

**Translators' Communicative Assumptions in  
Subtitling Chinese Feature Films into English**



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## Abstract

Medium-bound features and translation strategies are two central issues in the study of subtitling. However, the translator, who reacts to the medium-bound features and opts for translation strategies, has remained outside the focus in research on subtitling.

The scarcity of studies on the translator in the context of subtitling seems to suggest that the translator in this type of translation is simply viewed as a transparent vehicle. This study attempts to shed light on the translator's discursive presence in subtitling by proposing the use of a new concept, the translator's communicative assumptions. A bottom-up model, rooted in Descriptive Translation Studies, has been established to investigate the translator's communicative assumptions. This model consists of a comparative phase followed by an analysis phase. The English subtitles of three Chinese feature films were examined using this model in order to reveal the translators' communicative assumptions. In the comparative phase, the original dialogues and the subtitles are compared in order to identify and categorise micro-structural shifts in the subtitles. In the following analysis phase, Bordwell's (1997) approach to filmic perception and cognition, Text World Theory and Relevance Theory are adapted and combined to provide a theoretical framework and analytical tools to further scrutinise patterns and tendencies observed at the comparative phase.

The comparative-analysis model proves to be a useful tool to reveal translators' communicative assumptions in subtitling. The findings show that although translation shifts take place at various levels, the translator makes linguistic adjustments to give priority to *syuzhet* (plot elements) related to his/her own established *fabula* (story). Consequently, *syuzhet* is made more explicit; film characters' inner worlds and personality are enhanced; culture-specific and stylistic features of the original dialogue exchanges are generally diminished. Viewers seem to be regarded as cultural outsiders who have little knowledge of the Chinese culture in general and need additional assistance in the comprehension of certain *syuzhet* information.

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## Abbreviations

AD	aspect of disjunction
ATR	architranseme
AVT	audiovisual translation
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
ECR	extralinguistic cultural reference
LT	literal translation
OV	object-verb
SL	source language
ST	source text
STT	source-text transeme
SOV	subject-object-verb
SV	subject-verb
SVA	subject-adverbial
SVC	subject-verb-complement
SVO	subject-verb-object
SVOA	subject-verb-object-adverbial
SVOO	subject-verb-object-object
TL	target language
TT	target text
TTT	target-text transeme
VSO	verb-subject-object
VO	verb-object

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Rationale and Scope of This Study

Subtitling is a dominant method to translate feature films in the present day. After its long journey to academic acknowledgement, this type of translation method is firmly situated in Translation Studies as a dynamic area for research. To a considerable extent, subtitling owes its greatly raised profile to studies about its characteristic medium-bound features and translation strategies. These two issues still enjoy a central position in the study of subtitling and are inspiring enormous academic interest and achievements.

A film is a “polysemiotic text” (Gottlieb, 1994a: 265) composed of various signs to create a network of messages to be received by the viewers. This network of messages creates a fictional world within a specific geographical, historical, temporal and cultural context, and forms a multichannel and multicode system for communication. The messages are produced and received through four channels in a synchronized manner (Delabastita, 1989: 199) with the screen playing a coordinating role in the presentation process: aural-verbal, aural-nonverbal, visual-verbal and visual-nonverbal channels.

When translating a film, a translator is assigned to render the verbal messages only – mainly dialogues but also other information within the frame (e.g. graffiti or shop signs) or else present on the sound track (e.g. lyrics or background voices). The messages conveyed through other channels are beyond the translator’s control. The translation of the verbal messages in a film can be realised either visually or aurally depending on the chosen audiovisual translation method. Subtitling is a visual method<sup>1</sup>, a major method employed to translate audiovisual products and widely used in the English-speaking countries when importing foreign films. There are two distinct types of subtitling: intralingual subtitling and interlingual subtitling. In this study, the term subtitling is used to refer to interlingual subtitling, which operates between languages, unless otherwise stated.

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<sup>1</sup> Subtitling and other translation methods for audiovisual products are defined in Chapter 2.

Compared with other types of translation, subtitling is of characteristic features, being diasemiotic, additive, synchronous and transient (Gottlieb, 1992, 2005b). In a subtitled film, the visual-verbal channel is used to express the messages carried in the aural-verbal channel of the original film, i. e. subtitles are the written account of an oral source (diasemiotic). Subtitles are added to the original film and the semiotic resources in the source text are maintained in the subtitled target text (additive). Subtitles are presented simultaneously with the image, dialogue and sound of the original film (synchronous). Subtitles are presented in a flowing manner beyond the control of the viewer under normal film viewing conditions (transient). Subtitling is also subject to distinctive technical restrictions, mainly the spatial-temporal factor concerning screen size and audience reading speed. Subtitles normally do not exceed two lines, and only a certain number of characters can fit into each line. At the same time, subtitles need to remain on the screen for a certain length of time in order for the viewers to be able to read and process them. The spatial-temporal factors seem to point to the necessity of summarising in subtitles (O'Connell, 2007: 129) which leads to reduction of text.

Due to the above-discussed features and restrictions, the process of subtitling can be summarised as a “triple adaption” (Nir, 1984: 91) since the potential translation problems associated with this process are threefold: traditional translation problems in the transfer of text from the source language to the target language; language style problems in the medium conversion from speech to writing; cohesion problems when having to reduce the original dialogues. It is apparent that, compared with other types of translation, subtitling is subject to more constraints which cast a direct impact on the translator’s linguistic behaviour and give rise to various translation strategies as solutions.

Translation strategies are the translator’s discretion to translation problems. Researchers, especially those encouraged by Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and its central notion of norms, have conducted a plethora of studies and presented a fairly objective picture of translation strategies in subtitling. Among others, Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Kovačič (1994, 1995), H. Gottlieb (1992; 1997a), Lomheim (1999), Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007), Georgakopoulou (2010) and Pedersen (2011) have all put forward their own models and presented translation strategies in subtitling in the form of taxonomies.

Their studies have greatly deepened the understanding of the language transfer process and product of subtitling. Furthermore, concepts in the field of Translation Studies, such as source text, target text and even translation, are challenged and updated in these studies. Gradually, the initial disfavour and suspicion of subtitling is being replaced by warm embraces, open minds and interdisciplinary approaches. However, there seems to be something, or more accurate, someone that is overlooked: the translator<sup>2</sup>.

The translator is the locus of subtitling, who responds to medium-bound features and opts for translation strategies. However, there does not seem to be adequate research about the translator, which leaves one central question not fully answered: in the context of subtitling what has guided translators' linguistic behaviour in employing certain strategies to respond to the medium-bound features? It is true that DTS and its central notion of norms have provided part of the answer: translation, just like other social activities, is governed by norms that represent the shared values and ideas in a community at a certain place and time in judging right from wrong, acceptable from rejected and conventional from pioneering. However, translators also enjoy "relative autonomy" (Pym, 2004: 20), and their subjectivity also plays an important role in deciding on translation strategies. This is what translation norms cannot satisfactorily account for, although they provide good explanations to why there are regularities in translation behaviour.

