 ([but you can] write the last 10 pages [of your life]), 把你們兩都滅了 ([...they] close the book on both of you), 有多爆棚 ([Let's see if we can] get a tune out of this trombone), 爛到家了 ([Your aim's as bad as your cooking ...]... that's saying something), etc.

3.2.2. Rewriting with Idiomatic Chinese Colloquialisms

There had been stigma attached to the fact that, in general, dubbed films and TV dramas in China tended to sound affected and stereotypical until the SFDS initiated the new trend which is characterized by saying the lines naturally instead of “hamming”. A good translation is definitely the determining factor. By using idiomatic colloquial expressions, the dialogues sound livelier, wittier, more humorous, and closer to life, than they would have in the stiff, rather pompous manner of translation used previously.

Example 15.

Context: John brings breakfast in for Jane who is still in bed John: I think room service fled. I did what I could.	
服务生开溜了 将就着吃吧	[The servants fled. Just eat what I got.]
Function	B, C

The rewriting of the second sentence in this example, though seemingly very loose, is commendable if all the context is taken into consideration. The visual and audio elements together make the speaker's meaning clear and appropriate in that setting. The Chinese expression 將就著吃吧 (make do with it) is what the Chinese audience would expect to hear there. A similar example (Example 16) in the dubbed film performs the same function and more – it harmonises the camera shots and dialogue by adding to the hilarity through using a familiar Chinese idiom.

Example 16.

Context: A hitman from the BMW opens the van's left door. John opens the other van door and yanks the hitman through out John: These doors are handy!	
开门送客	[Open the door to see our guest off!]
Function	A, B, C

In fact, most of the examples in this category have achieved the desired entertainment by fulfilling more than one function.

Example 17.

Context: Referring to an assassin whom John has just knocked down with the minivan and disarmed John: Fuckers get younger every year.	
这么小就出来混	[He is out to fool around even at this young age.]
Function	A, C

Example 18.

Context: after firing a rocket launcher John: You should so not be allowed to buy these.	
这武器到处有卖就糟了!	[It would be terrible if the weapon were available for sale!]
Function	A, B, C

Examples 17 and 18 are two other successful renderings of dialogue which are very witty and readily comprehensible. Even though they may seem to be adaptation rather than translation, such rewriting is necessary. The familiar expressions used are so much a part of Chinese speech that, in that context, they are more than just entertainment: they are fully functional re-interpretations.

3.2.3. Rewriting with Chinese Set Phrases

Using four-character Chinese set phrases (CSP) can be a surprisingly effective technique in English to Chinese film translation. CSPS, standing for Conciseness, Saliency, Pertinence and Style, is a useful mnemonic. CSPs can condense and enliven the dialogue in dubbing and subtitling. Basically, they can alleviate the constraints on AVT in those four ways. This topic is worthy of a separate study. In the following example, the translator has used several CSPs to good effect.

Example 19

Context: John is trying to make himself heard by Eddie about his new girlfriend as he is being engaged in a practice fight John: I'm in love. She's smart, sexy... She's uninhibited, spontaneous, complicated... She's the sweetest thing I've ever seen!	
我恋爱了 她聪明 她性感 她狂野不羁 她无拘无束 她神秘莫测 绝对是天生尤物	[I'm in love. She's smart, she's sexy... She's unrestrained, she's mysterious... Absolutely a born beauty!]
Function	A, C

The above is just one of many instances in the film that illustrate the point that "... translators often try to recast the original in terms of the poetics of their own culture, simply to make it pleasing to the new audience and, in doing so, to ensure that the translation will actually be read" (Lefevere, 2004, p. 26). It also shows that, in AVT into Chinese, CSPs are an effective way of making a translation aesthetically appealing: CSPs have earned audiences' knowing smiles for conveying messages succinctly and vividly.

4. Concluding Remarks

The trend in AVT in Mainland China is away from the dubbing tradition bound to "faithful" but highly foreignised translations which tend to sound stagey and unnatural, towards catering for the audience's entertainment and comprehension by using artful rewriting, especially localised, unpretentious dialogue. In essence, the new translation approach fits in the taxonomy of "Cultural Translation (or Cultural Approach)" as defined in Shuttleworth & Cowie (2004, pp. 35-36). By compromising the lingua-cultural integrity of the original words to create a familiar, instinctively acceptable translation that would not be perceived as translation by the recipients, the translator succeeds in proving that translation being "a process which occurs between cultures rather than simply between languages" (ibid) can be delivered in a pleasingly mediated form that is fully functional and free of obstruction of any sort. The dubbed-cum-subtitled CCTV-6 version of *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* is a case in point. Its box-office success has been the reward for a pleasing, effective translation style, one which represents a major transition of approach to AVT in China. It is likely that this will continue to set the trend in English to Chinese screen translation for some time to come.

Applying Lefevere's rewriting theory, this study concludes that the conventional practice in AVT puts more emphasis on working for the interest of the ideology than of aesthetics. Both systems are conditioned by the era in which they influence literary creation.

At present, AVT practitioners are faced with the challenge of satisfying both interests, where the ideological interests represent official ideology and the aesthetic interests stand for mass ideology. Translators have succeeded in changing the emphasis, to place more importance on aesthetics rather than politics, in both the process and the end product of film translation.

This case study reflects how extraneous manipulation affects AVT in China, and shows, with supporting evidence, how film translators may perform under heavy pressure to the

satisfaction of both political and aesthetic imperatives, delivering an ideologically acceptable but marketable translation that, at the same time, enhances the appeal of films at the box office.

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