重庆大学

硕士学位论文

从目的论角度探讨影视作品的字幕翻译

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摘　　要

在现代社会中，影视作品作为大众传媒手段已广为普及。影视作品的字幕翻译作为一种新兴的翻译方式，也显得越来越重要。然而，传统的对等翻译理论已无法适应其特殊要求。由德国弗米尔等学者提出的目的论，作为对传统翻译理论的一个重大突破和翻译理论研究的重要补充，无疑为字幕翻译的理论研究开辟了新视角。

本文从目的论角度对影视作品的字幕翻译活动进行了研究和分析，认为字幕翻译作为一种特殊的翻译形式，既受翻译理论的影响，也受影视作品的独特性所约束。目的论认为翻译是一种原文、译者和读者等相互作用的动态交际过程，译者应该在翻译目的的指引下，尽量考虑一切可能的相关因素，决定最适合的翻译方法。简而言之，即翻译的目的决定达到预期目标的策略或方法。因此，在字幕翻译过程中，应充分考虑各方面因素，根据具体翻译目的采用相应的翻译策略进行翻译实践活动。为此，本文根据诺德提出的文本分析模式，采用描述性研究方法对字幕翻译过程进行分析，指出在原文分析过程中应采取自上而下的方法，在译文建立过程中应以观众接受为导向，最后在校订过程中应考虑字幕翻译的特点使译文达到简练连贯的效果。然后，又以此为根据进行实例分析，所选取的例子是美国系列连续喜剧《疯狂主妇》。这部作品在美国播出时曾风靡一时，吸引了无数观众，而引入中国后却主要由于翻译的原因而鲜有好评。因此，这里选择该剧进行分析研究，指出字幕翻译过程应遵循上述方法，从观众角度出发建立简练连贯的译文。

关键词： "目的论"，字幕翻译， 翻译方法，《疯狂主妇》

ABSTRACT

In modern society, audiovisual (AV) products distribute to a worldwide area as a popular means of mass media. AV subtitle translation, accordingly, is playing a more and more important part. However, the current equivalence-oriented theories cannot provide guidance for this new translation area. Skopos theory, as a breakthrough into the traditional translation concepts and an important complement to translation studies, has opened up a new perspective to subtitling studies.

In this paper, the author, in light of Skopos theory, made a comprehensive analysis of subtitling activities, and pointed out that subtitling, as a specialized area of translation, is not only guided by translation studies, but also under constraints of AV properties. In Skopos theory, translation is regarded as a dynamic communication with interplay of source text (ST), translator, addressee, etc. The translator is expected to take the translation purpose (skopos) as guidance, to choose the appropriate methods with consideration of all relevant factors. In short, the end justifies the means. Therefore, during the process of subtitle translation, the subtitler should take all the factors into consideration to identify the translation purpose (skopos), and then adopt corresponding translation strategies. From this perspective, the author made a descriptive analysis of subtitling process to explore the appropriate approaches, i.e. a top-down approach to source text (ST) analysis, a viewer-oriented approach to target text (TT) construction, and the approach for concision & coherence in subtitling post edit. Based on this analysis, the author made a case study for further illustration. The example for case study is American TV series *Desperate Housewives*. This work won considerable popularity to American viewers, but in China only very few positive reviews. It is primarily due to the poor translation which hindered or misled the Chinese viewers. The author thereby chose this series for a case study to illustrate the necessity for subtitlers to adopt the approaches proposed in this paper.

Keywords: Skopos theory, subtitle translation, translation approaches, *Desperate Housewives*

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Chapter One   Introduction

1.1 Research Background

"Globally, this is the age of mass communications, of multimedia experiences and a world where audiences demand the right to share the latest text, be it film, song, or book simultaneously across cultures" (qtd in Szarkowska 2005). By such remarks, modern communicative modes are mentioned together with the traditional ones for transmission of information. As a matter of fact, these new modes, thanks to their high-tech-supported qualities, are even more important. They are able to satisfy the global demands for communications in almost a simultaneous manner. In other words, the innovations of information technology, together with the needs for immediate communications by mass audiences, motivated the evolvement of communicative modes. In the new mode, information is transmitted as tripartition of sound, image and word through the information expressway.

With the merits of the innovations, human communicative actions have been greatly improved as following: (1) the extreme expansion of communication space; (2) the realization of immediate communications for people apart far away from each other; (3) the development of information vehicles, i.e. from traditional books to modern AV products; (4) the change of information form, i.e. from single lingual signs to tripartition of sound, image and word; (5) the realization of mass communication, i.e. the group of target receivers increased greatly, from traditional literate elite to common people, who are capable of listening and seeing (with subtitling even the deaf and hard-of-hearing can deal with communication successfully). In summary, modern communication mode has evolved into a much more convenient one, which can transmit information in a visualized manner. This evolvement then advances the process of globalization.

Globalization means the interlingual and cross-cultural communications of human beings in the most extensive area, which involves various aspects such as politics, economics, technology, etc. Under this background, however, the gaps of communications between people in different lingual and cultural communities have never narrowed down. That is to say, the vast range of languages is still regarded as a barrier to worldwide communications. Furthermore, with this new mode, people appeal even more urgently for the bridge between the gaps, i.e. they are requiring a solution from the translation studies circle. However, the fact is disappointing, as commented by

Mona Baker (ibid), "The transmission of cultural values in screen translation has received very little attention in the literature and remains one of the most pressing areas of research in translation studies." This pressing area, at present, has just grown into the infancy of audiovisual translation (AVT) as a new area of translation studies. So far, some scholars, especially in Europe, have made considerable contributions into this new area. But there is still a long way to go before it can develop into a full-blown discipline.

In China, for one reason or another, the situation is even worse. Chinese scholars focus on traditional literary translation, and seldom pay attention to AVT, for it is generally regarded as entertainment instead of orthodox academic studies. Therefore AVT in China, on the one hand, is lingering out of the translation studies circle; on the other hand, is taken for granted by tens of millions of viewers as indispensable part of mass communication. Subtitle translation, one of the dominant methods of AVT, is quite popular in China, but attracted even less attention from translation studies circle. Consequently, subtitle translation in China greatly depends on translators' individual competence without any guiding instructions in theory, which then result in numerous examples of poor subtitle translation hindering or even misleading audiences.

This paper, under such circumstances, focuses on an analysis of the subtitle translation, aiming to explore the appropriate approaches to this specialized area. Following the analysis, there is a case study for further illustration of the feasibility of the approaches. The Skopos theory, which has proved to be appropriate to analyze non-literary translation, is employed here as a theoretical foundation. During this Skopos-oriented analysis, subtitle translation is regarded as a dynamic process of text processing with contributions from both film studies and translation studies. The analysis is a descriptive one in accordance with the dynamic process of subtitle translation.

1.2 Research Issue

The present study is a Skopos-oriented research of text processing, focusing on a descriptive analysis of subtitle translation process. The Skopos theory is employed as a theoretical foundation of the research. Attempt will be made to provide Skopos-oriented approaches for the dynamic process of subtitle translation with a case study followed for further illustrations.

1.3 Thesis Structure and Methodology

The paper consists of six chapters: 1) Introduction; 2) Literature review; 3) Theoretical framework; 4) Exploring subtitling approaches in light of Skopos theory; 5) Case study; 6) Conclusion.

Chapter 1 makes an introduction to the background of the present study, emphasizing the imperative demand for subtitling studies. Chapter 2 analyzes the hybrid features of subtitle translation, i.e. the combination of film studies and translation studies as well as its specific constraints. Then after reviewing the previous studies in subtitle translation both at home and abroad, the author analyzes the status quo in China and reiterates the significance of this research. Chapter 3 introduces the Skopos theory as the theoretical foundation of this paper in detail, including the development of translation studies, the content of Skopos theory and a Skopos-oriented approach to subtitle translation. Chapter 4 provides the three approaches in accordance with text-processing procedures of subtitle translation in light of Skopos theory, briefly the top-down approach to source-text analysis, the viewer-oriented approach to target-text production and the approach for concision & coherence in subtitling post edit. Chapter 5 takes American TV series *Desperate Housewives* as example for case study to examine the particular problems so as to illustrate the applicability of the approaches provided in the previous chapter. Chapter 6 is the conclusion of the whole paper.

A descriptive-explanatory method along with case study is adopted in this research. It is basically qualitative rather than quantitative.

Chapter Two   Literature Review

2.1 General Introduction to Audiovisual Translation

1995 witnessed the 100th anniversary of film industry. Until then, film, after one century's development, had grown from original entertainment in circus sheds into an indispensable industry influencing many aspects, such as entertainment, education, communication, etc. Film, together with television (TV), was named as "the seventh art" after traditional literature, painting, sculpture, music, architecture and drama. This title, as a matter of fact, is far from enough to describe its power on human societies, which affect not only artistic appreciation, but also politics, economics, technology, etc. Film and TV, in fact, have become indispensable part of human societies. After the new millennium, many new AV recruits, benefited from innovations of digitalization, enlisted into film industry, such as DVD, MP4, on-line program, and so on. With these new AV products, people can be set free from the yoke of traditional film and TV, which require viewers to stay before screen in certain program period. These double-quick developments of film industry, however, bring forward even more urgent demand for translation in this field to facilitate the interlingual and cross-cultural communications in a global area.

Audiovisual translation (AVT), also known as "film translation" or "screen translation", is a specialized area of translation studies targeting at this filed. Despite its brief history, AVT has aroused academic attentions in translation studies circle in recent time, especially in Europe. In the following parts there are detailed introductions.

2.1.1 An Overview of Audiovisual Translation

Compared with the time-honored translating activities, AVT has a very short history. But in this short period, it has experienced a quite fast development. As recorded by Gottlieb, "since 1929 when the first sound film reached an international audience" (Baker 2004: 244), this specialized translation area has come into the sight of the mass audiences, mainly in form of dubbing and subtitling. The term "audiovisual translation" emphasizes the combination of translational nature of inter-linguistics and cross-culture with the special qualities of multi-medium and inter-semiotics. In other words, AVT can be regarded as a translating action in special communicative mode, which requires a multi-disciplinary approach to conduct a comprehensive analysis.

AVT, as a specialized area of translation studies, focuses on the translational action, i.e. the construction of the target text (TT) with information provided by the source text (ST). The AV text, however, differs greatly with the conventional ones, e.g. the literary works. Although the AV script is a written text, it is highly different from a literary work, for it implies many references to the audiovisual and dramatic medium it is designed for. In its formal structure it is bound by strict rules and most presented in series of dialogues. In other words, AV texts are usually built according to the conventions of film language, a complex language that overcomes linguistic communication and has its own rules and conventions. In film language it is possible to distinguish the non-verbal codes which complement and frame words and linguistic meaning. Therefore, it is important for translators to place focus on the interplay of verbal and non-verbal codes in film language and audiovisual translation. According to Reiss, AV text was classified as "a subsidiary text-type which supplements Reiss' basic text typology (expressive texts, information texts and operative texts)" (Suttleworth & Cowie 2004:109). Reiss claimed that "the multi-medial category consists of texts in which the verbal content is supplemented by elements in other media; however, all such texts will also simultaneously belong to one of the other, main text-types" (ibid: 110), and further argues that this text-type forms a "superstructure" over the other three, as the "special requirement of this type take precedence over whatever basic texts type a given text otherwise belongs to" (ibid). Songs, comic strips, plays, and writing for radio or TV are all examples of this type, and the translator dealing with those texts will need to ensure that the translation is equally suited as the original for use in the relevant medium.

Briefly speaking, AV text, with its multi-disciplinary properties, deserves considerations from both film studies and translation studies. And the two disciplines both contribute to the development of this field. Therefore, to conduct an analysis of AV text, the researcher should take a multi-disciplinary attitude to come out a comprehensive analysis of the special properties of this specialized area.

2.1.2 A Typology of Audiovisual Translation

Currently all countries cultivate the tradition of AVT as subscription to one of the two major modes, i.e. dubbing and subtitling, as far as cinema translation is concerned. Sometimes there is a third one—voiceover in the case of TV translation, which at present is still a minor mode. Hence, the AVT studies mainly focus on the two major ones. According to *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, dubbing and subtitling are defined as follows:

Dubbing is used in two ways: firstly, it can refer to any technique of 'covering the original voice in an audio-visual production by another voice'. This broad definition has the advantage of including other types of revoicing, such as voice-over, narration or free commentary. However, the term usually refers more narrowly to lip-sync dubbing, which is defined as the process in which 'the foreign dialogue is adjusted to the mouth movements of the actor in the film' and which is designed to give the impression that the actors whom the audience sees are actually speaking in TL. (Shuttleworth & Cowie 2004: 45) Subtitling can be defined as the process of providing synchronized captions for film and television dialogue (and more recently for live opera). Subtitles can be either interlingual (the type considered here) or intralingual (e.g. for the deaf), open (i.e. forming part of the original film or broadcast) or closed (i.e. broadcast separately and accessible for example by means of teletext). (ibid: 161)

Dubbing and subtitling, in comparison, both interfere with the original text to a different extent. On the one hand, dubbing is known to be the method that modifies the source text to a large extent and makes it familiar to the target audience through domestication. It is the method by which "the foreign dialogue is adjusted to the mouth and movements of the actor in the film" (ibid: 45). It aims to make the audiences feel as if they were listening to actors directly speaking the target language. On the other hand, subtitling is to supply a translation of the spoken language in the source text into a written form in the target language. The subtitles are in the form of synchronized captions, which are usually at the bottom of the screen. Subtitling is the method that alters the source text to the least possible extent and enables the target audience to experience the foreign language and be aware of its foreignness at all times.

In practice, there are a number of reasons for choosing subtitling rather than dubbing, e.g. the cost by subtitling is only one fifteenth of that by dubbing. However, the choice of one or other mode is to a large extent a matter of the preference of the country for which the new version is being produced. Traditionally, dubbing is the standard AVT method in a number of European countries, such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain (ibid:45); subtitling tend to be favored, in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Greece, Israel, Egypt and throughout the Arab world (ibid:161). Up to now, subtitling, even compared with dubbing, has been largely ignored by translation studies as a whole; it is thereby an imperative task for numerous scholars dealing with translation studies.

2.2 Subtitling Studies
2.2.1 The Nature of Subtitling

Subtitling, as one of the dominant methods of audiovisual translation, possesses the nature of translating activity and multi-media qualities. In addition, under the confine of special constraints, it requires much more consideration than ordinary translation studies. To achieve a better understanding of the nature of subtitling, it is necessary to focus on both the AVT features mentioned above as well as its special technical constraints as follows. As mentioned in *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, subtitlers work under a number of constraints which are additional to those associated with other types of translation.