The texts that translators work on are composed of messages at many levels with unequal importance for the attainment of successful communication. How do translators prioritise the messages? It is said that successful translation derives from the translator being "an active reader of the source text and a dynamic re/writer of the target text" (Federici, 2006: 5), but what exactly does being active and dynamic mean, especially in the context of subtitling? This study wishes to propose the concept of 'the translator's communicative assumptions' to refer to the translator's subjective beliefs, conscious or unconscious, that shape his/her translation practice in the context of subtitling. The study of the translator's communicative assumptions in the context of subtitling can

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<sup>2</sup> In this study, the term 'translator', instead of 'subtitler', is used to refer to the person who composes the translation in the context of subtitling. The reason is that in China, the person who composes the translation is not necessarily the person who is responsible for the actual subtitles appearing on the screen. There may be a technician who has the final touch on the translation.

lead to a better understanding of the translator's role in this type of translation practice and the possible impact his/her linguistic behaviour may have on the target viewers.

This study aims to establish a model to investigate translators' communicative assumptions in subtitling, a concept that will also be refined at the same time when theoretical explorations are made for the establishment of the model. Since the study of translators' assumptions falls in the domain of human cognition, the model to investigate the assumptions is necessarily of an interdisciplinary nature integrating relevant theories in Translation Studies and human cognition. Furthermore, this model will then be tested by being employed to investigate translators' communicative assumptions in subtitling Chinese feature films into English.

## **1.2 Research Objectives and Methodology of This Study**

The objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to propose and refine the concept of the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling; (2) to design and employ a model to reveal the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling Chinese feature films into English; and (3) to discuss the translator's communicative assumptions. The first two objectives will be realised concurrently through theoretical explorations in the fields of Descriptive Translation Studies (e.g. Toury, 1995), filmic perception and cognition (e.g. Bordwell, 1997), Text World Theory (e.g. Gavins, 2007; Werth 1999) and Relevance Theory (e.g. Gutt, 1991; Sperber & Wilson, 1986). This study will then move to the third objective, which will in turn test the model and further refine the concept.

This study is rooted in DTS and takes a data-driven qualitative methodology. The model designed to investigate translators' communicative assumptions takes a bottom-up form through two phases: a comparative phase followed by an analysis phase.

In the comparative phase, detailed comparison between the original dialogues of three Chinese films and their English subtitles is carried out at the "transeme" (van Leuven-Zwar 1989) level in order to map micro-structural translation shifts. This study argues that translation shifts are the imprint left by translators during the translation process and are shaped by translators' communicative assumptions. The method used to identify

and categorise shifts is adapted from van Leuven-Zwart's model (1989). The entire English subtitles from each of the three selected Chinese films are included in the comparison, rather than excerpted sections, in order to have a large enough sample size for meaningful comparisons and discussions.

In the analysis phase, a cognitive approach is taken in studying the shifts mapped in the comparative phase. A detailed account of the translator's communicative assumptions is established upon the completion of the phase.

### **1.3 Outline of This Study**

Following Chapter 1 Introduction, there are six more chapters in this thesis. Chapter 2 points out that medium-bound features and translation strategies have been two central issues in the study of subtitling since this type of translation method inspired academic interest since the late 1950s. After reviewing existing studies about the two issues and affirming their contributions to furthering knowledge about subtitling and the interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies, this chapter points out that translators, who react to the characteristic medium-bound features and opt for various translation strategies, have been largely overlooked. However, findings about the two issues have laid a good foundation for studying translators' subjective beliefs that shape their linguistic behaviour. This chapter proposes the concept of translators' communicative assumptions to refer to translators' subjective beliefs.

Chapter 3 explicates how to draw on relevant theories in various disciplines for the study of translators in the context of subtitling. This chapter follows two threads of thoughts: to design a model to investigate translators' communicative assumptions and to refine the concept of translators' communicative assumptions in the process of the theoretical exploration for the model. This chapter argues that translation shifts identifiable in the subtitles are the manifestations of translators' communicative assumptions. It also argues that studying the assumptions can bring to the fore "the translator's voice" (Hermans, 1996) muted in the subtitles. Therefore, a study of translation shifts should be the starting point of the model. The design of the model is methodologically and theoretically informed by Descriptive Translation Studies and its central notion of norms, notions of filmic perception and cognition, Text World Theory



and Relevance Theory. Translator's voice, translation shifts and relevant concepts from the above-mentioned areas and disciplines are discussed in this chapter. At the completion of this chapter, a bottom-up model is established and the proposed concept is refined. This model consists of two phases: a comparative phase and an analysis phase.

Chapter 4 details the application of the comparative phase to map translation shifts in the English subtitles of Chinese films. Three Chinese films presented in the form of DVD have been selected as case studies: *Farewell My Concubine* (dir. Chen Kaige 1993), *Road Home* (dir. Zhang Yimou 2000) and *Hero* (dir. Zhang Yimou 2002). Details of the three films and the selection process are described. The focus of the chapter is how to adapt van Leuven-Zwart's method of identifying and categorising micro-structural shifts in order to account for linguistic features of the Chinese language and those of spoken language in general.

Chapter 5 presents statistics of the shifts identified at the comparative phase. These shifts are grouped under categories, sub-categories and sub-divisions that have been established in Chapter 4. This chapter contains initial comments and discussions about the patterns and tendencies that the shifts show. Findings at the comparative phase will serve as a foundation for the analysis phase.

Chapter 6 details the discussions carried out at the analysis phase. The translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling Chinese feature films into English are revealed. Discussions are based on the patterns and tendencies of shifts identified in Chapter 5.

Chapter 7 concludes the whole thesis by recapitulating the findings, drawing out the conclusions, outlining and reflecting on implications for professional practice and translator education, and suggesting further research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Medium-Bound Features and Translation Strategies: Two Central Issues**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Subtitling in the modern sense emerged at the back of the invention of sound film around the late 1920s and remains a dominant method to translate films in the present day. Díaz Cintas (2009: 3) has observed that, from a translational perspective, the pioneering academic work on subtitling appeared in the late 1950s (e.g. Laks, 1957) and that its golden age and “true scholarly emergence” were witnessed in the 1990s when audiovisual translation (AVT) as a whole became the object of more systematic research. The concept of AVT will be discussed in Section 2.2.2.