Firstly, the addition of subtitles to a screen necessitates interfering with the visual image, at least to some extent. For this reason subtitles are usually placed at the bottom of the screen, and are generally limited to two lines of a maximum of about 35 characters each. Secondly, the time available for display depends firstly on the speed at which the material is spoken (which is generally faster than the rate at which a full transcription could be delivered), the viewers' average reading speed and the necessity of keeping a (short) interval between subtitles; all of these factors must be borne in mind if the general requirement of synchrony is to be satisfied. Thirdly, subtitles are generally inserted simultaneously with the onset of speech and removed 0.5 to 1.5 seconds after the speech segment has finished; however, this can be ignored if for example there is a danger of the subtitle 'overlapping' a scene change. Finally, it is important that subtitles are displayed in a format which ensures their clear visibility and easy legibility, and that line-breaks are chosen in such way as to coincide with the natural breaks in sentence structure. (Shuttleworth & Cowie 2004: 161-162)

In view of the constraints discussed above it is clear that there are serious limitations on the amount of information which can be conveyed by most subtitles. Consequently, subtitling usually entails an overall compression of the original material, though on occasion the subtitler may need to add extra information, for example to help the TL audience to understand a point which for cultural reasons might otherwise be unclear. Additionally, only a fraction of the information contained in the original intonation or tone of voice can be conveyed, while it is not always possible to produce an effective rendition, for example, of non-standard speech or colloquial vocabulary.

Briefly speaking, subtitling, due to the additional audiovisual components, differs from text translation in several important aspects. It must synchronize with the two other semiotic components of film, i.e. image and sound; it involves a switch from

spoken to written language and it includes a substantial reduction of the original dialogue. Therefore, the task of subtitlers is to seek for a balance, trying to minimize any side effect coming along with the addition. To achieve the balance, they should first of all reconsider translation approaches and strategies targeting this special field.

Currently, there are actually two major types of communicative modes concerning with subtitle translation, i.e. film and TV. Although there are also other new members appeared with the development of technology, they haven't by far brought great changes into the traditional modes. Film and TV enjoy such common features that they are generally regarded the same thing. However, there are some specific features belonging to the two modes respectively. It is necessary for subtitling researchers to pay attention to these differences and then to find out the specific expected functions of the two modes respectively.

From the viewers' perspective, the differences can be classified as follows, (1) fantastic film vs. realistic TV, i.e. in the process of seeing a film, the viewer is generally confined to a black theatre enjoying the dream-like pictures. As for TV the viewers mostly stay at home and watch the realistic programs, e.g. news. (2) Ceremony of film appreciation vs. casualty of TV watching, i.e. film is usually regarded as artistic works, so the appreciation of film is like a ceremony. But TV programs are quite clear to daily life, thus viewers take them as part of their casual lives. (3) Alienation of film vs. intimity of TV, i.e. what films present to viewers is generally the alien experience far from common one, such as planet war, martial arts, etc. But a variety of TV programs provide more intimate images close to viewers' common experiences with more mutual interactions, such as local news, cuisine show, etc. The major classification of film and TV programs has been explained, however, there are a number of subdivided types. For example, film, according to the standard by U.S. researchers, can be divided into 75 types belonging to different themes. (QinJunxiang 2006:132, translated) However, since the limited application of subtitling at present, the majority of AV texts under research are popular feature films and TV series.

2.2.2 Past Studies on Subtitling

Subtitling has been used since 1929, when the first American talkies reached Europe. After decades of development, the technique of subtitle insertion had improved from photochemical subtitling over optical subtitling to the introduction of laser subtitling. However, there was very little literature on this subject. Moreover, the words in terms of "subtitles" were very rarely to be found in the indexes of handbooks or

bibliographies on translation studies. A few experienced subtitlers had written down their observations and thoughts or lectured on subtitling, but on the whole, finding source material used to be an uphill struggle.

Things have changed, however, since around 1995, and now there are quite a few books available and a multitude of academic papers on this subject, as well as on subjects related to AVT. In 1999, Gottlieb compiled *An International Annotated Bibliography: Interlingual Subtitling for Cinema, TV, Video & DVD*[1], listing some 1200 titles on subtitling originating from all over the world. This bibliography includes articles published in newspapers, magazines, journals, anthologies or proceedings, presenting discussion on subtitling from the very beginning to the end of the twentieth century, a period in which subtitling grew from a necessary evil, based on the standards of the intertitles of silent films, to a highly debated art form and much-read text type, taught at universities and second nature to the peoples of a large number of speech communities the world over, from China to Iceland, and from Brazil to Greece. It provides an exhaustive guide in terms of the growing literature on subtitling.

The first academic works dealing with AVT, as recorded, appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The edition of the magazine *Babel*, published in 1960 under the title *Cinéma et traduction*, made a symbolic starting point. Most of the early articles, however, were confined to discussion on certain phenomenon without systematic research in theory. In fact, the academic researches started in earnest until 1990s, especially since 1995 when the 100th film anniversary was celebrated. Subtitling scholars, so far, have just outlined the general framework of this subject, with researches into the aspects such as definition, history, classification, features, constraints, strategies, etc. In the following part, there is a brief retrospective introduction on some important studies in the past.

Subtitling (Gottlieb 1992: 162) was defined as a (1) written, (2) additive (i.e. new verbal material is added in the form of subtitles), (3) immediate, (4) synchronous, and (5) polymodal (i.e. at least two channels are employed) form of translation. It was regarded as an overt type of translation (Gottlieb 1994b:102-103) in that it maintains the original voice and is thus open for criticism from those with a slightest knowledge of the source language. The research on subtitle translation is relatively new as it began to attract attention only since 1995 and the change first took place in the Europe. "Accompanied with the booming of new technology, service of offering on-line and off-line products is more convenient, the need of subtitle translation is on the rise" (Gambier 2003:171).

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[1] http://www.unipv.it/wwwling/gottlieb.pdf & http://www.unipv.it/wwwling/gottlieb_intro.pdf.

Besides, minority groups began to realize that the media could be a useful tool to "promote and reinforce their language and culture identity" (ibid).

Subtitling, as a special mode of translation, has more constraints than other forms due to its features. Paola Guardini (1998: 97) divided the constraints into three categories, namely technical constraints, i.e. time and space of presentation, imposed by the original work; textual constraints, i.e. the presence of the visual and verbal elements of the original, the spatial constraints implying the reduction of the original and the change in medium; linguistic constraints, i.e. intra-linguistic (due to differences in syntax and grammar between the two languages) and extra-linguistic (problems referring to the surrounding reality). According to Hatim and Mason (1997: 78-79), there should be a maximum of two lines for English at one time so that not too much of the screen images will be covered. In order to save space, translators will adopt omission and reduction in subtitle translation. Time constraints mainly come from four elements: the duration of the utterance in the original version, the reading speed of the viewers, the visual information given on the screen and editing style adopted in the film.

The constraints mentioned above add to the complexity of subtitle translation. Thus, scholars began to explore the norms and codes for subtitle translation as well as reconsider translation strategies. Quality, which "has to be defined in the transfer process, in relation to translator's rights and duties, and in the final products" has drawn attention from many scholars (Gambier & Gottlieb 2001: xvi). Jorge Díaz Cintas (2001) demonstrated how crucial a good dialogue list, complete with linguistic and cultural information, is in making the subtitler's job much easier. Clara Cerón (2001) insisted that good subtitle punctuation established a certain rhythm in reading and made immediate processing and comprehension of the subtitles easier. Felicity Mueller (2001) stressed the importance of quality which she considered an elusive concept. She also saw to the training, evaluating and recruiting of subtitlers, highlighting the role played in achieving it by the standards set for the selection and training of adequate subtitlers who must display specific skills and work in cooperation with the editors.

Some scholars paid attention to subtitle translation strategies. Li Yunxing (2001a) suggested that the primary requirement for subtitling is to provide, within constraints of time and space, the most relevant information in the most efficient way. He analyzed the features of subtitling in terms of time-space constraints, informative function and cultural factors and proposed corresponding strategies for translation, together with concrete examples. Accordingly, due to the time-spatial constraints, subtitlers often need

to adopt deduction strategy, which can be subcategorized into condensation, reductive paraphrasing and deletion. Similarly, Gottlieb (2001) studied the Danish subtitling of English language TV programs and put forward four strategies, (a) total surrender (non-translation of, for instance, cursing and puns in English), thus generating overt Anglicisms; (b) the use of unnatural-sounding English-flavored Danish constructions displaying what could be labeled covert Anglicisms; (c) the use of commonly accepted English loans, adoptions; (d) or fully translated dialogue in idiomatic Danish.

Furthermore, some scholars noticed the extra-linguistic factors in viewing subtitling. Patrick Cattrysse and Aline Remael (2001) both pointed to the need of interdisciplinary in the research and defend a target-oriented descriptive approach, aiming to improve not just adademic research but also education and training. Anne Jäckel (2001) produced an absorbing socio-cultural study on the French film *La Haine*, with special focus on non-standard languages such as Americanism. She explained why the attempt to sell the film in the US by subtitling slang and cultural differences still fails due to strong cultural mismatches.

In summary, the past studies cover most major aspects of subtitling and outlined the general framework of this subject. They constitute a solid base and provide valuable data for later researchers. In spite of the contributions in the past decades, however, research in this field remains difficult, for lack of appropriate theoretical frames and methodological tools, as most of the studies are conducted by practitioners. It needs more attentions and efforts from scholars and professionals of translation studies for more systematic and theoretical descriptions (Gambier & Gottlieb 2001: xx). What's more, much of the research is done in the West and therefore mainly concentrates on translations from English to other European languages or vice versa. In China only very few scholars pay attention to this field, and Chinese cases are much less explored. Compared with the West, China is still lagging behind in this field. Therefore, it is much more important to bring Chinese cases into study.

2.3 Subtitling: An imperative trend for academic studies in China
2.3.1 Subtitling: A Translation Method with Worldwide Popularity

AV products are extremely powerful vehicles to transmit values, ideas and information. They are polysemiotic mediums that transfer meaning through several channels, by which information is presented not only verbally but also visually and aurally. The preference of AVT method in different countries can be attributed to

economic considerations and national habit rather than to cultural characteristics and aesthetic considerations.

These countries, according to the type of preferable AVT method, can be divided as (1) Source-language countries, which mean English-speaking countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom, where hardly any films are imported. The foreign ones tend to be subtitled rather than dubbed. In Britain, film translation does not appear to be a significant issue as the great majority of imported films are American and require no translation. (2) Dubbing countries, comprising mainly French-, Italian-German-, and Spanish-speaking countries, both in and outside Europe. In these countries the overwhelming majority of films undergo the process of dubbing. This is mostly due to historical reasons since in the 1930s dubbing became the preferred mode of film translation in the world's big-market speech communities. (3) Subtitling countries, which are characterized by a high percentage of imported films, and thus there is a great and steady demand for translation, including the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Portugal and some non-European countries. In Belgium or Finland, where there are large communities speaking two languages, films are usually provided with double subtitles. (4) Voice-over countries, most of which cannot afford dubbing, e.g. Russia or Poland (Baker 2004:244).

This division, however, has ultimately become less distinct, partly due to economic pressure which forces broadcasters in high-cost dubbing countries such as Germany and France to revert to a mix of the different methods of language transfer and to consider subtitling in particular as the cheaper alternative in order to reduce total costs[2]. Moreover, audience attitudes are changing. In Spain for example, subtitling was traditionally linked with an idea of elitism and exclusivity, since it was mainly 'art films' that were subtitled[3]. With a growing number of 'commercial films' also being subtitled in Spain, this attitude has changed and the educational value of subtitles in foreign language learning has been recognised. As a consequence, in large Spanish cities such as Madrid, Barcelona or Valencia, it is already possible to watch a given film in two versions, either dubbed or subtitled. In France, well into the 1990s, only two or three prints of a popular film used to be subtitled with every 95 dubbed copies for mainstream cinemas. Today, up to 50% of the film prints distributed in France are subtitled, and subtitled versions are screened all over the country[4]. To conclude, even though there still exists a division between 'subtitling countries' and 'dubbing countries',

[2,3,4] http://isg.urv.es/library/papers/thesis_Christine_Sponholz.doc

this division is becoming less distinct and there is a tendency to shift to subtitling popularity for economic reasons as well as due to changes in audience attitudes.

2.3.2 Status Quo of Subtitling Studies in China

AVT activities started in China after the year 1949. At that time, only a small group of people had access to foreign movies and few of them could understand foreign languages. Because of the high level of illiteracy, most of the imported foreign movies were dubbed for the mass audience. After decades of social development, things have changed tremendously. Subtitling, with its advantage in time-efficiency and cost-economy, has won considerable popularity in China.

Furthermore, with a great multitude of foreign movies imported each year, the Chinese public is faced with a wide range of choices, e.g. they can decide whether to go to the cinema and enjoy the large screen or they can just stay in front of the home theatre. Besides, large number of VCDs and DVDs are available in stores, with which mass audiences are set free from yoke of traditional modes. Under such circumstances, subtitled films seem to win greater popularity among numerous film lovers, who prefer to appreciate their favorites in the original. Nowadays, more and more people feel interests in foreign cultures and appreciate the exotic flavors in subtitled works. By viewing subtitled films, they can enjoy the authentic voices of their fond actors/actresses and fulfill the wish to facilitate their foreign language learning. In addition, the multiplication of TV channels generates an increased demand for subtitled programs. Before liberation, there was no television in China, but now there are over 300 television stations at the provincial level and CCTV alone owns 16 channels, let alone those TV stations at municipal and lower levels and of various types. This, in turn, results in an increased demand to transfer foreign programs into Chinese at TV stations which do not produce many programs of their own.

Contrarily, subtitling studies are still in infancy owing to general ignorance from translation studies circle in China. As a matter of fact, with the considerable popularity of AV products as well as the requirement of globalization, some scholars began to pay attention to this field. In 2004, *Meta* issued a volume on "Traduction audiovisuelle" introducing the latest studies on AVT, in which there were four articles from China, namely *On the Hong Kong Chinese Subtitling of English Swearwords* by Chapman Chen, *Linguistic Dimensions of Subtitling: Perspectives from Taiwan* by Shengjie Chen, *The Present Status of Screen Translation in China* by Shaochang Qian, *The Translating*

of Screenplays in the Mainland of China by Chunbai Zhang. Nevertheless, compared with the present situation in China, these contributions are far from satisfaction.