Along the journey of subtitling to being academically acknowledged, medium-bound features and translation strategies associated with this translation method have attracted enormous interest right from the tentative start in this research area. Some of the early writings on subtitling were in the form of guidelines, usually from already practising translators trying to shed light on the main everyday issues and practical parameters involved in the profession, in order to help less experienced colleagues (Georgakopoulou, 2010: 11). Others were usually case studies abounding in working anecdotes and specific details or difficulties linked with some experimental art feature film of the time (Gambier, 2008: 15). Another common topic of the early writings was the debate on the respective advantages and disadvantages of subtitling as opposed to dubbing. Dubbing (or lip-synchronized dubbing) is a revoicing technique using dubbing actors’ voice “to cover entirely the spoken source text with a target text adjusted to fit the visible lip movements of the original utterances” (Karamitroglou, 2000: 5). The debate concerning subtitling and dubbing has been criticised for being based “more on argumentation than evidence” and lasted for a surprisingly long span of years from the 1930s to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (Gambier, 2008: 15). Retrospectively, although these early writings generally carry a disapproving tone towards audiovisual translation and are regarded as “sporadic and often anecdotal” with a prescriptive and fragmented nature (ibid: 12), they did touch the very core of the difference between audiovisual

translation and written literary translation and later started to contribute to the interdisciplinary nature of the field of Translation Studies.

The 1990s was a turning point for AVT studies when research in this area became more systematic and started to draw more on neighbouring disciplines to tackle issues related to the characteristic features of audiovisual translation methods. From then till the present day, medium-bound features and translation strategies remain two central issues in the study of subtitling. Academic exchanges on the two issues have not only increased understanding of subtitling as a unique professional practice but also contributed to redefinition of existing concepts and has furthered the interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies. The current chapter sets to critically review existing research about the two issues and to identify needs for further research.

This chapter opens with a discussion of four concepts – subtitling, audiovisual translation, medium and translation strategy. This is to provide some background related to these concepts and also to lay a terminological foundation for the rest of this study. Literature is then reviewed to show how medium-bound features and translation strategies in subtitling have been approached from different perspectives. At the end of the chapter, it is concluded that the two issues can benefit from a more systematic and interdisciplinary approach and serve as a point of departure to provide more insights into what Holmes (1972/2000: 177) calls “the ‘little black box’ of the translator’s mind”. A concept of ‘the translator’s communicative assumptions’ is proposed.

## **2.2 Concepts**

In this section, four concepts – subtitling, audiovisual translation, medium and translation strategy – are defined and discussed so that a terminological foundation for the rest of this study is laid down.

### ***2.2.1 Subtitling***

Subtitling is one of the two dominant forms of audiovisual translation. The other dominant form is dubbing. There are two distinct types of subtitling: intralingual subtitling and interlingual subtitling. Intralingual subtitling operates within one language and usually appears in “domestic programmes for the deaf and hard of hearing” and “foreign-language programmes for language learners” (H. Gottlieb, 1997a: 311).

Interlingual subtitling operates between languages, and gives a synchronous account of the original dialogue and other linguistic elements forming part of the visual image (inserts, letters, graffiti, banners and the like) or of the soundtrack (songs, voices off) in a different language, in the shape of one or more lines of written text normally situated at the bottom of the screen (Delabastita, 1989: 200; Díaz Cintas, 2009: 5). In this study, the term subtitling is used to refer to interlingual subtitling unless otherwise stated. Subtitling is used for “filmic media” (Gottlieb, 2004: 15) that include cinema, television, DVD and Internet video.

Subtitles (intralingual or interlingual) are added to the screen image as a post-production activity appearing and disappearing to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue (Luyken et al., 1991: 31). They are different from ‘displays’ and ‘captions’. ‘Displays’ refer to “fragments of text recorded by the camera – letters, newspapers, headlines, banners, etc.” while ‘captions’ refer to pieces of “textual information usually inserted by the programme maker to identify names, places or dates relevant to the story line” (Gottlieb, 1994a: 107). Displays and captions are not always translated, but when they are, the translation forms part of the subtitles.

The forerunner of subtitling appeared during the silent film era (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007: 26). With the emergence of increasingly complex filmic narratives, pieces of filmed and printed texts, known as intertitles, were placed between film frames to clarify character dialogue or help with plot development. The original intertitles were removed and a new set of target language texts were inserted when silent films reached a foreign market. This was the pioneer practice of audiovisual translation.

Audiovisual translation methods in the modern sense were invented during the second half of the 1920s after the introduction of sound in film when, according to Forbes and Street (2000), the American domination of European film industries was put to a temporary end because studios became suddenly unable to satisfy the demand of European audiences for films spoken in their native languages. The big film studios at first attempted to appeal to local European sensibilities by shooting several versions of the same film in different languages using different teams of actors. This multilingual filming method was soon found to be too expensive (Ivarsson, 2002: 7) and failed to

earn back the American industry its lost market share. In order to reclaim its former dominant position, new forms of audiovisual translation were required. Advances in the manipulation of celluloid films in the late 1920s allowed texts as a translation of the source dialogue to be superimposed straight onto the film strip images and thus paved the way for the development of modern subtitling (ibid). Concurrent technological developments also made it possible to apply a process known as “post-synchronization” (Whitman-Linsen, 1992) to revoice and replace the source dialogue with a translated version, which is acknowledged as the infant form of today’s dubbing.

Until the mid-1990s, the audiovisual market-place remained divided into two major clusters: subtitling vs. dubbing countries (Luyken et al., 1991) but since then the lines between the formerly opposing camps has blurred, with dominant traditional forms of audiovisual transfer co-existing with other less widespread types (Gambier, 2003).

Researchers have looked into the interrelated and interacting factors that affect to different degrees the decision to opt for dubbing or subtitling. O’Connell (2007: 127) speaks of main factors as “local custom balanced by new trends, available budget and time, programme genre, the status of the source and target languages (e.g. world, major, minority languages) and the power relations existing between them”. She points out that target audience profile, such as the age, sex, educational background and social class of the audience, also has a significant influence on the selection of an AVT method (1998: 68). In the case of translation for television, Karamitroglou (2000) identifies the broadcaster’s primary purpose (entertainment, education, propaganda, etc.) as highly relevant to the decision.

### **2.2.2 AVT**

It has been established that subtitling is a dominant form of AVT. What is the scope of AVT? What is its relation to Translation Studies?

Thanks to technological developments, human society has gradually changed from paper-oriented towards media-oriented (Orero, 2004: viii) where more recent media, such as cinema, television and computer, have joined older mediated experiences such as theatre, drama or opera, in multiplying semiotic potential by integrating moving images, language (spoken and written), sound and music (Stöckl, 2004: 9-10).

Subtitling and other forms of AVT have been invented against this backdrop to meet the needs of the globalisation of communication networks. They are great innovations facilitating communication and providing solutions to language obstacles between cultures. AVT as a whole has now become “the most important translational activity of our time” (Díaz Cintas, 2004b).

However, AVT remained a relatively unknown field of academic research until the 1990s. There was once a huge imbalance between the little research on AVT and its enormous impact on society. Research in this field had a tentative start in the late 1950s and early 1960s with somewhat superficial writings as the main contributions, and then two decades of relative inactivity in the 1970s and 1980s (Díaz Cintas, 2003: 192). Over the last two decades, however, research on AVT in general and subtitling in particular has grown exponentially into vigorous and systematic research. AVT has become “a resolute and prominent area of academic research” (Díaz Cintas, 2009: 1) firmly situated in the broader domain of Translation Studies.