This situation, statistically speaking, is even worse in mainland China. A research on www.cnki.net shows, there are 37 papers concerning film translation, in which 32 discuss film title translation, 3 explore general film language translation without specific reference to subtitling, only 2 relate to subtitle translation. As far as the research can cover, there is not any book devoted to subtitling written by Chinese scholars. Translation studies in China focus on literary translation, with occasional discussion on oral interpretation. However, rarely are there concerns and discussions given to dubbing or subtitling in spite of the outstanding contribution of dubbing to imported foreign films and TV programs in cross-cultural communication and the increasingly extensive application of subtitling since the reform and opening-up policy was carried out. Furthermore, the current state of AVT studies tends to be experiential and prescriptive. Some of the papers are in essence a summary of personal practice of subtitling. On the basis of their experience they go on to prescribe what methods and strategies should be adopted when translating film dialogue and subtitles. Therefore, it is an urgent task to pay attention to this filed and carries out relevant researches.

Chapter Three Theoretical Framework

Translating activities witness a time-honored history stretching as long as 2000 years. During this period, generations of researchers have been conducting explorations into translation studies. For a long time, however, translation studies mainly focused on 'equivalence', i.e. through comparison of the linguistic structures of the ST and the TT to draw out corresponding approaches on the level of syntax or even words. As a result, the evaluative system was established on the "absolute faithfulness to the ST", consequently comes the controversy of "translatability" and "untranslatability". It was not until 1960s that the most significant breakthrough took place in translation circle, i.e. the so-called "great turns" of translation studies. The "great turns" of translation studies can be summarized as the turn of translation theories from equivalence-oriented to function-oriented, the turn of translation approaches from linguistics-focused to culture-focused, the turn of translation units from words and syntax to text and discourse. In addition, with the innovation of communicative mode, there come a number of new types of translation, which again enriched the translation studies.

The "great turns" of translation studies provided new perspectives for researchers in this field. Skopos theory is one of the most significant achievements and has shown its effectiveness particularly in guidance of non-literary translation, e.g. audiovisual translation (AVT). In the following parts, there is a detailed explanation on Skopos theory as an appropriate one for the guidance of subtitle translation.

3.1 The Great Turns of Translation Studies
3.1.1 Brief Review of Translation Studies Development

The great turns of translation studies first took place in the western world in 1960s when other disciplines especially linguistics developed into full-blown, as stated by Mason,

Whereas it would be true to say that linguistics and translation studies have, until comparatively recently at least, undergone separate development and even denied any mutual relevance, it remains the case that agendas set by various schools and strands within linguistics have, sooner or later, found their way into thinking and writing about translation. Thus, structuralism, functionalism, transformational-generativism, sociolinguistic and psycho-linguistic issues have all influenced the debate. (Baker 2004: 29)

Therefore, translation studies, influenced with ideas imported from linguistics, began to take meaning and communication as the center of analysis. During that period, however, translation studies were regarded as a strand of applied linguistics, instead of an independent discipline requiring a comprehensive theoretical framework.

It is hard to define the specific period of the establishment of translation studies, which, up to now, is still on the way. During this period, however, the contribution of one Dutch scholar is worth mentioning, i.e. the basic map of translation studies produced by Holmes. The map for translation studies won a popular acknowledgement in translation circle, and was depicted by Toury in his *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* in 1995 as follows:
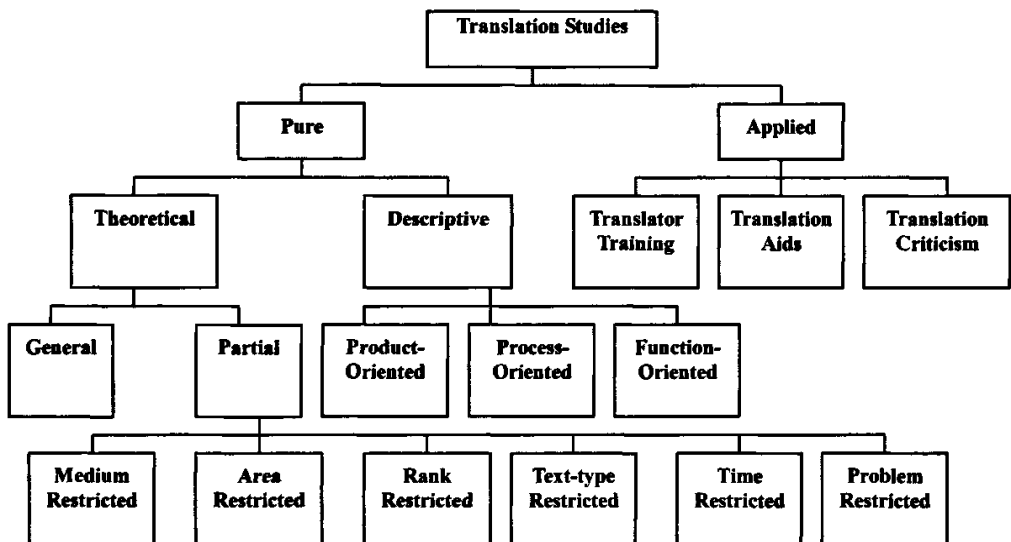
Fig.3.1   Holmes's map of translation studies

According to the framework, translation studies are divided into three aspects, i.e. descriptive translation studies, translation theory, and applied translation studies. Among the three aspects, the descriptive translation studies were regarded as the fundamental one to provide documents and evidence for the other two branches. Toury, on the basis of Holmes' framework, explored further into the relationships of the subdivisions of descriptive translation studies, i.e. the product-oriented translation studies, the process-oriented translation studies, and the function-oriented translation studies. And he pointed out that the choice of translation strategies depend on the form of target text (TT), and the form is justified by the translation function (the expected status or

function of target text in the context of target community). (Zhang Meifang 2005: 8, translated). From the new perspective, translation is regarded as a communicative process involving interplay of ST producer, translator, TT receiver, and etc.; and translation studies, accordingly, should take a function-oriented approach instead of the traditional equivalence-oriented one.

3.1.2 Functional Approaches

Function-oriented translation studies or function-oriented descriptive translation studies, "is concerned with analyzing the function of translations in the context of the recipient cultural and social setting, and typically addresses such questions as which texts were or were not selected for translation by a particular culture, and what influences were exerted as a result of such selection" (Shuttleworth & Cowie 2004: 63). The functionalist tradition can be traced back to 1960s when "Firth, building on Malinowski's notion of 'context of situation', saw meaning in terms of function in context and rejected those approaches to the study of language which sought to exclude the study of meaning. Crucially, he was critical of the restrictive view of language as code which had been prominent in early communications theory." (Baker 2004:29). Instead, he emphasized that "the context of situation is crucial and must include the participants in speech events, the action taking place and other relevant features" (ibid) which is now proposed in the functionalist perspective.

Firth, in fact, is just one of the contributors of functional approaches. There are many other functionalist scholars who have devoted to the development of these approaches to translation. According to Mason, there are "three main strands of thinking which have influenced this perspective on translation, namely, (a) the functionalist views of the British tradition in linguistics, stemming from J.R. Firth and continuing in the work of J. Catford, Michael Gregory, Michael Halliday and others; (b) the notion of communicative competence developed originally by Dell Hymes in response to the Chomskyan view of language competence; (c) within translation studies, a tradition stemming from Karl Bühler, which sees judgments about the communicative purpose/skopos (Reiss and Vermeer) or set of functions (Nord) of the act of translating as lying at the root of translators' decisions." (ibid) Therefore, at present, the functional approaches mainly classified two major groups, Skopos theory of German school and functional grammar of British school.

According to Nord, the relationship of the two theories was pointed out as the following,

One could say that the origin of German functionalist approaches happened in a situation that had been made susceptible to function-oriented perspective by Halliday's functional linguistics, among other factors." and, "the main difference between Skopos theory and Halliday's Functional Grammar, is that the latter was designed with the English language in mind, whereas the former is a theory of intercultural/interlingual transfer and is language-independent (qtd in BianJianhua 2006).

The two theories, both with function as focus, set about analysis from different perspective. Functional linguistics conducts an analysis of text functions in detail, while Skopos theory takes a broader perspective to explore the functions of target text (TT) in the targeted context and the strategies adopted accordingly. Thus, functional linguistics is called "micro-functionalism" and Skopos theory is called "macro-functionalism" (Zhang Meifang 2005: 12, translated).

3.2 Skopos Theory

The social background of Skopos theory, as stated by Nord, was the growing need for professional translators and interpreters not only in industry and commerce but also in the international organizations established after World War II. People became aware that a mere practical training of bilingual communicators was not enough, and in the sixties and early seventies, scholars (most linguists, although some of them had had some experience in the practice of — mainly literary— translation) felt the need for an independent theory of translation. The foundation of a number of translator-training institutions inside and outside of university faculties gave an additional impulse (qtd in BianJianhua 2006).

Thus, "with the pragmatic turn both in linguistics (leading to a pragmatic-based text theory) and literary theory (leading to reception aesthetics) as well as in communication theory in mind, Vermeer and the other skopos scholars, started to view translation as a purposeful intercultural communicative activity between individuals instead of something that is done to a text by a translator" (ibid), and as a result the Skopos theory was established. Skopos theory reflects a general shift from predominantly linguistic and rather formal translation theories to a more functionally and socioculturally oriented concept of translation. In Skopos theory, "translation is viewed not as a process of transcoding, but as a specific form of human action. Like any other human action, translation has a purpose, and the word Skopos, derived from Greek, is used as the technical term for the purpose of a translation. Skopos must be

defined before translation can begin; in highlighting Skopos, the theory adopts a prospective attitude to translation, as opposed to the retrospective attitude adopted in theories which focus on prescriptions derived from the source text" (Baker 2004:235) .

3.2.1 The Establishment of Skopos Theory

"In combing Vermeer's general Skopos theory of 1978 with the specific translation theory developed by Katharina Reiss, Reiss and Vermeer arrive at a translation theory that is sufficiently general, and sufficiently complex, to cover a multitude of individual cases. They abstract from phenomena that are specific to individual cultures and languages an account of general factors determining the translation process, to which special theories that concern individual problems or subfields can be linked consistently" (Baker 2004: 236). The translation model proposed in Skopos theory, drew on Karl Bühler's organon model (as illustrated in Fig.3.2), with an additional fourth function, the phatic function. Therefore, Bühler's theory can be regarded as the starting point of Skopos theory.

Karl Bühler and organon model

Bühler proposed that there were three basic language functions, i.e. referential, expressive and appellative. On this basis, he built the organon modal involved three kinds of relationships as (1) the context for the "informative function" of language, which concerned with the relationship of sign and the world; (2) the speaker for the "expressive function" of language, which concerned with the relationship of sign and the speaker; (3) the addressee for the "appellative function" of language, which concerned with the relationship of sign and the hearer. (Zhang Meifang 2005: 66, translated). The relationships are illustrated in the following Fig. 3.2.
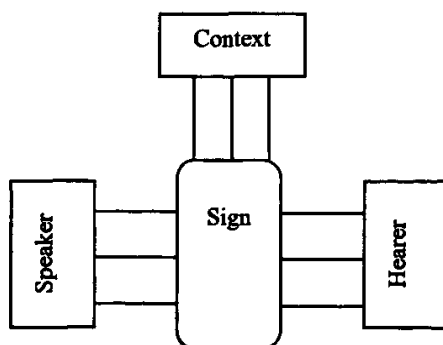

Fig.3.2. K. Bühler's organon model

K. Bühler's organon modal not only left great influences on the linguistics studies, but provided invaluable insights for translation studies. With the inspirations from this model Katharina Reiss began her functionalist explorations.

Katharina Reiss and text typology

Reiss first mentioned functionalist theory in her book *possibilities and limitations in Translation Criticism* published in 1971, which was regarded as the origin of Skopos theory. Reiss realized that the objective of TT, in certain practices, might differ from that of ST. She argued that the prior problem for translators should be the function of TT instead of equivalence with ST.

According to *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, "Reiss' typology is intended as a set of guidelines for translators and translation critics, and the three types which she proposes are distinguished from each other in terms of their major function, which is reflected in the language they contain, and which needs to be preserved in TT." The three types are summarized in the following table.

Table 3.1. Reiss' text typology

Text type	Informative	Expressive	Operative
Language function	Informative (representing objects and facts)	Expressive (expressing sender's attitude)	Appellative (making an appeal to text receiver) ·
Language dimension	Logical	Aesthetic	Dialogic
Text focus	Content-focused	Form-focused	Appellative-focused
TT should	Transmit referential content	Transmit aesthetic form	Elicit desired response
Translation method	'Plain prose', explicitation as required	'Identifying' method, adopt perspective of ST author	'Adaptive', equivalent effect

Justa Holz-Mänttäri and translatorial action

Holz-Mänttäri introduced the term "Translatorial Action" to describe the collaborative process which leads up to the production of TT. Holz-Mänttäri's concept is in many ways similar to that of Skopos theory, although it is arguably more radical than

that approach. The concept of translatorial action places the act of translation in its broader professional context, in which not only the translator, but also the ST author, the client or commissioner and the TT reader play a role in the process of TT production. The translator is viewed as an expert who cooperates with other experts in the production of TT which is in line with the product specification which has been agreed on in advance by the parties concerned. The role of translatorial action is then to produce a target message transmitter (or text) which will overcome all cultural barriers in order to fulfill its function in the target situation. For Holz-Mänttäri, ST exists solely in order to meet the requirements of the situation. When the function of TT, which has been agreed in the product specification, differs from that of ST, the translator is expected to make the necessary changes to ST, or to supplement it with additional material by way of explanation. Consequently, although translatorial action is a more literal English translation of the term, Nord's rendering intercultural cooperation more effectively conveys the essence of the type of professional interaction which Holz-Mänttäri is visualizing. (Shuttleworth & Cowie 2004:189)

Hans J. Vermeer and Skopos theory

Vermeer, together with Reiss, proposed Skopos theory in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Skopos theory stresses the interactional, pragmatic aspects of translation, arguing that the shape of TT should above all be determined by the function or "Skopos" that it is intended to fulfill in the target context. Reiss & Vermeer formulate this principle into two Skopos rules: "an interaction is determined by (or is a function of) its purpose", and "the Skopos can be said to vary according to the recipient". From these principles it follows that the translator should use the translation strategies which are most appropriate to achieving the purpose for which TT is intended, irrespective of whether they are considered to be the "standard" way to proceed in a particular translation context; in short, when producing a TT "the end justifies the means" (Shuttleworth & Cowie 2004:156). An awareness of the requirements of the Skopos thus "expands the possibilities of translation, increases the range of possible translation strategies, and releases the translator from the corset of an enforced – and hence often meaningless – literalness" (ibid).