The establishment of Translation Studies as an independent discipline in the 1980s provided historic opportunities for the development of studies on AVT and the latter in turn has greatly enhanced the interdisciplinary nature of the former. Translation Studies was emancipated from literary theory and linguistics and established itself as an independent discipline in the 1980s, following the so-called pragmatic turn in linguistics of the 1970s and the cultural turn in the 1980s (Snell-Hornby, 2006). The pragmatic turn is believed to have made the emergence of Translation Studies as an independent discipline possible. With this turn, language is no longer studied only as an isolated concept of the linguistic sign or within the abstract concept of the language system; instead, it was enriched by insights from anthropology, philosophy, sociology and psychology (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 40). The ‘cultural turn’ was a term coined by Snell-Hornby (1990), referring to the orientations that emerged in the 1980s to emphasize cultural, historical and ideological dimensions of translation. It is believed that, through the cultural turn, a basic profile of Translation Studies has been largely established (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 47). Written literary translation was the main inspiration for general translation theories and was once considered the only translation proper. In the early days of AVT studies, research approaches and perspectives developed to study written literary translation were employed to explore issues related to the translation of

audiovisual texts. These studies have not only provided initial understanding of audiovisual translation but also helped identify needs for further research and new methodologies. In turn, research on AVT has contributed to the interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies. At the same time, AVT studies are gradually becoming established as a subfield of Translation Studies.

Translation Studies now covers all kinds of translation and involves relevant areas of neighbouring disciplines. As a result, certain concepts have been widened, new research methods have been drawn on, connections with more disciplines have been established and numerous new contributions have been made towards knowledge. Translation is now viewed as a more flexible and more heterogeneous phenomenon, which subsumes new and potential translation activities, explores links with other disciplines and calls for new research approaches (Díaz Cintas, 2009: 6-7).

The dynamics of the relatively young field of AVT studies is reflected in the different generic names used to mirror the seemingly ever-changing nature of translation and encompass new methods used to translate audiovisual texts: from *constraint translation* (Mayoral et al., 1998; Titford, 1982) to *film translation* (Snell-Hornby, 1988), *film and TV translation* (Delabastita, 1989), *screen translation* (Mason, 1989; O'Connell, 1998, 2007; Snell-Hornby, 2006), *audiovisual translation* (Bartrina & Espasa, 2005; Dries, 1995; Karamitroglou, 2000; Luyken et al., 1991; Orero, 2004), or *(multi)media translation* (Gambier & Gottlieb, 2001). Such terminological instability has been however welcomed by Díaz Cintas (2009: 7) who sees it as not only another corroboration of the changeability of the field, but also a clear sign that researchers have maintained an open and accommodating stance with a view to assimilating and acknowledging new developments in translation praxis.

The term *constrained translation* was coined by Titford (1982) to refer to subtitling and “is now usually understood to include the translation of a wide range of comics, songs, advertising, and any type of audiovisual or multimedia translation, from film subtitling and dubbing to software and website localization” (Zanettin, 2009: 39). The ‘constrained translation’ approach stresses the semiotic dimension and the interdependence of words and images but remains primarily concerned with the translation of verbal material. This approach sees words as subordinated to the images,

and the non-verbal components in the source text only as representation of visual constraints for the translator of the verbal components. This term has been criticised (e.g. Zabalbeascoa, 2008: 23) for its rather negative connotation because it seems to imply that a translation method for a text with non-verbal elements cannot be regarded as translation proper since translation proper must deal exclusively with words.

*Film translation* has been used (e.g. Snell-Hornby, 1988) to cover translation methods originally developed to translate films. Dubbing and subtitling are the two dominant methods and other widespread methods include voice-over, narration and free-commentary<sup>3</sup>. Since these methods are also used to translate TV programmes, videos and Internet clips, the term *film translation* has been subsequently replaced by *film and TV translation* and then by *screen translation*.

As stated above, *screen translation* refers to the same translation methods that film translation does but includes TV and videos as the extended areas where these methods are applied and widened beyond ‘films’. *Screen translation* emphasises where the translation product appears, namely the cinema, TV, or video screen (Karamitroglou, 2000: 1) and is favoured by researchers such as O'Connell (1998, 2007). Although some researchers, such as Pym (2011: 91), use this term to cover any translation work involving the specific spatial constraints of screens, the translation of software, websites or computer games seen on the screen of computer monitors or smart phones is more widely known as localisation.

The term *audiovisual translation* is used by some researchers (e.g. Karamitroglou, 2000) to refer to exactly the same as screen translation but by others to cover a wider area.

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<sup>3</sup> Unlike dubbing, voice-over, narration and free commentary do not attempt to adhere to the constraints of lip synchronization or cover the original spoken text entirely. Voice-over tries to give an almost full translation of the original text in an approximately synchronous delivery (Luyken et al., 1991: 80): after a few seconds when the original sound is fully audible, the volume is lowered and the voice reading the translation becomes prominent. Narration has been described as “an extended voice-over” (Luyken et al., 1991: 80), providing a summarized but carefully scripted rendition of the original speech with its delivery being carefully timed to avoid any clash with the visual syntax of the programme. Free commentary is a free delivery of the source message into the target language, which does not emphasise the faithfulness to the original text or synchronous delivery (Luyken et al., 1991: 139-140).



Whitman-Linsen (1992:103) incorporates within audiovisual translation the use of surtitles or supertitles<sup>4</sup>; Pym (2011: 76) goes further to include translation of any electronic communication involving sound and images under this term. In this current study, *audiovisual translation* includes any pre-recorded and live translation of any electronic communication involving sound and/or images. This means that not only film translation, screen translation, localization, surtitling/supertitling can fit into the category but also the types of translation not involving a visual dimension (e.g. radio programme) and the so-called simultaneous subtitling and simultaneous revoicing sometimes used at film festivals.

The term *multimedia translation* has been promoted by Gambier and Gottlieb (2001). The contents and scope of multimedia translation can be identical to those of *audiovisual translation* but the latter is preferred in this study for three reasons. Firstly ‘audiovisual translation’ highlights the audio and/or visual dimensions of the communication and can better facilitate discussions on the medium-bound features this type of translation manifests. Secondly the term ‘audiovisual translation studies’ has been widely accepted and recognised as an established academic domain in its own right. Thirdly, Gambier (2003: 172), one of the first academics who promoted the term ‘multimedia translation’ reflected later that the term blurs the “differences between media in the strict sense (TV, cinema, computer) and verbal and visual codes”.

### **2.2.3 Medium**

The term *medium* is used in a variety of ways by different researchers. It has been related to “specific technical forms within the mass media” (radio, television, film, newspapers, books, photography, etc.) or “the media of interpersonal communication” (telephone, letter, fax, email, video-conferencing, etc) (Chandler, 2002: 3). In this study, however, *medium* is used interchangeably with *channel*, referring to the physical characteristics of the signals that are transmitted in the process of communication.