Christiane Nord and functionality plus loyalty

Nord introduced the term "loyalty" to describe the attitude which should ideally characterize the translator's relationship to the ST author and sender, and the TT reader. Nord describes loyalty as a moral principle indispensable in the relationships between

human beings, who are partners in a communication process. Such a concept is necessary because in normal intercultural communication, neither the initiator nor the recipient of the translated text is able to check on whether or not the TT really conforms to their expectations. Whenever this is the case, they have to trust the translator to do a good job. Nord suggests the term to supplement the framework provided by Skopos theory, and termed her new revised model "functionality plus loyalty" (Shuttleworth & Cowie 2004:98).

3.2.2 Basic Rules of Skopos Theory

Skopos rule

Skopos rule is the top-ranking rule for any translation, which means that a translational action is determined by the Skopos, i.e. the end justifies the means. Vermeer explains the Skopos rule in the following way, "each text is produced for a given purpose and should serve this purpose. The Skopos rule thus reads as follows: translate/interpret/speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function" (Nord 2001: 29).

Skopos rule helps the translator solve the eternal dilemmas of free vs. faithful translation, dynamic vs. formal equivalence, good interpreters vs. slavish translators, and so on. Nord pointed out that "the skopos of a particular translation task may require a 'free' or a 'faithful' translation or anything between these two extremes, depending on the purpose for which the translation is needed" (ibid). The concept is often misunderstood in this way that a good translation should ipso facto conform or adapt to target-culture behavior or expectations. This misunderstanding is due to the belief that the receiver or rather the addressee is the main factor determining the target-text skopos. However, it does not mean to strictly exclude philological or literal or even word-for-word translations.

Coherence rule

Coherence rule specifies that a translation should be acceptable in a sense that it is coherent with the receivers' situation. "Being 'coherent with' is synonymous with being 'part of' the receiver's situation" (ibid: 32). The receiver's situation refers to the communicative situation and culture in which the translation is received. In Vermeer's terms, the target text should conform to the standard of 'intratextual coherence' which indicates that what the translator can do and should do is to produce a text that is at least likely to be meaningful to target-culture receivers (ibid). Schäffner (1998) explains it as

follows, "the target text must be sufficiently coherent to allow the intended user to understand it, given their particular background knowledge and situational circumstances" (Baker 2004: 236). A translator should formulate a target text in a target culture and language about an offer of information formulated by someone else in the source culture and language in an acceptable and accessible way to the target readers.

Intertextual coherence or fidelity rule

Intertextual coherence concerns the relationship between a translation and the corresponding source text. Reiss and Vermeer postulate it as a further principle, referred to as the 'fidelity rule'. Intertextual coherence should exist between source and target text, while the form it takes depends both on the translator's interpretation of the source text and on the translation skopos (Nord 2001:32). Sometimes intertextual coherence may require a maximally faithful imitation of the source text. As Vermeer points out, "it might be said that the postulate of 'fidelity' to the source text requires that e.g. a news item should be translated as it was in the original" (ibid). However, intertextual coherence is subordinate to intratextual coherence while both are subordinate to the skopos rule.

Loyalty rule

Nord proposes the loyalty rule in allusion to the two interdependent limitations to the Skopos theory, one of which concerns the culture-specificity of translational models and the other has to do with the relationship between the translator and the source-text author. Loyalty refers to a moral responsibility translators have toward their partners in translational interaction. Loyalty is an interpersonal category referring to a social relationship between translators, initiators, target receivers and original authors (Nord 2001:125). Loyalty implies that a translator should mediate between the source-text culture and the target-text culture and cannot impose one's culture-specific concept on members of another culture community. Loyalty also means that the target-text purpose should be compatible with the original author's intentions. Thereby the functional approach stands on two pillars, i.e. function plus loyalty. Function refers to the factors that make a target text work in the intended way in the target situation. Loyalty refers to the interpersonal relationship between the translator, the source-text sender, the target-text addressees and the initiator.

3.2.3 The Skopos-orientated Translation Studies

Redefinition of translation in Skopos theory

In Skopos theory, translation is viewed not as a process of transcoding, but as a

specific form of a communicative action. This communicative process, like any other communications, is carried out by means of signs. These signs are, as explained by Nord, "verbal or nonverbal behavior associated with a concept or meaning by the producer, the receiver, or both" (Nord 2001:22-23). Since "the meaning associated with the sign need not be the same for both the producer and the receiver" (ibid), the translator is supposed to produce the agreement about the meaning of the sign between ST producer and TT receiver. To achieve this agreement, the translator should take account of the purpose of this communication as well as other relevant factors that might influence this process.

According to Skopos theory, "translation is the production of a functionally appropriate target text based on an existing source text" (Baker 2004:237), and the status of ST has changed into an offer of information. Therefore, the translator is expected to choose the appropriate information from ST. To be specific, "the translator offers information about certain aspects of the source-text-in-situation, according to the target text skopos specified by the initiator" (Baker 2004:236).

Translation with Skopos as orientation

The function of a translation can be analyzed from double perspective, focusing (a) on the relationship between the target text and its audience (which can be defined in the same terms as the one holding between any original text and its readers), and (b) on the relationship between the target text and the corresponding source text. On the one hand, a translation is a text which is intended to function for the target receivers and, as such, may be intended for any communicative function. On the other, a translation is a kind of target-culture representation or substitute for a source-culture text. As such, it may carry out quite different functions with regard to the source. Nord put it as follows:

> In professional settings, translators rarely act on their own account; they are asked to be involved in the communication by either the sender or the receiver, or perhaps by a third person. From an observer's point of view, this third party will be playing the role of 'commissioner' or 'initiator'; while from the translator's point of view, they will be the 'client' or 'customer'. Initiators may have communicative purposes of their own or they may share those of either the sender or the receiver. Translating thus involves aiming at a particular communicative purpose that may or may not be identical with the one that other participants have in mind (Nord 2001: 2).

Therefore, to fulfill this action, the translator should, first and foremost, define the purpose or skopos. Only with a clear idea of the specific skopos, the translator can

continue to conduct his/her job accordingly. The importance of skopos has also been reiterated by Schäffner as "skopos must be defined before translation can begin; in highlighting skopos, the theory adopts a prospective attitude to translation, as opposed to the retrospective attitude adopted in theories which focus on prescriptions derived from the source text" (Baker: 2004: 235).

Functional typology of translations

The 'equivalent' hypothesis for the translation-oriented text typology proposed by Katharina Reiss has been proved to be inappropriate to solve the translation problems, especially in the translation of highly specialized texts. Nord claimed that "it nevertheless seems to make more sense to use the intended communicative function of the target text as a guideline" (Nord 2001:39), i.e. "Let your translation decisions be guided by the function you want to achieve by means of your translation" (ibid). During the process of confirming the specific functions, Nord continued to point out that:

If the purpose of the translation is to keep the function of the text invariant, function markers often have to be adapted to target-culture standards. On the other hand, source-culture function markers that are exactly reproduced in the target text might induce the target receivers to assign a different function to the target text. Where the source text is appellative, the target text may inform about an appeal; where the source text refers to something that is familiar to its readers, the target text may refers to something unfamiliar; where the source text establishes contact in a conventional way, the target text may strike the receiver as strange (ibid:45).

Function is linked to aspects of genre and text type. "The source text can be assigned to a text type and to a genre, and in making this assignment, the translator can decide on the hierarchy of postulates which has to be observed during target-text production" (Baker 2004:237). Therefore, the typology of texts can provide guidance for the translator during the confirmation of specific functions. This was viewed by Nord as "conventional assignment" of experienced translators, who could infer the skopos from the translational situation itself. With the general assumption that, "in a particular culture community at a given time, certain types of text are normally translated by certain types of translation" (Nord 2001:31), Nord proposed the functional typology of translation, i.e. documentary vs. instrumental translation. The documentary translation includes word-for-word and other types of literal translation, which focus on certain aspects or features of ST (e.g. its wording or grammatical structures, or the local color it contains). The instrumental translation is intended to have the same or a similar

or analogous function as the ST. Depending on the precise relationship between source and target functions. Under this typology, translator might distinguish the skopos to build up a translation brief, and then adopt strategies accordingly.

3.3 Subtitling Studies in Light of Skopos Theory

3.3.1 Applicability of Skopos Theory to Subtitling Studies

Modern translation studies went through a rapid development period in the previous half century. However, until 1980s these new translation theories were introduced into China. Before that, the traditional theories remained as mainstream for Chinese translation studies. This is because that, on the one hand, Chinese translation studies traditionally focus on literary works translation, thus the source text (ST) is placed to very high status; on the other hand, translation studies has be regarded as a craft of word transfer instead of a discipline requiring systematic research in theory. Consequently, in China translation is regarded as an artwork for elite instead of mass appreciation. And those applicable varieties, e.g. AVT, despite their considerable popularity, receive far less attention than traditional literary translation. However, the traditional equivalence-oriented theories have proved to be inappropriate particularly for non-literary translations. As a result, some scholars began to pay attention to Skopos theory, which were brought into sharp relief with the growing need in the latter half of the twentieth century for the translation of non-literary text types, such as scientific and academic papers, instructions for use, tourist guides, contracts, etc.

It is evident that subtitling studies under the framework of Skopos theory is feasible and effective. By specific researches into this field, some scholars have proved that subtitling, as a subdivision of translation studies, is a text-processing characterized with certain purpose, interpersonal quality and cross-cultural feature. Reiss, as the initiator of Skopos theory, made an analysis of audiovisual text and classified it as the fourth text type. She used the term "multi-medial texts" to refer to a subsidiary text-type which supplements Reiss' basic text typology. She pointed out that, "the multi-medial category consists of texts in which the verbal content is supplemented by elements in other media; however, all such texts will also simultaneously belong to one of the other, main text-types." And "this text-type forms a 'superstructure' over the other three, as the 'special requirements of this type take precedence over whatever basic text types a given text otherwise belong to'. Songs, comic strips, plays and writing for radio or television are all examples of this type, and the translator of such texts will need to

ensure that the translation is equally suited as the original for use in the relevant medium" (Shuttleworth & Cowie 2004:109-110).

3.3.2. Skopos-oriented Approach to Subtitling Studies

Nord adopted Skopos-oriented approach to explore literary communication. To identify the translation-relevant features of a literary text, she regarded literary texts as ordinary texts with a few specific features that may become important for the translator. With this premise, Nord set up a model to demonstrate how literary communication might work within the framework of a particular culture. This model, as a matter of fact, can also be applied to non-literary communication, particularly communication by means of audiovisual products. Therefore, it is depicted in the following Figure 3.3, and the original literary marks in Nord's model are deleted in order to be applied to subtitle-aided communication studies.
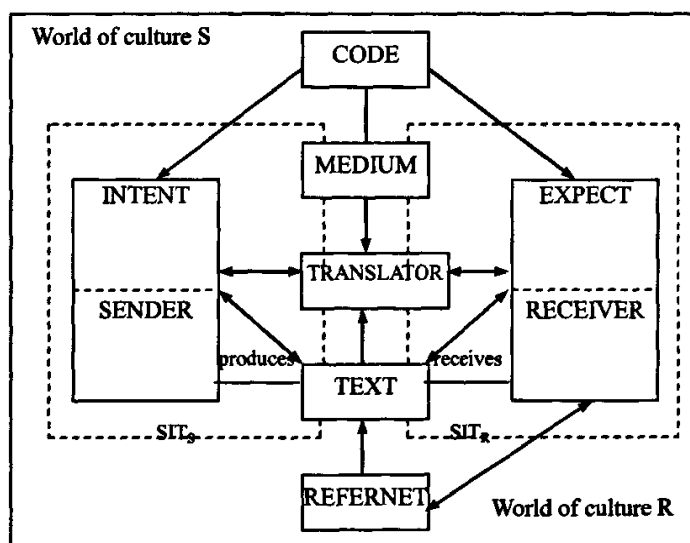

Fig.3.3   A Model of Translating Action in Skopos Theory

As depicted in this model, the receiver has specific expectations (EXPECT) determined by previous experience, e.g. by some film he/she once experienced, subtitled or not. In a particular situation (SITR) (fixed with regard to time, place, motive of reception), the receiver receives a text produced by an addresser (SENDER) with a particular purpose (INTENT) in mind. And during the process of reception, the receiver might be influenced by his/her former experiences (REFERENT) as intertextuality, which is culture-bounded. Therefore, the translator should focus on not only the specific

skopos but also the cultural factors. In the subtitle-aided communication, however, there are some features for note, i.e. the AV text (TEXT) is demonstrated in a multimedia-defined manner, and the script (CODE) is supplemented with other non-verbal codes, e.g. sound and image. These features distinguish this communicative interaction from ordinary communications and produce special genre for the translator's attention.

In view of the analysis above, the translator, to adopt Skopos-oriented approach to subtitling studies, "has to infer the sender's intention from the source text, interpreting the textual features and consulting secondary sources" (Nord 2001: 85). To achieve the ideal version, Nord proposed the necessary conditions as, (1) the translator has interpreted the sender's intention correctly; (2) the translator succeeds in verbalizing this interpretation in such a way that it can, in turn, be interpreted correctly by the target receivers; and (3) the background knowledge and expectations of the ST addressees and the TT addressees are identical or have been made to match by the translator. For the identity of source intention and target function, Nord proposed to analyze the actional aspects involved, including (a) the sender or author, (b) intention, (c) receivers, (d) medium, place, time and motive, (e) the message, and (f) effect or function. After the analysis, the translator is in a position to establish the translation brief as to the choice of translation type.