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<sup>4</sup> Surtitling or supertitling is “the screened translation of librettos, scores and foreign play texts usually positioned above or alongside the stage” (Newmark, 2003: 2). They are the translated or transcribed lyrics projected above the scene, which may be used either to translate the meaning of the lyrics to a target language, or to transcribe lyrics that may be difficult to understand in the sung form in the same language (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998: 19-20).

Sebeok (1976/1985: 30) distinguishes material (gases, liquids or solids) and energetic (chemical or physical) channels with optical, tactile, acoustic, electric, thermal and other channels as the major subtypes (Nöth, 1990: 175). *Signals* are “the energetic or material vehicles of signs, their physical form” (ibid: 174) and a *sign* can be broadly understood as anything that stands for something else and gives meaning to it (Stecconi, 2009: 260).

Based on the understanding of the above terms, *medium-bound features in subtitling* refer to the characteristics deeply rooted in the multi-channel and multi-signal context where subtitling operates. This is to say that the features of subtitling are caused by the interplay between subtitles and other signs and channels from the original text and, because of such interplay, subtitling will demonstrate significantly different features from other forms of translation. To achieve an unbiased picture, studies on the linguistic dimension of subtitling should not be carried out in isolation but should take into account other communication channels in the same text where subtitling is employed as the translation method.

Delabastita (1989) was one of the first researchers to look into the characteristics of subtitling by drawing the translator’s attention to the “multi-channel and multi-code type of communication” established in a film. He speaks of four types of film signs that have to be taken into account when dubbing or subtitling: verbal signs transmitted acoustically (dialogue), non-verbal signs transmitted acoustically (background noise, music), verbal signs transmitted visually (credits, letters, documents shown on the screen), and non-verbal signs transmitted visually (ibid:101). Delabastita’s groundbreaking study has since inspired a number of researchers in Translation Studies to approach the communicative mechanism of audiovisual products from a semiotic perspective.

#### ***2.2.4 Translation strategy***

The term *translation strategy* is a “rather diffuse concept” (Wilss, 1983: 145) and has been often used without precise definition in many different senses in Translation Studies (Lörscher, 1991: 67-81).

Firstly, this term has been used to refer to both procedural and textual strategies (Kearns, 2009: 283). Translation strategy in its procedural sense is well defined by Lörcher (1991: 76) as “a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language into another”. Lörcher also points out that strategies, as mental phenomena, are themselves unobservable but may be reconstructed by researchers through analysis of strategy indicators. Gambier (2010: 414) concludes that, so far, the most common way to reconstruct strategies is through “the outcome of product-to-product comparison”. In addition, experimental methods have also been applied to or borrowed for research into translation process and strategies; these mainly include think-aloud protocols, psycholinguistic experiments used in bilingualism research and cognitive studies of text production (Halverson, 2009). Lörcher’s main criticism of earlier uses of the term *strategy* in translation studies is its prescriptiveness (e.g. Wilss, 1983). Kearns (2009: 283) observes that the notion of *strategy*, after Lörcher’s study, has inspired a great deal of empirical research into translation procedures.

Translation strategy has also been understood in its textual sense, referring to “the results of procedures rather than the procedures themselves” (Kearns, 2009: 283), namely the actual linguistic solutions a translator takes up to resolve translation problems. Textual translation strategies therefore are embedded in the TT and are also observable through comparing the ST with its TT. Kearns points out that the use of *strategy* in its textual sense is fairly recent and in earlier studies other terms such as *techniques*, *procedures* (e.g. Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/2004) and *shifts* (e.g. Catford, 1965) were all used to mean the same thing. In this study, shifts are not understood as strategies themselves but the results of employing strategies. Therefore, shifts could serve as strategy indicators and give information about certain unobservable phenomena during the translation process. More detailed discussions on shifts will be carried out in Section 3.2.3.

Secondly, *strategy* has also been used to refer to both *local* strategies (relating to the translation of particular language structures and lexical items) and *global* strategies (pertaining to broad questions of textual style). It should be noted that local strategies have been understood in both procedural and textual senses but global strategies are most commonly used in a procedural sense. The influential debates on general

translation theory in dichotomous terms, such as literal vs. free translation, formal vs. dynamic translation (Nida, 1964), overt and covert translation (House, 1977/1981), semantic vs. communicative translation (Newmark, 1981), documentary vs. instrumental translation (Nord, 1991), and more recently, foreignizing vs. domesticating translation (Venuti, 1995), are all examples of global strategies used in a procedural sense. Séguinot (1985) and Bell (1998) also use this term in a procedural sense, but their focus is to describe translators' work pattern. According to their observation, translators tend to translate without interruption for as long as possible, correct surface errors immediately but leave errors involving meaning typically until the end of a clause or sentence, and leave the monitoring for qualitative or stylistic errors in the text to the revision stage.

Chesterman (1997: 92) sees translation strategies from a different angle and proposes another division and distinguishes “comprehension strategies” and “production strategies”. This division of strategies furthers the ambiguity between procedural and textual senses of the term, as he himself reflects (Chesterman, 2005: 22). The former relate to the analysis of the ST and the whole translation commission; the latter refer to various results of the comprehension strategies and relate to the production of the TT. In contrast to the little literature on translation comprehension strategies, since the 1950s there have been a large number of studies devoted to production strategies in the field of Translation Studies. Many of these researches are informed by contrastive linguistics and focus on local strategies.

In the context of subtitling, the ambiguity of the term strategy is at its vivid best: although it usually refers to production strategies, researchers use the term in a mixture of procedural and textual senses for local, broader or global solutions in the translation process. This is probably because translation strategies in subtitling are usually regarded as countermeasures to deal with translation constraints caused by the medium-related features of this particular form of translation. Therefore what translators do to tackle individual translation problems, their overall approach to subtitling and the differences between solutions in subtitling and traditional written translation are all regarded as ‘strategies’.

In this current study, in order to avoid any further confusion, the term strategy is used to refer to production strategies in the procedural sense, which are accessible through the translation product itself in comparison with the ST. Therefore, strategies are “the first level of abstraction from the concrete level of data” (Pedersen, 2011: 71) and can be divided into categories to group translators’ actual linguistic choices that affect micro-units of texts.

It is important to point out at this stage that the subtitles which eventually reach the TL viewers may not purely be the translator’s work. The technician responsible for fitting the translation onto the screen as subtitles may have to, or prefer to, make certain changes to the contents in order to meet technical requirements with or without the translator’s awareness. There could also be other persons who have intentionally or accidentally influenced the contents of the final subtitles. Therefore translation strategies reconstructed through text comparison in fact reflect the joint effort of an amalgam of people. It is merely a means of convenience to mention only the translator when discussing translation strategies in subtitling.

### **2.3 Medium-bound Features of Subtitling: a Semiotic Perspective**

In the earlier writings on subtitling, the perception of this form of translation was rather negative. For example: Dollerup concentrated on different errors in the English-Danish subtitles of various TV programmes (1974). Titford (1982: 113) talked of translation problems that “derive essentially from the constraints imposed on the translator by the medium itself” and introduced the concept of “constrained translation”. Marleau (1982) went so far as to view subtitling as “a necessary evil”.

Gambier (2008: 16) asserts that such a contemptuous or even hostile way of seeing subtitling reflects the stereotyped vision of translation as being inferior to the original. This notion has been gradually and largely reversed, and the general tendency of viewing subtitling now is descriptive and interdisciplinary. General translation theories, such as *skopos* theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984), polysystem theory (Even-Zohar, 1978/2004) and Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (Holmes, 1972/2000; Toury, 1995) that place emphasis on the target text and culture, may have lent their influence in such a move.

In 1989, Delabastita published his ground breaking article *Translation and mass communication: film and TV translation as evidence of cultural dynamics*, in which he discusses the “multi-channel and multi-code type of communication” in a film. Díaz Cintas (2009: 3) speaks highly of him as a pioneering researcher to tackle the semiotic nature of audiovisual productions. Delabastita discusses how the multiple signs and channels that make up a film can have translational implications for dubbing and subtitling. Since then, the semiotic approach has been widely adopted in the study of subtitling.

In general terms, semiotics studies how people produce, interpret and negotiate meaning through signs. Semiotics has not become widely institutionalised as a formal academic discipline (Chandler, 2002: 241) and researches on semiotics can be loosely grouped into two broad regions both of which originated at the turn of the nineteenth century: one is known as ‘structural semiotics’ initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure (1906-11) and the other is known as ‘interpretive semiotics’ elaborated by Charles Sanders Peirce (1931-58). Scholars from Translation Studies have drawn on both traditions of semiotics to enrich translation theories. Typical contributions include Jakobson’s (1959) call for a semiotic understanding of translation, Toury’s (1986) search for the semiotic nature of translating, Hatim and Mason’s (1990) exploration of the semiotic dimensions of context concerning translation, Chesterman’s (2002) investigation of translation causality, and so on.

However, the term ‘semiotics’ is also used as “shorthand for research that goes beyond verbal language” (Stecconi, 2009: 261) without necessarily engaging with either structural or interpretive semiotics. As a matter of fact, this is especially the case in the field of AVT studies. It will become apparent that the studies to be discussed in the coming parts of this section have all used ‘semiotics’ in such a shorthand fashion.

### ***2.3.1 A semiotic definition of subtitling***

Gottlieb is one of the first researchers who attempted to describe the medium-bound features of subtitling from a semiotic perspective. He has developed the notion of polysemiotic text on many occasions (e.g., 1997a) to refer to texts constituted by the

presence of two or more parallel channels. He divides a polysemiotic text, such as a feature film, into four distinguishable semiotic channels:

- a) the verbal auditory channel: dialogue, background voices, and sometimes lyrics
- b) the non-verbal auditory channel: music, natural sound and sound effects
- c) the verbal visual channel: superimposed titles and written signs on the screen
- d) and the non-verbal visual channel: picture composition and flow” (Gottlieb, 1998: 245).

Translating a polysemiotic text involves rendering information from the verbal auditory channel in one way or another, and the translator does not normally have control of other channels of communication of the polysemiotic text. In contrast, monosemiotic texts (e.g. an unillustrated book) have only one channel of communication and the translator controls the entire medium of expression (Gottlieb, 1994b: 271; 2005a: 3-4). Gottlieb (ibid) describes subtitling as diasemiotic, distinct from isosemiotic translations, due to the fact that subtitling changes the channel of expression and renders source-language speech to target-language in writing. In the case of isosemiotic translation, the same channel(s) of expression is used in the TT as the ST where speech is rendered by speech (as in interpreting and dubbing) or writing by writing (as in literary translation) (Gottlieb, 1994b: 271; 2005a: 3-4). Gottlieb (1994a) also proposes the notion of “diagonal translation” to highlight the channel-changing feature of subtitling.

From a semiotic perspective, Gottlieb (2005b: 16, emphasis in the original) defines subtitling as

- A. **Prepared** communication
- B. using **written** language
- C. acting as an **additive**
- D. and **synchronous** semiotic channel,
- E. as part of a **transient**
- F. and **polysemiotic** text.

This is a fairly objective and comprehensive description of subtitling. The emphasised words not only highlight the features of subtitling but also serve to differentiate subtitling from other forms of translation. They sketch the source of the characteristic constraints the translator experiences in subtitling and can also be seen as urging

translators to treat polysemiotic texts as a whole in the translation process. As Pedersen (2011: 9) comments: feature A contrasts subtitling with simultaneous interpreting; feature B contrasts subtitling with dubbing and voice-over; feature C contrasts subtitling with dubbing or traditional written translation; features D, E and F all contrast subtitling with traditional written translation. To a great extent, the understanding of subtitling is based on the understanding of the differences between subtitling and traditional written translation. In the following, further discussions will focus on features C to F.

### Additive

Subtitles are an ancillary element added to the finished product of the original film. All the semiotic systems in the original film (ST) are maintained in the subtitled film (TT). The subtitles are extraneous to the diegesis or narrative of the original film and obviously address the viewers from the TL culture, hence the feature of being additive. Subtitling is therefore seen by Gottlieb (1994a) as a typical example of “overt translation” (House, 1977/1981) in the sense that it allows viewers to access the original dialogue and the displayed subtitles constantly remind viewers that they are receiving a translated text. A subtitled film is still a polysemiotic text with four semiotic channels, but the channels do not hold the same semantic load as in the original version: the balance is significantly shifted from aural-verbal channel to visual-verbal channel (Gottlieb, 1994b: 265). The visual-verbal channel carries the highest semantic content in a subtitled film while the same channel normally carries the lowest semantic content in the original film. Based on its additive feature, Cronin (2009: 116) labels subtitling a form of “extra-diegetic translation” (Genette, 1988) in the sense that subtitles are extraneous to the narrative but necessary for the audience to understand the narrative.

Due to the cohabitation of ST and TT, subtitles are put in the difficult position of being constantly accompanied to the film dialogue, laying themselves “bare to criticism from everybody with the slightest knowledge of the source language” (Gottlieb, 1994a: 102). Díaz Cintas and Remael therefore sympathetically see subtitling as a “vulnerable translation” (2007: 55). Nedergaard-Larsen (1993: 214) points out that the opportunity for the viewer to evaluate the TT by comparing it to the ST while receiving the TT creates “a feedback effect”. She uses the term to refer to the TT recipients’ assumed reaction to a particular translation solution based on the information they receive at the same time from other auditory and visual channels. Such reactions can be negative if



subtitles create contradictions between what the viewers read and what they are able to understand from the images and/or soundtrack (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007: 56). Nedergaard-Larsen (1993: 214), however, believes that feedback effect may also be positive, if, for instance, a translation solution for a given culture-bound translation problem is supported by auditory or visual elements.