During subtitling activities, the translator is expected to analyze the ST as the first step. This is in agreement with division of translation process proposed by Nida, which consist of (1) analysis of the source text, (2) transfer from the source to the target language, (3) restructuring in the target language, and (4) testing of the translated text with persons who represent the intended audience. (Nida, 2001: 108). In Skopos theory, however, the function of ST, as stated by Nord, is to "provide the offer of information that forms the starting point for the offer of information formulated in the target text" (Nord 2001: 62). Therefore, "analysis of the source text guides the translation process in that it provides the basis for decisions about (a) the feasibility of the translation assignment, (b) which source-text units are relevant to a functional translation, and (c) which translation strategy will lead to a target text meeting the requirements of the translation brief" (ibid). In view of this, the process of translation can be divided into three stages, i.e. the ST analysis, the TT construction, and finally the subtitling post edit. Subtitling studies, based on that, is carried out from a descriptive perspective, focusing

on the process. In Chapter 4, there are detailed analyses of the approaches aiming at every stage respectively.

Chapter Four   Exploring Subtitling Approaches in Light of Skopos Theory

Subtitling studies, as noted in previous chapter (Chapter 2.1.1), involves a multidisciplinary approach to provide a comprehensive analysis of the hybrid nature. To be specific, for the analysis of AV texts from a translational perspective, the theoretical contributions from translation studies and those from film studies are necessary. Both disciplines are crucial in the exegesis of audiovisual texts and become necessary in order to understand the interlaced web of meaning in these texts. In addition, the special constrains of subtitling present another factor in this special translating process. Therefore, the following analysis of the subtitling process, based on Skopos-oriented theories, take all the factors into consideration to explore the guiding approaches. Subtitling process, as discussed previously (in Chapter 3.3.2), can be generally divided into three stages. This exploration, accordingly, present the approaches corresponding to each stage of subtitling respectively, i.e. (1) a top-down approach to ST analysis, (2) viewer-oriented approach to TT construction, and (3) approach for concision & coherence in subtitling post edit. The following parts present the analysis in detail, with some subtitle examples[5] from the film *In the Mood for Love* for illustration.

4.1 Top-down Approach to Source-text Analysis
4.1.1 The Necessity to Adopt a Top-down Approach

The traditional bottom-up approach produced some insurmountable problems during past translating activities. This situation was analyzed by Nord as follows:

This bottom-up process works from the linguistic text-surface structures to conventions and finally to pragmatics. As such, it is highly contingent on the translator's own stylistic preferences and the limitations of their linguistic and translational competence. In the bottom-up approach, translating is seen as a code-switching operation where lexical or syntactic equivalences play the most important part. Students are thus tempted to keep as close to the source-text structures as possible, which leads to linguistic interferences and mistakes even when translating into one's native language. At the same time, students often lose sight of how the text as a whole functions in its communicative situation. This leads to intuitive decisions that cannot really be reasoned through intersubjectively. Moreover, a decision taken at a lower level often has to be revised when reaching

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[5] Most of the examples quoted in Chapter four are translated versions from those in the article *Researches into subtitling strategies of the film: In the Mood for Love* (LongQianhong 2006), which have been proved to be successful in achieving the communicative end.

the next level. Sometimes the translation process is even blocked because of apparent untranslatability (Nord 2001:67).

To solve this kind of problem, Nord provided the functional approach for text-analysis, i.e. translation problems should be dealt with in a top-down way. That means a functional translation process should start on the pragmatic level by deciding on the intended function of the translation (documentary vs. instrumental). And then a distinction is made between those functional elements of the source text that will have to be reproduced as such expectations and communicative needs of to such factors as medium-restrictions and deixis requirements. The translation type then determines whether the translated text should conform to source-culture or target-culture conventions with regard to translation style.

In Skopos theory, translation is a decision making process and the criteria for the decisions are provided by the skopos. That is to say, the concrete purpose and aims in a concrete translation commission justify the choice of translation methods. Since skopos varies with text receivers, the skopos of the target text and of the source text may be different. In cases where the skopos is the same for the two texts, Reiss and Vermeer (Baker: 2004:236) speak of functional constancy, whereas cases in which the skopos differs between the two texts undergo change of function. In cases of the latter type, the standard for the translation will not be intertextual coherence with the source text, but adequacy or appropriateness to the skopos, which also determines the selection and arrangement of content. To specify the skopos of a translation task, Nord proposed to build a translation brief as an instruction. The translation brief, as stated by Nord, "specifies what kind of translation is needed. This is why the initiator or the person playing the role of initiator (who might also be the translator) actually decides on the translation skopos, even though the brief as such may not be explicit about the conditions" (Nord 2001:30). During the establishment of translation brief, Nord proposed a top-down approach for ST analysis as against the traditional bottom-up one in equivalence-oriented translation theories.

4.1.2 The Top-down Approach Inspired from Skopos Theory

When analyzing the source text, the translator should find out which function or functions the text fulfils or has fulfilled in the source text culture. The first task is to determine which of these functions can be achieved in the target culture by means of an instrumental translation, or whether a documentary translation would be more

appropriate. This ST analysis, as explained by Nord, is used to "determine whether and to what extent an imitation of the source-text style could be appropriate way of achieving the intended function and what effect this will have. The result of this analysis should determine the choices made in the translation process" (Nord 2001:93). Therefore, the translator should first of all analyze the actional aspects for further identification of the specific skopos. These aspects have been mentioned in Chpater 3.3.2. It is the agents with their own due role involved in the whole translation process that collectively contribute to the ideal function or functions that the target text is expected to achieve. The translator, with his/her various choices in dealing with different translation problems, should take into consideration of the agents as well as other situational factors involved. In order to achieve this end, he is expected to compare the ST with TT profile defined in the translation brief.

In Skopos theory, translation brief plays a very important role; it should contain (explicit or implicit) information about the following:

- the (intended) text function(s),
- the target-text addressee(s),
- the (prospective) time and place of text reception,
- the medium over which the text will be transmitted, and
- the motive for the production or reception of the text. (ibid: 60)

When the translation brief is established, the translator is in a position to categorize the translation problems through a top-down approach. To be specific, he/she should categorize translation problems as pragmatic, cultural, linguistic or text-specific. To stress on the importance of pragmatic analysis, Nord pointed out that even though various text-linguistic models can be used to analyze the source text, the most important point is to include a pragmatic analysis of the communicative situations involved, and that the same model be used for both the source text and the translation brief, thus making the results comparable. All translation process mediates between the source-text and target-text situations. Therefore, pragmatic translation problems arise from the differences between these situations and can be identified by checking on the extratextual factors (sender, receiver, medium, time, place, motive, text function). Since pragmatic translation problems are present in every translation task they can be generalized regardless of the languages and cultures involved or the direction of the translation process (into or from the native language).

The cultural aspect is even more important, which is stated by Nord as "the differences between source-text and target addressees with respect to sociocultural background, world knowledge and cultural expectations." (Nord 2001:63) To solve this kind of problem, she suggested that since each culture has its own habits, norms and conventions, the translator should take a receiver orientation. Cultural translation problems are a result of the differences in the norms and conventions guiding verbal and non-verbal behavior in the two cultures involved. They are present in almost every translation task, particularly in instrumental translations. However, since they depend on the particular cultures or culture groups involved they may not have the same relevance in each case. And the last but not least, translation problems can also arise from structural differences in the vocabulary, syntax and suprasegmental features of the two languages. Some of these linguistic translation problems are restricted to language pairs, as might be the case of cognates or false friends, one-to-many or one-to-zero equivalences. Many of these problems are nevertheless common to several or even all language pairs that include the one particular language. Contrastive grammar and comparative stylistics can provide valuable help in solving these problems.

With the argument above, Nord (2001:63) made a suggestive "optimal 'transfer' procedures" as follows, firstly, the translator should make comparison of the intended functions of the source and target texts leads to the conclusion that the brief can be carried out by means of some specific translation method. Secondly, he/she should make comparison between ST and TT addressees to explore the differences in cultural knowledge and culture-specific genre expectations. Thirdly, as mentioned above, it is important to pay attention to the linguistic differences between the two languages. This suggestion is applied to all translating activities, and therefore it is also effective to subtitling activities.

4.1.3 The Top-down Approach to Subtitling Studies

Subtitle translation, due to the hybrid nature from a textual and generic point of view, is difficult to define where one genre ends and another begins. Additionally, in the production of AV texts, the variety of content, together with multiple codes, requires the translator to take the whole text as the translation unit for analysis. Furthermore, the information transmitting process is not in the linear arrangement as a text does, instead, it is with fluctuations of emphases. Therefore, during the text-analysis the translator is expected to "choose the items they regard as interesting, useful or adequate to the desired purposes. In translation, the chosen information items are then transferred to the

target culture using the presentation the translator believes appropriate for the given purpose" (Nord 2001:26). To fulfill this task, it is important to follow the top-down approach proposed in Skopos theory.

As the starting point of analysis, it is better to adopt the text typology as an effective approach for distinguishing the specific purpose of certain material in hand. In Skopos theory, Reiss classified text varieties in accordance with her text typology. This classification is depicted in the following figure.
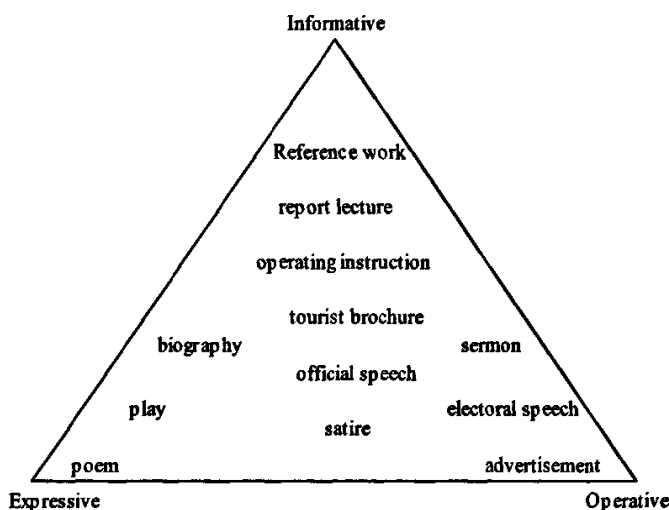

Figure 4.1   Reiss' classification of text varieties

Since AV products, so far, have expanded into a variety of specialized text types, this classification can be an aid to subtitling ST analysis. It is, therefore, necessary to pay attention to the specific functional features of a variety of audiovisual texts. After that, the translator should set about the analysis of the agents in the communicative process of subtitling as mentioned in Chapter 3.3.2.

The Skopos Identification

(a) The intended text functions

Like the author, the intention of AV products has its own features. On the one hand, AV products are presented as artistic works, which are expected to entertain, instruct or motivate the mass audience by describing an alternative or fictional world. On the other hand, they belong to the film industry, which tries to pursue the economic profits in this commercialized world. Therefore, the translator should take the two intentions into consideration. Furthermore, during the production of an AV text, the screenwriter and

the director extract the essence from the resources in ordinary life, and then made some amendment to achieve the artistic quality. Therefore, every word and sentence pattern is the result of the author's elaborate choice. At the same time, the utterance of the dialogue is also created to portray characters, develop plots and mode the whole work into a highly appreciated piece of works. The intended functions of TT are worth attention from the translator.

(b) Addressees

For the commercial purpose, AV products always try to distribute to the largest possible group of audience. However, confined to certain theme or style, they usually focus on specific target group of audiences. For instance, romantic films aim at those who are easy to be moved by love stories or have just fallen in love. Therefore, in order to interpret the text for the target language audience, the translator must consider the content and purpose of the original work. It is important to understand who the target audience is, which might influence the choice of vocabulary and syntax during the construction of TT.

(c) Medium

In subtitling medium is very important, which is a unique property belonging to AV products. As mentioned previously, the AV text differs from ordinary works in that they transmit information in a multi-media manner. That is to say, the translator should consider both the verbal and non-verbal signs for a better interpretation on the AV products.

(d) Time and Place

Since AV products can be presented through various ways, such as TV set, Video player, CD-ROM, and so on. There is no definite time or place for any AV products. However, the translator should pay attention to the distance of fictitious world and the real world, e.g. the story of a film with a background in an ancient time.

(e) Profile Comparison

The subtitles are just an additional part of the original ST, aiming at facilitation of the viewers' interpretation. With this addition, therefore, the intentions of ST and TT vary very little. However, the functions of TT might change a little, since the TT viewers cannot share the same knowledge background as the ST viewers. For instance, the former appellative function might change to informative one through translation.

Translation Problems Identification

The translator, with the analysis above, is in a position to identify the skopos of subtitle translation, and establish the translation brief accordingly. After that, he can adopt a top-down approach to identify the hierarchy of translation problems. This top-down way has been explained above, i.e. analyses from the pragmatic, cultural, linguistic or text-specific perspectives respectively. In the following is an example to show the importance of ST analysis in advance.

This example is chosen from the caption translation of Chinese film *In the mood for love*. First the translation of the captions is worth mention here. "花样年华" is an expression derives from an old song by ChouXuan, a famous Chinese actress and singer in 1930s. Literarily, it implies the fineness of youth like flower in full bloom. This meaning, however, cannot reflect the theme of this film, which mainly told about a romantic love story. Therefore, the translator rendered it as "in the mood for love", thus to indicate the theme of "seeking for love" in harmony with the whole film, which emphasizes the emotional appeal for love in every aspects from the colors, costumes, scenes to the plots, characters and development of the story. There is also another version of transliteration as "Fa Yeung Nin Wa". This version, compared with the former one, is not so preferable since it failed to transmit the implicit meaning of this film, therefore, cannot fulfill the function of a caption.

4.2 Viewer-oriented Approach to Target-Text Construction

4.2.1 The Viewer-oriented Approach Inspired from Skopos Theory

Skopos theory, inspired from aesthetics of reception, place great importance on the factors influencing the reception of TT. The main point of this functional approach is explained by Vermeer as follows:

It is not the source text as such, or its effects on the source-text recipient, or the function assigned to it by the author, that determines the translation process, as is postulated by equivalence-based translation theories, but the prospective function or skopos of the target text as determined by the initiator's, i.e. client's, needs. Consequently, the skopos is largely constrained by the target text user (reader/listener) and his/her situation and cultural background. (Baker 2004: 236)

By such remarks, Vermeer emphasized the guiding role of TT recipient playing in the process of translators' decision-making. This rule exerts the same power in subtitling activities, with the recipient as viewer. By subtitle translation, translators by no means

just copy words from a dictionary automatically, instead, they must make decision on the transpositions in terms of every sentence, every word, or even every comma into another context, not just linguistically, but also socially and culturally. During this process, translators are expected to take a viewer-oriented attitude which has been explained above by Vermeer's remarks.

This point was further reiterated by Nord in more details. She mentioned that text author should first take account of the presumed relevant factors, which might influence the interpretation of the addressees. Therefore, the translator, as the producer of the TT, should also consider the relevant factors influencing the TT addressees. Since the TT addressees cannot share the same knowledge background as the ST addressees, the translator cannot follow the ST composition to construct the TT. What the translator does is to offer another kind of information in another form. That is to say, the viability of the translation brief depends on the circumstances of the target culture, not on the source culture. For a clear idea about the construction of a text, Nord mentioned that, "the meaning or function of a text is not something inherent in the linguistic signs; it cannot simply be extracted by anyone who knows the code". (Nord 2001:31) That is to say, a text is made meaningful by its receiver and for its receiver. And she further explained as, "Different receivers (or even the same receiver at different times) find different meanings in the same linguistic material offered by the text. We might even say that a 'text' is as many texts as there are receivers" (ibid). To sum up, Nord explained Vermeer's concept of "offer of information" to translation as "we could say that a target text is an offer of information formulated by a translator in a target culture and language about an offer of information formulated by someone else in the source culture and language" (ibid:31-32). Therefore, the translator's task is summarized as following:

Guided by the translation brief, the translator selects certain items from the source-language offer of information and processes them in order to form a new offer of information in the target language, from which the target-culture addressees can in turn select what they consider to be meaningful in their own situation. In these terms, the translation process is irreversible. (ibid: 32)

4.2.2 The Factors Involved in Viewer-oriented Approach

As mentioned above, the translator, in order to construct the TT, should select the text world according to the intended target-text function. This means, as pointed out by Nord, "there is no norm or law that says the text world has to be kept invariant in any

translation" (Nord 2001:92). And she further mentioned that, when "it is very important for the materialization of the sender's appellative intention that the target readers recognize the text world as being congruent with their own reality" (ibid: 92-93). And on other occasions, "the translation purpose may be shifted toward the reader's presumed 'interest in an exotic world', which can best be satisfied by leaving the text world as it is and explaining strange details either in the text or in footnotes, glossaries and so on" (ibid:93). In subtitling activities, the TT is a discourse system resulted from the joint influences of semiotics, context, translator, etc. In other words, it results from the compromise of individual cognitions of ST producer, translator and TT recipient, as well as the interplay of their respective socio-cultural context. Therefore, the translator is expected to take these factors into consideration, i.e. the interests, expectations, knowledge and situational constraints of the target-culture addressees as well as the composition rules in terms of the target language.

These factors, inspired from language variation classification proposed by Hatim & Mason (2001:46), can be generally classified into two groups, i.e. the use-related factors and user-related factors, which can be subdivided into several aspects. In the following figure (Fig.4.2) there is a depiction of the proposed classification.
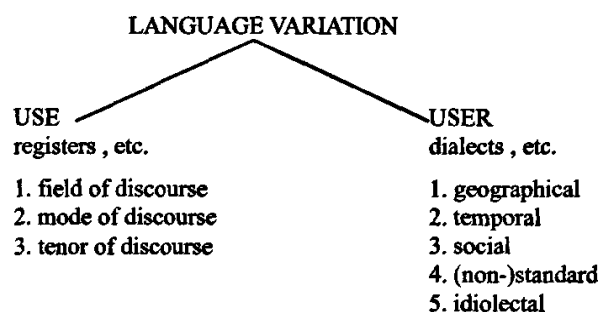
LANGUAGE VARIATION

USE   USER
registers , etc.   dialects , etc.

1. field of discourse   1. geographical
2. mode of discourse   2. temporal
3. tenor of discourse   3. social
                                 4. (non-)standard
                                 5. idiolectal

Figure 4.2 Language Variation Proposed by Hatim & Mason

As depicted above, they provided "a framework of categories for the classification of 'sub-languages' or varieties within a total language" (Hatim & Mason 2001:38). This framework, as pointed out by them, presents two dimensions when making up what is here referred to as the communicative dimension of context. One has to do with the user in a particular language event, while the other relates to the use to which a user puts language (ibid: 39). The user-related varieties are called dialects which differ from

person to person primarily in the phonic medium; and the use-related varieties are known as registers, which differ from each other primarily in language form.

Therefore, analysis of the relevant factors in viewer-oriented approach can also follow the categories listed in the above figure: use-related (field, tenor and mode) and user-related varieties. To determine the variation in language use, Hatim and Mason suggest that we can approach this problem in terms of several aspects, i.e. the medium by which language is transmitted (phonic, graphic), formal patterning (lexico-grammatical arrangement), and situational significance (relevant extra-linguistic features). Based on that, they subdivided the aspects of each general variety, which are further explained as:

Field refers to the subject of the audiovisual texts and the way in which it is constructed (technical vs. everyday language).

Tenor describes the social interaction between the characters (formal vs. informal language).

Mode refers to the channel though which the text is transmitted, which, in the case of audiovisual products, is defined by a combination of linguistic code (oral) and the visual code (image). (Hatim & Mason 2001:48-50)

User-related varieties are a series of features that characterize the speakers, which may present the following translation problem: problem derived from chronological variation (linguistic differences between generations, historical periods, etc.), problems derived from geographical variation (linguistic differences that may be observed within a language from a dialectical perspective), problems derived from social variation (different ways of speaking depending on education, gender, social status and religion), problems derived from idiolectal variation (characteristic forms of a language used by an individual), and problems derived from age variation (ways in which children express themselves compared with adults).

Therefore, to analyze the relevant factors involving in the TT construction, the translator should consider the classification mentioned above. That is to say, the translator should pay attention to both the factors in terms of the viewers and the factors of TT text composition rules.

4.2.3 Viewer-oriented Approach to Target-Text Construction

As a general rule stressed repeatedly by Vermeer, the option of translation strategies and methods is determined by translation skopos (Nord 2001:12). The special purpose and functions of subtitling decide that translation of subtitles is different from

translation of other types of writing. In the light of Vermeer's Skopos theory, target-language-culture oriented strategy should be considered as the basic strategy of subtitling translation.

According to Vermeer's Skopos theory, the possible kinds of purpose in the field of subtitling can be distinguished as, "the general purpose aimed at by the translator in the translation process; the communicative purpose aimed at by the target text in the target situation; the purpose aimed at by a particular translation strategy or procedure" (ibid: 27-28). Nevertheless, the term "skopos" usually refers to the purpose of the target text. Indeed, the purpose aimed at by the translator in subtitling activities is subordinate to the purpose of subtitling. It is because the producer is targeting a foreign market that the subtitle translation is involved. This determines that the task of translators in subtitle translation is to facilitate the viewer's interpretation, and therefore to promote the popularity of the AV product in the target market.

To achieve this purpose, the translator is expected to consider the relevant factors which might influence the reception of the TT viewers. These factors, as classified in previous part, mainly related to the viewers and the rules of the TT composition. And then, the translator is in a position to choose appropriate strategies for TT construction. Here are some examples from *In the Mood for Love* for illustration.

Example 1

周慕云：你不是还在医院吗?

阿　炳：哎,麻烦多着呢!别再说了,先借我 30 块!

周慕云：干什么?

阿　炳：哎呀,帮帮忙,名誉攸关。

周慕云：怎么回事?

阿　炳：哎...还不是那个阿海!那天他到医院来看我,说有两场稳赢的马,十拿九稳。我看他挺有把握的,连线都来不及拆,一个劲儿地跑出医院,把老婆本儿掏出来,去马场搏一搏,结果输了个精光。

周慕云：那你活该,拼死还要去赌。

阿　炳：唉,我以为负伤上阵,必有鸿运。谁知道只剩两块钱。一赌气就去关中找贵妃去了。

周慕云：病成这样你还去找女人?

阿　炳：　想冲冲喜嘛!

ChouMuyun: You've out of hospital!

Ah　　Bing: Don't mention hospital! Lend me $30!

ChouMuyun: What for?

Ah   Bing: You gotta help me save face!

ChouMuyun: What's the big deal?

Ah   Bing: It's Ah Hoi's fault. He gave me a racing tip, said it was a sure thing. Before they've taken out the stitches...I bet everything I had. And I lost my shirt!

ChouMuyun: What did you expect?

Ah   Bing: I thought it was my lucky day. Anyhow, I had only $2 left. So I went to the whore house.

ChouMuyun: You were in no shape for sex!

Ah   Bing: I thought it would improve my luck.

In example 1, the expression "冲冲喜"present a typical Chinese cultural nature. "冲喜"is used especially in old days as a kind of superstition, which is to mean that people turn the ill luck through some deeds to bring happiness, e.g. to hold a wedding ceremony. In this film, the superstitious gambler wished to turn his ill luck in gambling by winning women's favor in whore house. Here the translator domesticated this expression, rather than directly transferred as "to have sex with a whore to get rid of my bad luck at the track", thus to eliminate the possible strangeness to the TT viewers. What's more, there are other similar expressions such as "老婆本儿", "负伤上阵，必有鸿运"translated in this way.

Example 2

苏丽珍: 干吗无缘无故请我吃饭?

周慕云: 今天收了稿费,你的那份又不肯要,只好请你吃饭了。

苏丽珍: 其实关我什么事?我只是在旁边打打边鼓而已。

SuLizhen: Why a special dinner tonight?

ChouMuyun: Since you won't take your share of the writing fee...

SuLizhen: All I did was giving you some thoughts.

The expression "打边鼓"is a term of ancient Chinese drama, meaning "to beat the drum accompanying the theme ". In example 2, the woman means that she just provided some ideas to help the man write, so it is free translated as "give some thoughts".

Example 3

苏丽珍: 下次吧......慢慢打(麻将)(笔者注)啊!

SuLizhen: Next time...Enjoy your game.

The expressions "慢慢打(牌等)"、"慢慢吃"、"慢慢走"、"慢慢挑" are traditional

greeting words in China. If they are directly translated as "play cards slowly", "have meal slowly", "go slowly", "pick slowly", TT viewers might fail to understand the meaning. Therefore, the translator, in view of the norm of TT views' language, adopts the indirect way of translation as "Bye", "Good evening". And the other similar expressions of "我先回去了", "我先走了"are translated as "I'll leave you in peace; I'll be off, then; I should go; I'll be going".

4.3 The Approach for Concision & Coherence in Subtitling Post Edit

In subtitle translation, the source is a clearly finished AV product, including dialogue, image and music. And the target text is the same one with subtitle added. Translator's task is first to choose from the ST what is useful, important and adequate to the purpose desired, following the translation brief consisting of the director's intention and assumption; and then produce the subtitles which is meaningful and acceptable to the target audience in their culture. And with the special constraints of subtitle translation, the translator cannot render the wholeness of the original meaning. Therefore, subtitling studies should take account of these elements to produce as concise as possible coherent version together with other signs. Apart from the two above mentioned contributed by translation studies, there is another important aspect concerning with the text-specific properties, i.e. the approach for concision and coherence.

4.3.1 Concision

Subtitles, as "transcriptions of film or TV dialogue presented simultaneously on the screen" (Baker 2004:244-245), dramatically differ from ordinary translation with a number of strict constraints on the subtitlers' work, which have been explained in Chapter 2.2.1. Subtitling changes the medium with a written TL version of the dialogue appearing on the screen. Although there is no lip-synchronization as in dubbing, there must be some agreement between the subtitles, the spoken source language dialogue, and the corresponding image. The main problem in this type of translation is caused by the difference between the speed of the spoken language and the speed in reading. A complete transcription of the film dialogue is not possible. Both the physical limitation of space on the screen and the pace of the spoken word require a reduction of the text. The experience for audiences is considerably different from those who see the original

film. Viewers are asked to do a lot of extra work by reading subtitles while still coping with all the other visual and oral channels of the film.

As a result, a full transcription/translation of the spoken discourse in films and television is seldom desirable. The need for conciseness is motivated by two elements: (a) intersemiotic redundancy, which enables the viewer to supplement the semiotic content of the subtitles with information from other audiovisual channels, notably the image and prosodic features in the dialogue. (b) Intrasemiotic redundancy in the dialogue. Especially with spontaneous speech, not only the informative content but also the verbal style of the speaker is better served with some reduction in the subtitles. Even deliberate speech, including script-based narration, may contain so much redundancy that a slight condensation will enhance rather than impair the effectiveness of the intended message. Therefore, to achieve the effect of conciseness it is necessary to adopt condensation strategies during post edit stage.

Therefore, according to the analysis above, the reductive strategies are adopted, including condensation, i.e. merely render of the essence of information from ST; reductive paraphrasing, i.e. translation of the information from ST in as brief as possible words; and deletion, i.e. complete deletion of some information from ST without impairing of the main points. In the film *In the Mood for Love*, for instance, there are some examples of reductive translation for conciseness and legibility of subtitles.

Example 4

阿炳: 说的是啊,像我这样的人,是个直肠子,哪有心事?

Ah Bing: I'm just an average guy; I don't have secrets like you.

Here the expression "是个直肠子,哪有什么心事"is strange to TT viewers if literarily translated as "straight bowel". So the translator took reductive translation as above. There are a lot of similar examples as following.

Example 5

周慕云: 那怎么办?

ChouMuyun: So?

Example 6

何先生: 那好吧。如果做完事情我还没回来,你先走,我来锁门好了。

Mr. He: Leave when you're ready, I'll lock up.

Example 7

苏丽珍: 领带很好看啊!

SuLizhen: That tie looks good on you.

何先生：你看得出我换了领带?我还以为差不多呢。

Mr. He: You noticed? It's much like the old one.

Example 8

苏丽珍：麻烦你到前面停一下。

SuLizhen: Please pull up here!

周慕云：干什么?

ChouMuyun: Why?

苏丽珍：我在这儿下车好了。

SuLizhen: I'll get off first.

周慕云：还是我先下吧。

ChouMuyun: No, let me.

Example 9

周慕云：呃,电饭锅吗?是你的,顾太太?

ChouMuyun: A rice cooker! It's yours, Mrs. Koo?

顾太太：不是,我们这些老古板,哪儿懂得买这些东西,是陈太太的。

Mrs. Gu: No, it's beyond us! It's Mrs. Chan's.

The examples mentioned above (5、6、7、8、9) were to achieve the effect of conciseness. The translator adopted the strategies to reductively translate the ST so as to provide an acceptable version to the TT viewers.

4.3.2 Coherence

What the translator can do, and should do, is to produce a text that is at least likely to be meaningful to target-culture receivers. That is to say, the target text should conform to the standard of 'intratextual coherence'. This means the receiver should be able to understand it; it should make sense in the communicative situation and culture in which it is received. A communicative interaction can only be regarded as successful if the receivers interpret it as being sufficiently coherent with their situation. Accordingly, another important rule of Skopos theory, the 'coherence rule', specifies that a translation should be acceptable in a sense that it is coherent with the receivers' situation.