#### Transient and synchronous

Subtitles as part of the subtitled film are presented in a flowing manner beyond the control of the viewer, simultaneously with the image, dialogue and sound of the original film, hence the feature of being transient and synchronous. As discussed above, films are texts of great semiotic complexity in which different sign systems co-operate to produce a coherent story (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007: 45). The coordination between the different sign systems creates harmony through the realisation of different types of synchrony for the purpose of communicating a coherent story. Mayoral *et al.* (1998: 359) have identified five types of synchrony and they include 1) *synchrony of time* between different signals communicating a unit of information; 2) *spatial synchrony* with signals occupying neither more nor less space than that which corresponds to them; 3) *content synchrony* with no contradiction between different signals or with the whole message; 4) *phonetic synchrony* between sound signals of spoken dialogue with the visible speech movements on the screen; and 5) *character synchrony* between the image of the character and his or her voice and words. In a subtitled film, subtitles become part of the already complex semiotic system as an addition to the finished film. If subtitles are to function effectively, they must respect the established synchrony between the different sign systems in the original film and at the same time interact with and rely on these sign systems.

#### Polysemiotic

Subtitling operates in a polysemiotic text and needs to be in harmony with the flow of other channels. Only in this way, can subtitles be in harmony with the entire polysemiotic ST and together with all the channels of the ST form a new coherent polysemiotic text – the TT which is defined as “polysemiotic ST + subtitles” (Pedersen, 2011: 10). It can be seen that subtitling has challenged the traditional understanding of ST, TT and even the very concept of translation. Furthermore, because of the unique way in which subtitling operates, this form of translation is subject to distinctive

technical restrictions, mainly the spatial-temporal factor concerning screen size and audience reading speed.

The spatial factor refers to the fact that only a certain number of characters can fit into one line and that a maximum subtitle length of two lines is recommended. As to the number of characters, Pedersen (2011: 19) believes that older subtitles normally consisted of 28-32 characters, but a full line of contemporary subtitling is considered to have 36 characters and a full two-liner 72 characters. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 96) speak of a maximum of some 37 characters in each line and a total of 74 characters in a full two-liner. The temporal factor is closely linked to the spatial factor and refers to the fact that the message contained in the subtitles needs a certain amount of display/exposure time in order for the viewer to be able to read and process it. Researchers generally consider some three seconds for a full one-liner (de Linde & Kay, 1999: 7) and six seconds for a two-liner (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998: 64).

The unique way in which subtitling operates and the technical restrictions it is subject to have challenged the understanding of equivalence as a central concept in translation theory. Translation has been defined in terms of equivalence relations (e.g. Catford, 1965; Nida & Taber, 1969; Pym, 1992; Toury, 1980). The concept of equivalence was once particularly associated with the now heavily critiqued early linguistic theories of translation of the 1960s when theorists asked whether two texts were equivalent according to some pre-defined, prescriptive criterion of equivalence (Kenny, 2009: 99). Therefore, it is no surprise that some researchers were once hesitant to treat subtitling as a case of translation but to give it different names, such as adaptation or “transadaptation” (Gambier, 2003). Toury (1980, 1995) sees equivalence as an empirical phenomenon in translation studies and treats the existence of equivalence between TTs and STs as a given. His approach, to a large extent, has helped end the debate on whether subtitling is a form of translation. Toury’s work, especially his notion of norms, will be discussed further in Section 3.2.1. In the field of AVT Studies, Delabastita (1989: 214), opts for a highly flexible notion of translation and points out that a limited and prescriptive definition of translation “is in danger of being applicable to very few, well-selected cases, and of being unsuitable for a description of most actual fact”. Delabastita is representative of a trend and an approach that is shared by most researchers today. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 10) firmly state that “translation must

be understood from a more flexible, heterogeneous and less static perspective, one that encompasses a broad set of empirical realities and acknowledges the ever-changing nature of practice.” It can be seen that studies of AVT have made an enormous contribution to the conceptual development and interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies. A example is Zabalbeascoa’s (2008) exhaustive survey of audiovisual text types and his advocacy of including the translation of texts constituted by any of the four dimensions – audio, visual, verbal and non-verbal – as AVT.

It is now established that subtitles form part of the TT and co-exist with other channels originally present in the ST. The question now is how the various channels are interconnected and coexist. This is a question concerning the semiotic texture of a polysemiotic text.

### **2.3.2 Semiotic texture, cohesion and coherence**

Gottlieb (2005b: 3) proposes twelve “source text parameters” as “source-defining factors” that can provide “a compilation of filters through which one will get a pretty exact multi-dimensional profile of any text” for translation studies purposes. The twelve parameters are: 1) *factuality* (falsifiable/non-falsifiable text), 2) *function* (informative vs. involving vs. entertaining), 3) *authority* (normative/non-normative), 4) *actual age of text* (recent vs. aged vs. classical), 5) *setting* (familiar vs. exotic), 6) *stylistic conventions* (shared conventions vs. culture-specific conventions), 7) *text life* (permanent vs. temporary), 8) *semiotic texture* (monosemiotic vs. polysemiotic), 9) *language mode* (spoken vs. written), 10) *rhythm of reception* (real-time vs. audience-defined), 11) *author identity* (know/unknown) and 12) *audience* (private vs. public). Gottlieb (2005b: 4) points out that such a profile about the ST may “serve as a valuable intercultural tool for assessing the technical, communicative and receptive potentials of a translation of the text in question”. What concerns the current study is the parameter of semiotic texture.

Texture is a predominant domain of text linguistics as it constitutes the essential property of a linguistic text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 1-2). Cohesion and coherence are important concepts concerning texture. The former is “the network of surface relations which link words and expressions to other words and expressions in a text” while the latter refers to “the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text”

(Baker, 1992/2011: 230). In Hoey's (1991: 12) terms, cohesion is "a property of the text" and is "objective, capable in principle of automatic recognition", while coherence is "a facet of the reader's evaluation of a text" and is "subjective" with judgements varying from reader to reader.

Following Hoey's line of argument, one can make the following assumptions: The producer of a text makes use of cohesive devices to construct a text that s/he hopes is coherent to the intended users. The users are not passive recipients of the text; instead they engage their world knowledge and personal experience in processing the cohesion presented to pre-suppose, implicate and infer meaning when receiving the text (Mason, 1998: 170). The users make judgements on whether the text is coherent and/or to what extent. There are no two persons in the world who are identical in terms of world knowledge, personal experience or cognition; therefore the coherence that the text producer wishes users to find is different from the actual coherence any user perceives.

When a text travels to a different culture, it would appear to be of no or very low coherence to its new users who do not understand the language used to construct this text unless the text is translated. A translator's job can therefore be seen as helping the text users from a different culture to establish coherence of this text. How the translator achieves this objective is a complex issue. It involves how the translator perceives the coherence of the ST, what the translator believes prevents the target reader from achieving the same coherence, and what the translator believes s/he can do to overcome obstacles in order to achieve the closest coherence possible. If the translator is successful, a pragmatic equivalence is established between the ST and the TT.