However, since a translation is an offer of information about a preceding offer of information, it is expected to bear some kind of relationship with the corresponding source text. Vermeer calls this relationship 'intertextual coherence' or 'fidelity'. This is postulated as a further principle, referred to as the 'fidelity rule'. Again, as in the case of the skopos rule, the important point is that intertextual coherence should exist between source and target text, while the form it takes depends both on the translator's

interpretation of the source text and on the translation skopos. One possible kind of intertextual coherence could be a maximally faithful imitation of the source text.

Intertextual coherence is considered subordinate to intratextual coherence, and both are subordinate to the Skopos rule. If the Skopos requires a change of function, the standard will no longer be intertextual coherence with the source text but adequacy or appropriateness with regard to the Skopos. And if the Skopos demands intratextual incoherence (as in the theatre of the absurd), the standard of intratextual coherence is no longer valid. (Nord 2001: 32-33)

According to Gottlieb, in films and television programs, the translator has four simultaneous channels to consider:

(a) the verbal auditory channel, including dialogue, background voices, and sometimes lyrics;

(b) the non-verbal auditory channel, including music, natural sound and sound effects;

(c) the verbal visual channel, including superimposed titles and written signs on the screen;

(d) and the non-verbal visual channel: picture composition and flow. (Baker 2004:245)

In subtitling, the audiovisual balance is shifted from channel (a) to channel (c), the latter normally nearly void of semantic content. Although subtitling retains the original dialogue, which allows the target audience to enjoy the voice quality and intonation of the original actors, the authenticity gained in this way is partly lost when it comes to reconstructing the polysemiotic whole. The reception work going on in the minds of the audience differs considerably from the original process. We might ask, for instance, whether a film that is partly read can convey the same impression as the same film listened to, with hardly any visual verbal signs on the screen. In trying to answer such questions we clearly leave translation studies proper and enter the realm of psychology.

Therefore, to consider the coherent rule in subtitling activities, translator must pay attention to the special coherence of the multi-semiotics. These semiotics, according to Chaume (2004), have been distinguished as linguistic code, paralinguistic codes, musical code and the special effects code, sound arrangement code, iconographic codes, photographic codes, planning code (types of shots), mobility codes, graphic codes, syntactic codes (editing).

Chapter Five   Case Study—the Approaches to Subtitling of *Desperate Housewives*

The approaches provided in the previous chapter, aim at guiding the dynamic process of subtitling activities from a descriptive perspective. That is to say, these approaches are not expected to prescribe such strict criteria as the traditional equivalence-oriented theories did. Instead, they provide a Skopos-oriented instruction for subtitle translator. Guided by the approaches, translator should, first of all, adopt a top-down approach to ST analysis for the identification of skopos and translation problems of specific translation task. And then depending on the skopos, he/she should, with consideration of relevant factors concerning expected viewers, choose effective strategies to construct the TT. Last but not least, in the stage of post edit, he/she should, taking account of the text-specific properties of subtitle translation, create the TT as concise as possible in a coherent wholeness of verbal and non-verbal signs. Based on the approaches, the following parts present a case study with the popular American TV series *Desperate Housewives* as an example.

5.1 Introduction to *Desperate Housewives*

Desperate Housewives is an American TV series centered on the lives of several middle-classed housewives living in a small town. Integrated with features of quip, suspense and comedy, this series won considerable popularity to American audiences. The debut of the first season in the U.S was on October the 3rd 2004, and lasted till May the 22nd 2005. The first season is composed of 23 episodes, each with duration of one hour. In two months' time since its debut, this series tempted 25,000,000 American viewers to stick to screen every week. The most obvious target audiences are those who share the similar experiences as the protagonists, including even the U.S. president's wife Laura Bush. She once announced herself as another desperate housewife watching the series at 9:00 p.m. every evening. *Desperate Housewives* won both the Emmy and Golden Globe Awards in 2005, and is expected to last till 2011. The heat of the series has spread a worldwide area—so far it has been exported to 130 countries, including China.

The dubbed version of Desperate Housewives was introduced to Chinese viewers in December 2005 by CCTV8. However, according to the audience rating, it didn't

make great success as expected. This is, according to statistics, mainly attributed to the poor translation, which failed to facilitate Chinese viewers' interpretation. Compared with the dubbed one, the subtitled version has somewhat improved, but still bears some mistakes. Therefore, this series is chosen for case study to illustrate the necessity for the translator to follow the approaches proposed in Chapter 4.

5.1.1 Synopsis

We all have moments of desperation. But if we can face them head-on, that's when we find out just how strong we really are. – Desperate Housewives

Teri Hatcher, Eva Longoria, Marcia Cross, Felicity Huffman, Nicolette Sheridan, and etc. star in this Emmy-winning series about several middle-classed housewives living in *wisteria lane* town. This prestigious group, on the surface, enjoyed quite decent and beatific life in that picturesque suburban town. In fact, every one of them felt sort of desperation respectively.

One Thursday morning, a housewife Mary Alice shot herself dead in her perfect house without any portent. This senseless tragedy aroused both soreness and curiosity among her housewife neighbors. They tried to probe into the fact and in the meantime continued their own lives with occasional desperate moments. As Mary said, "everyone has a little dirty laundry". Susan Mayer, a divorced housewife, felt disappointed about marriage but finally fell into love with a handsome plumber. Lynette Scavo, once a successful businesswoman, resigned to take care of four children at home. Bree Van De Kamp, a completist housewife, tried to control the whole family but ended up with being cheated by her husband. Gabrielle Solis, once a supermodel, married to a rich businessman but felt unsatisfied in spirit, who lured her young gardener. In the ordinary lives of these housewives, there are some kinds of crisis hidden. The story unwrapped step by step with suspense and comedy as highlights. The popularity of this series is attributed not only to the theme that dug into the life of American middle class, but also to its cast, performance, and especially the humorous and individualized language. Therefore, the translation is very important when it is exported to other countries.

5.2 The Approaches to Cases study

5.2.1 Decoding of the Source-Text

According to the first approach to ST analysis, the stage of decoding ST should

adopt an approach of top-down analysis, i.e. step-by-step analysis from the pragmatic, cultural and linguistic perspectives respectively. Therefore, on such basis the translator is able to grasp the intentionality of the ST thus to construct the translation brief with certain translation problems. The following case study will be conducted from these perspectives.

Skopos identification

The significance of skopos identification has been emphasized in Skopos theory as the most important part, which should be conducted before the specific translating process started. Only with a clear idea of the specific skopos in mind, the translator can be in a good position to make judgments for the choice of translation methods and strategies. To define the skopos, as proposed by Nord, the translator should verity the translation brief. Although it is said that a brief should be given by the clients, more often than not, it is not the case. Then a translator should have the ability to verify it by himself/herself. The translation brief of the present case could be specified as follows:

(a) intended text functions: the main function of the TT is referential. In view that *Desperate Housewives* is more a commercial movie than art, the intended text function is first of all referential, and to provide information about what is going on the screen. As a result, there is the expressive function to relay the sender's attitude and feelings. The translator must weigh against different functions and decide on the main one. In the present case, it is the referential function that wins the upper hand.

(b) addressees: It is self-evident that the TT addressees in subtitle translation are foreign audience, probably adults, who share a different culture background. In view of the content, this series might attract the college students who feel interest in American culture as well as those housewives who might share the same experiences as shown in the series. This series had won a worldwide popularity; however, for the convenience of analysis in this paper, the viewers are confined to Asian viewers, especially those in China.

(c) medium: written form appearing at the bottom of the screen within a limit of space and duration.

(d) time and place of text reception: The time and space of reception is less controversial, which vary in different cases. In this case, the time is up to now (or might extends to the year of 2011) from 2004 when it was released to the public and the place is mostly at the small town *wisteria lane.*

(e) profile comparison: A shift of the main text function from expressive to

referential proposes and instrumental translation which requires a target-culture orientation. To be specific, a heterofunctional instrumental translation should be applied because the functions of the original cannot be preserved as a whole or in the same hierarchy for reasons of cultural and temporal distance. In the target text, the information about what is going on the screen will have priority over the expressive function. If the aim is in conflict, this aspect may justify a sacrifice of the expressive function of the original.

Translation problems identification

Where the ST and TT diverge foretells what obstacles would appear in the course of translation. To specify the translation problems, the translator should take a top-down approach as the first approach suggested. In the following, the author attempts to identify the translation problems in the subtitling *Desperate Housewives* and sees how the translator tackled them.

(1) Analysis from pragmatic perspective

As mentioned previously, the Skopos theory represents a view which refuses to divorce the act of translating from its context, insisting upon the real-world situational factors which are prime determinants of meaning and interpretation of meaning. Therefore, the translator should first consider the problems in this respect.

Example 1

Mary:　That's why it was so astonishing when I decided to go to my hallway closet, and retrieve a revolver that had never been used.

玛丽：　这就是为什么一切令人震惊,当我决定走向走廊的壁橱，拿起一把从没用过的左轮手枪。

Example 2

Mary:　In the distance, Susan thought she heard a bell ring. Round one had started. Round two was under way, and she was already taking a beating.

玛丽：　远远的，苏珊觉得好像听到一声丧钟。第一声钟响了。第二声丧钟响了。她已经败了第一回合。

Example 3

Mary:　Gabrielle was touched when tears welled up in his eyes, but she soon discovered this happened every time Carlos closed the big deal.

玛丽：　当加布丽尔看见他眼眶中的泪水时,被感动了，但是她很快发现每当卡洛斯成功靠近一些大人物时都会这样。

In example 1 the verb "retrieve" means to get back or regain something. Here the

ST producer used this word intentionally with an implication that Mary had prepared to commit suicide with a gun. This implication, in fact, became explicit with the advancement of the following plots. However, the translator used the Chinese verb "拿起" here, which seemed to be coherent but lost the implicated meaning. In example 2, the "bell" was translated as "丧钟"，by which the viewers might think that someone would die. But here the ST producer just compared the competition between Susan and Edie to the boxing match, in which the bell rings to show the winner. In example 3, the "big deal" was rendered as "大人物", which is contradicted to the scene of Carlos' proposal to Gabrielle. This phrase here actually means the profit which Carlos as a businessman always pursued.

From the explanations above, one can see that the translator didn't analyzed the ST from the pragmatic perspective, instead, he/she just translate sentence by sentence without a whole picture in the mind. And the following examples provided some positive illustrations.

Example 4

Mary: Everyone has a little dirty laundry.

玛丽：   每个人都有一些不可告人之事。

Example 5

Carlos: If you talk to Al Mason at this thing, I want you to casually mention how much I paid for your necklace. He let me know how much he paid for his wife's new convertible.

卡洛斯：   如果今天早上你跟艾尔·梅森交谈，我希望你能装着很随意的提起我花了多少钱给你买这条项链。他上次告诉我他为他妻子的新车花了多少。

Example 6

Gabrielle: So we're good, right? Okay. Well, you enjoy your new little friend, and if there's anything else you need, you just let me know.

加布丽：   那么我们扯平了，对吧? 好吧. 很好，和你的新伙伴玩得开心点，如果你还想要什么，告诉我好了。

In example 4 the "dirty laundry" didn't literarily rendered as "脏衣服", instead, the translator put it as "不可告人之事", which conformed to the context of the story, and therefore was preferable. In example 5, the translator added the verb "装着", which revealed the intention of Carlos and help the viewers understand more clearly. In example 6, the word "good" was translated as "扯平了"，which is also due to the requirement of suiting the context.

(2) Analysis from cultural perspective

AV works reflect certain social life in some specific community of culture and history. Languages, accordingly, reflect the cultural elements of certain national features, including sense of value, ideological norm, religious belief, social custom, etc., which generally appear in the form of idioms, literary quotations, dialects, and so on. During subtitling process, the culture-specific words, i.e. the words contain implications of certain cultural information might be unfamiliar to the TT viewers. Therefore, the translator is expected to solve these culture-specific problems.

Example 7

Children: What's that?

Lynette:　Santa's cell phone number.

Children: How'd you get that?

Lynette:　I know someone who knows someone who knows an elf, and if any of you acts up, so help me, I will call Santa, and I will tell him you want socks for Christmas.

孩子们：这是什么？

丽奈特：圣诞老人的电话号码。

孩子们：你怎么知道的?

丽奈特：我认识个朋友,她的朋友里有人认识一个小恶魔, 所以,今天如果你们谁捣蛋,我马上打电话给圣诞老人, 我会告诉他,你们圣诞节只要短袜就行了。

Example 8

Lynette: I have four kids under the age of 6. I absolutely have anger management issues.

Neighbor: Yeah, well, I think you need to talk to somebody, because abandoning your children is ...

丽奈特：我有 4 个六岁以下的孩子，我当然要采用发怒式的管理方式。

邻　居：是的，我觉得你需要找个人聊聊，因为抛弃你的孩子们是......

Example 9

Voiceover: With the winds from the northwest at 4 miles per hour, it's currently 55 degrees.

画外音：伴随着时速 4 英里的西北风，目前已经 55 度了。

In the above examples, the translator failed to solve the cultural problems. In example 7, the word "elf" means both "a small creature with magic power" and

"mischievous or sometimes spiteful person". In the example, elf must be the messenger of Santa, who therefore must be a lovely magic one. But the translator rendered it as "恶魔", which referred to an evil one to Chinese viewers. This translation might confuse the viewers. In example 8, the phrase "anger management issues" was translated as"发怒式的管理方式", which was not so clear to Chinese viewers. This actually means the physical punishment to children, which is forbidden in the western world. In example 9, the translator didn't make clear the idea that the temperature units in China and the U.S. are different. So it is suggested to translated as "华氏温度 55 度"。In the following examples, the translator adopted some strategies to solve the cultural problems well.

Example 10

Mary: Her husband Carl always teased her about her macaroni, saying it was the only thing she knew how to cook, and she rarely made it well.

玛丽：她的丈夫卡尔总是笑她做的通心粉，说这是她唯一会做的东西，而且她还做不好。

Example 11

Bree: I'm sure Freud would not approve of this. Oh, who cares what he thinks? I took psychology in college. We learned all about Freud. A miserable human being.

布丽：我肯定弗洛伊德肯定不赞成这样,哦，谁会在乎他怎么想？我大学修的是心理学，我们完全了解弗洛伊德，一个悲惨的人。

Example 12

Gabrielle: Sometimes we even kiss people, who are just our friends, kind of like a high-five on the lips, right?

加布丽：有时候我们甚至亲吻我们的朋友，就像是用嘴唇来个 high-five(举手击掌致意), 对吧?

In example 10, the food macaroni is quite strange to Chinese viewers. But there was no need for paraphrase since the viewers can infer the implied meaning from the context, i.e. the macaroni must be one of the ordinary foods in the U.S. In example 11, the famous scholar Freud was mentioned, and the translator just translated directly, since most Chinese viewers know about Freud. In example 12, the translator added a note to explain the "high-five", which might be unfamiliar to the Chinese viewers.

(3) Analysis from linguistic perspective

The television characters' use of language generally mirrors or even sets the trend of language use in the real world. *Desperate Housewives* has always garnered the most

popular American oral English, i.e. the innovative sentence structure, the new words and phrases, the updated expression, etc. Through individualized language this Emmy-winning comedy successfully shaped several housewives from middle class with striking characteristics, which, however, makes it difficult for the translator to reproduce such vivid images through subtitling.

Example 13

Lynette: Well, guess what -- the kids and I want to have some fun, too, so unless you
call me back by noon, we are getting on a plane and joining you.

丽奈特：嗯,猜猜看——我和孩子们也要出去玩玩, 除非你中午之前给我回电话, 我
们正在飞机上,马上就加入你们。

Example 14

John: You know what I don't get?

Gabrielle: What?

约翰：   你知道什么是我没有得到的么?

加布丽：什么?

In the examples above, the translator made the mistake in terms of linguistics. In example 13, the phatic expression "guess what" was translated as "猜猜看", which was different from the original intention. Therefore, it can be rendered as "知道吗" to express the phatic intention. In example 14, the word "get" can means "to come into possession" or "to understand". Although the former meaning used widely, the word here meant "to understand".

Example 15

Edie: No, I don't want to intrude. Three's a crowd.

伊蒂：不过我不想打扰，三个人不太好。

Example 16

Rex: Look, all I'm saying is that this whole "it takes two to mess up a marriage" theory is bull. The problems that weave are because of her.

雷克斯：听着，我想说的就是 "一个巴掌拍不响"这个理论是狗屁，问题都出在她
身上。

In the examples above, there were both the idiom expressions in the ST culture, i.e. "Three's a crowd" in example 15 and "it takes two to mess up a marriage" in example 16. The translator, however, can hardly find corresponding fixed expressions to translate. Therefore, he chose to translate the implicit meaning in example 15 explicitly as "三个人不太好". And the corresponding expression of "一个巴掌拍不响"couldn't be equal

to the original expression.

Example 17

Carlos: I know you're awake.

Gabrielle: I know you're a jerk.

卡洛斯：我知道你没睡。

加布丽：我知道你是个杂碎。

Example 18

Mary: As the sun slowly settled on Wisteria lane, an unsettled Susan racked her brain
to find a way into her own house.

玛丽：当太阳缓缓地在紫藤镇落山，手足无措的苏珊绞尽脑汁想着回到自己家里
的办法。

In the examples above, there were some rhetoric expressions which presented the
linguistic problems. In example 17, the word "awake" and "jerk" both had the
consonant syllable "k" in the end. Therefore, if the translator were to follow this sound
pair, he might not render the meaning correctly. In the example 17, "睡" and "碎" did
have the same sound effect, but the meaning of "杂碎" is quite different from "jerk". In
example 18, the "settled" and "unsettled" repeated to show the sound effect, but the
translator couldn't find such expressions correspondingly. Therefore, he chose to render
the meaning without the sound effect.

5.2.2 Encoding of the Target-Text

The realization of the cross-cultural communication eventually depends on the
understanding and interpretation of the TT recipient, which is the embodiment of the
understanding in the background of an alien culture. As a result, the translator is
supposed to take account of the schema of recipient as the guidance of TT construction,
and then to provide the agreement of TT structure with recipient's norm. AV text, with
a hybrid nature of semantics, pragmatics and culture, can by no means translate by
seeking simple equivalence. In addition, the recipients of AV products differ from each
other in their world knowledge and specific requirements, therefore, the register and
style of TT should be adjusted accordingly.

In the Skopos theory, the TT should cater for the norm of the targeted context. In
other words, the translator is expected to convey the elements of the ST in accordance
with the viewers' custom and norm of expressions, which display in the two aspects, i.e.
the linguistic elements and the cultural elements. On the one hand, the translator should
break through the yoke of ST form thus to convey the informative elements; on the

other hand, the composition of the TT should follow the norm of the targeted viewers. To fulfill this task successfully, the translator should adopt the approaches as the guidance of subtitling process. The case chosen here presents subtitles conforming to the norm of the target viewers, thus to facilitate the communications in an international area. In the following parts, there will be further illustrative analysis according to the process of subtitling activities.

Under this circumstance, the choice of strategies depends on a number of factors, such as translation brief, the text variety and the expected TT viewer, etc. In general, the strategies include straight way, break-up, paraphrasing, domestication, etc. But these strategies do not always apply to subtitle translation, e.g. some culture-specific expressions are not easy to translate in straight way, however, the limitation of subtitle space allows for no additional notes. The subtitlers of *Desperate Housewives* therefore chose the strategy of domestication to solve this problem successfully. Domestication is a kind of translation of TL orientation, which allows the expressions in accordance with the conventions and norms of TL to the utmost extent, thus the TT viewers could understand easily.

According to the second approach, the translator should take account of the factors that might influence the reception of the expected viewers. And for the convenience of analysis, these factors are grouped into two categories for analysis as explained in Chapter 4.2.2.

During the interpretation, the translator interprets the source text not only with regard to the sender's intention but also with regard to its compatibility with the target situation.

This means the translator compares the target text profile (time, place, motive, addressees, medium etc.) with the material offered by the source text, analyzing not only the sender's intention with regard to source-culture receivers but also the possibilities the target receivers have of coordinating the source-text information with their own situation and horizon. To do this, the translator needs as much as possible information about the intended addressees of the translation. This information might be asked from the initiator, who is often the publisher.

Example 19

Mary: And just like that, Susan could suddenly see something she'd never seen before. It, uh, meant so much to her.

玛丽：就在那时，苏珊突然看见了一点她以前从未看到过的东西。它，呃，对她

来说非常重要。

Example 20

Mike: You like Alfred Hitchcock?

迈克：你喜欢看阿尔佛雷德·希契科克吗?

In the examples above, the translator didn't pay attention to the factors which might influence the viewers' interpretation. In example 19, the subtitle expression couldn't conform to the composition rule of Chinese, which might appear strange to Chinese viewers. And the subtitle in example 20 was too brief to be understood by Chinese viewers, for Hitchcock is not as popular as Freud in China.

Example 21

Lynette: I can't believe she wormed her way in. How did you let her do that?

Susan: I don't know. I was going to take her out at the knees, but it all happened so fast.

丽奈特：简直不敢相信，她也想插一竿子。你居然会允许她那样做。

苏　珊：我不知道，我正盘算怎么把她打发走，但一切发生得太快了。

Example 22

Susan: It's the age-old question, isn't it?

苏珊：这是个老掉牙的问题，不是吗?

In the examples above, the translator considered the composition rule of Chinese and therefore produced acceptable subtitles.

5.2.3 Post Edit of Subtitling

Subtitling, as mentioned in Chapter 2.2.1, is a special translating activity under a number of constraints. Subtitlers should "provide the most relevant information in the confine of spatio-temporal limitation" (LiYunxing 2001a, translated). The match of dialogue and picture must be retained when translating. In other words, the appropriate subtitle must appear synchronous with the picture. The positioning of the subtitle and the duration it remains on screen, are dictated by the dialogue and the visual channel, in other words the action on the screen. Subtitles should remain as unobtrusive as possible and not interfere with edit points in the film. The wording of the translation should also aim to reflect delivery and style of the SL dialogue.

Since film and TV is a communicative way of multi-semiotics including words, picture and sound, there must be some agreement between the subtitles, the spoken source language (SL) dialogue, and the corresponding image. Therefore, the translator is supposed to provide a complete one with coherence of all these relevant elements. To

cope with this kind of situation, LiYunxing (2001a) mentioned the strategy of straight translation, i.e. literary translation of transliteration of the TT. Since the picture and sound had provided enough contexts to help the viewers' understanding, there wasn't much adaptation to be done here. It was mostly straightforward translation. Except that you had to take into account certain elements you would not necessarily pay attention to in a written translation, e.g. time and tempo. In the case of a narration, the translation has to follow the image and refer to its various elements as they appear on the screen. So, even if an inversion would be more appropriate in the target language, it may not be indicated if it does not suit the picture. The illusion to be maintained always is that the audience is watching an original production.

The following are some examples to show how the translator solved this kind of problem.

Example 23

Bree: This is half the reason I joined the NRA. Well, when Rex started going to those medical conferences, I wanted it in the back of his mind that he had a loving wife at home with a loaded Smith & Wesson.

布丽：这是半个我加入 NRA 的原因. 嗯,当雷克斯开始参加这些医学会议时，我希望他记得还有个爱他的妻子在家里等他. 还有一群孩子.

Example 24

Carlos: You know what your problem is? You're very tense. You should go to a spa or go shopping. Find a way to relax.

卡洛斯：你知道你的问题是什么吗？你太紧张了，你应该去做个 SPA 或者去购物，想个办法放松自己。

In the examples above, the translator, for the effect of concision, didn't render the terms of "NRA" and "SPA". This, however, might confuse the viewers. Therefore, he should add a note to paraphrase the meaning of the two special terms.

Example 25

Bree: Change in behavior is one of the warning signs, and you have been as fresh as paint for the last six months.

布丽：怪异的行为是一种信号, 之前半年都很正常.

Example 26

Gabrielle: You know, and for the record, I am not one of those women who has a hole in her heart that can only be filled by a baby.

加布丽： 我不喜欢总是孩子转。

In the examples above, the translator deleted the additional information without damage on the intended meaning. Therefore, these subtitles were acceptable to viewers.

Example 27

Susan: Oh, Mary Alice, what did you do?

苏珊：   哦，玛丽·爱丽斯，你究竟干了什么？

　　　（我知道你都干了些什么，这让我太恶心了，我要说出去）

Example 28

Gabrielle: Oh, honey, these heels don't have another block in them.

加布丽：我的高跟鞋后跟坏了(我不能陪你玩了)。

In the examples above, the translator added some notes which were originally transmitted by image, therefore to achieve the TT coherence.

5.3 Summary

Desperate Housewives owes its worldwide popularity to the indispensable elements, i.e. the unique plots, the superb performances, the brilliant language, and so on. With an integration of these elements, this series successfully presented several housewives with striking characteristics. In the meanwhile, however, they also brought about difficulties for translator to reproduce such vivid images through subtitling. In addition, this series, deeply rooted in American culture, reflected the thematic concepts among particularly middle-class people. This again confused the viewers in other countries. This situation is even worse for Chinese audiences who cannot share the ideological and cultural conceptions. Therefore, the low audience rating in China can be partly justified. And the poor translation should also be responsible as illustrated in the previous examples. According to this case study, the applicability of the approaches proposed in this paper has been proved. That is to say, subtitlers should adopt these approaches into their subtitling tasks.

Chapter Six   Conclusion

The unimaginable popularity of AV products in a worldwide area is appealing for the academic studies into the new translation area—audiovisual translation (AVT). As for subtitling, one of the dominant methods of AVT, the requirement is even more urgent. However, the theoretical studies into subtitle translation are still in infancy, and the practices mostly depend on the translators' individual language competence. Due to lack of theoretical guidance and evaluative system, the subtitle translators produced many poor subtitling versions, which might hinder or even mislead the TT viewers. Under such circumstances, this paper conducted a Skopos-oriented analysis of subtitle translation, aiming at an exploration into the appropriate approaches to this specialized area of translation. In Skopos theory, translation is regarded as a dynamic process rather than a definite product as described by traditional equivalence-oriented translation theories. Thus, the approaches are descriptive instead of prescriptive. To be specific, they are provided in accordance with the process of subtitling activities, which can act as an instruction for the guidance of the subtitling practices. These approaches, according to the three stages of subtitling process, are provided as a top-down approach to ST analysis, a viewer-oriented approach to TT construction and the approach for concision & coherence of post edit. Even though discussed respectively, these approaches work together to guide subtitle translation in actual practices. The guidance is illustrated with cases study in Chapter 5. The example chosen for case study is the Emmy-winning American TV series *Desperate Housewives*. This series won incredible popularity in the US during its debut in 2004. However, when it was introduced to Chinese audience in 2005, the result was not as optimistic as imagined. The main reason is simply the poor translation hindered the interpretation of Chinese viewers. Under such circumstances, this TV series is chosen as an example for case study to show how important to follow the approaches proposed in this paper.

This paper, of course, contains some limitations which need further improvement. Firstly, the typology of AV products is not inclusive in terms of those new members appearing in the modern society; therefore, the research is confined to the two major types, i.e. film and TV series. Secondly, this analysis just provided the appropriate approaches as action guidance of subtitlers, but cannot give a specific evaluative system in details to judge the possible errors produced in practices. Thirdly, the analysis and

following illustrations are based on assumption instead of empirical study, which needs to be verified in practices or might not be convincing enough.

Even though with such limitations, these approaches are still expected to provide guidance for subtitling activities, not only for bilingual translation of English and Chinese, but applying to an international area. In addition, the approaches provided here are not confined to subtitling; instead, they can further be applied to dubbing which shares quite a lot of common grounds with subtitling. And the establishment of the evaluative system is another urgent task for researchers of AV translation studies. These aspects, of course, need more efforts for further exploration, and the research results in this paper might provide some inspiration.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Professor Jiang Zhiwen, for his encouraging the preparation of this paper, and for his careful revision and insightful suggestions during the process of my writing. His considerate guidance has been invaluable and illuminating.

My particular thanks also go to Mr. Huang Mingkui, my dear husband, for his continuous prompt and selfless help as well as hand-and-foot support during the hardest time of my life.

Equally, I owe my debt to my parents and my friends, for their kind-hearted tolerance with my ignorance due to my tight timetable and sustained care for me.

Last but not least, I'd like to send my sincere gratitude to Foreign Language College of Chongqing University. I benefit a lot from the lectures and seminars as well as her excellent teaching and learning situations for academic researches.

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Appendix

作者在攻读硕士学位期间发表论文的目录

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