Work on texture, particularly that on cohesion and coherence, has informed theorists and practitioners in the field of Translation Studies from the perspective of text analysis (e.g. Baker, 1992/2011; Blum-Kulka, 1986/2004; Newmark, 1988). Hatim (1998/2001: 265) points out that the search for underlying coherence, over and above cohesion realised through the use of cohesive devices, has proven to be most relevant to the work of the translator. Zabalbeascoa (1997: 329) comments that the realisation that the texts and utterances, rather than languages, are the objects of translation has helped tremendously in the development of the field of Translation Studies. This holistic

approach is, without doubts, beneficial to the development of audiovisual translation as a subfield of Translation Studies.

When examining a polysemiotic text as a ST for translation activities, messages conveyed in various signs and through various channels should be treated as an interactive whole: this is believed to be the essence of Gottlieb's (2005b) parameter of semiotic texture – the structure-in-detail of a text in terms of semiotic composition. In a polysemiotic text, such as a film, various signs in multiple modes – visual/aural, verbal/nonverbal, intentional/unintentional, implicit/explicit – all combine to create a network of messages to be received by the viewers (Delabastita, 1989: 199; Gottlieb, 1994a). This network of messages forms a multimodal system of communication between the film and the viewers. The messages are produced and received through four channels (aural-verbal, aural-nonverbal, visual-verbal and visual-nonverbal) in a synchronized manner (Delabastita, 1989: 199; Gottlieb, 1994a) with the screen playing a coordinating role in the presentation process (Negroponte, 1991).

This network of messages, which is produced through the interplay between various semiotic modes, creates a coherent fictional world within a specific geographical, historical, temporal and cultural context. A profound appreciation of such interplay is of significant importance to both translation practitioners and theorists so that a quality TT can be produced and more comprehensive understanding of AVT can be achieved academically.

Among the different sign systems in a film, image and dialogue are usually the two prominent ones. Marleau (1982: 274 cited in Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 50) explores the relation between image and word, which can take two forms: anchoring and redundancy. In the case of anchoring, “the verbal mode further defines information that is also given visually” and in the case of redundancy, “words and images communicate more or less the same information” (ibid).

The interaction between the verbal narration and visual narration has also drawn the interest of Chaume Varela, who extends the linguistic concept of textural cohesion and introduces the term “semiotic cohesion” (2004: 232-237 cited in Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 50) to refer to such interplay. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 50-1) draw on this

concept and analyse a short excerpt from a film called *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* to demonstrate how images or dialogue alone cannot present to the audience a complete, coherent story.

When a film is subtitled, the subtitles inevitably alter the cohesion and coherence of the original film and may cause differences in the reception of the film in the TL culture. To meet the requirements of the spatial-temporal restrictions is essential to the creation of semiotic cohesion in a subtitled film, but only the first step to the overall coherence. What is crucial to the creation of coherence is how the translator renders the verbal information and blends it with the existing modes and channels under the technical restrictions. The actual linguistic choices the translator makes are viewed as translation strategies and will be discussed in detail in Section 2.4.

### ***2.3.3 From semiotics to multimodality***

It is clear from the above discussions that researchers usually take a semiotic perspective in exploring the medium-bound features of subtitling and that the term ‘semiotics’ is used as shorthand for research that goes beyond verbal language without necessarily engaging with either structural or interpretive semiotics. The semiotic perspective emphasises the interplay between various communicative channels within a polysemiotic text and has established a good model to study subtitling in a holistic fashion rather than to be confined to the linguistic dimension.

In recent years, researchers have also taken a multimodal perspective towards the study of subtitling, and this can be seen as a step further based on the semiotic perspective in holistically understanding subtitling. Mode can be loosely defined as anything that makes meaning in a sense. Multimodality is “a new and rapidly developing sub-field of communication studies” (Kress, 2010) and describes approaches that understand communication and representation to be more than just language and attend to the full range of intersemiotic resources or communicational forms people use – images, writing, speech, music, gesture, gaze, posture and so on – and the relationship between them (Jewitt, 2009: 14). The theorization of intersemiotic resources is a key aspect of multimodality (Jewitt, 2009: 18) and “multimodal cohesion” (Van Leeuwen, 2005) is a closely associated concept which explores how different semiotic resources are integrated to form multimodal texts and communicative events via rhythm, composition,

information linking and dialogue. There are so far roughly three main approaches to multimodality (Jewitt, 2009: 28-37): 1) a social semiotic approach to multimodal analysis with Halliday's theories of social semiotics and systemic functional grammar providing the initial starting point; 2) a systemic functional grammar multimodal approach to discourse analysis with Halliday's social systemic functional grammar providing the foundations and central theoretical framework; and 3) a multimodal interactional analysis informed by interactional sociolinguistics, intercultural communication and multimodal semiotics. In this media-oriented era, all the three approaches can potentially provide new perspectives for the field of Translation Studies. More and more communications are realised through multiple modes including translation-mediated communications with AVT as a typical example.

The multimodal approach to AVT started with studies drawing on theories in the field of non-verbal communication. Chaume Varela's (1997) work is a good example. In addition to his interest in the interaction between verbal narration and visual narration from a semiotic perspective, he also speaks of the important role non-verbal information plays in audiovisual translation. Non-verbal communication as an interdisciplinary field has gathered momentum since the late 1950s (see Poyatos, 2002a). According to Chaume Varela (1997: 319), the non-verbal information items that can be relevant for translation purposes include paralinguistics, kinesics, proxemics and cultural signs. Paralinguistics (Trager, 1958) refers to sounds or "voice cues" (ibid) that accompany spoken words but "are not directly part of the language" (Ottenheimer, 2009: 166-7). Paralinguistics concerns specifically "how something is said rather than what is said" (ibid: 167) with voice quality and intonations being the most commonly noticed elements in this category. Kinesics (Birdwhistell, 1952) is commonly known as 'body language' referring to gestures, manners and postures. In most cases paralinguistic features and kinesics correspond to each other since both systems function within discourse in cohesion with verbal language (Poyatos, 2002b: 188). Proxemics is basically the "study of man's spatial relations" (Hall, 1963) referring to the spatial distance between persons interacting with each other and their orientation towards each other. Although variations are also based on gender, social status and environmental constraints, paralinguistics, kinesics and proxemics are culturally defined and studies have found significant differences between cultures.

When a film is shown to viewers in a different culture, the translator, among other issues, may need to judge whether messages conveyed non-verbally in the original film are viewed as coherent with the verbal messages. If there is incoherence, to verbalise the non-verbal messages in the translation of the film dialogue may be a desired practice. Perego (2009) has observed in the English subtitles the codification of non-verbal information carried by paralanguage, image and sound track in three Italian films through translation strategies such as addition, specification and reformulation.

Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 52) echo Chaume Varela in emphasising that various modes, such as the movement, gesture and positioning of characters in a film are all purposefully arranged so as to contribute to a coherent story. However they did not use terms such as ‘non-verbal communication elements’ but speak of the ‘multimodality’ of language. Multimodality can practically be an umbrella term to cover everything – verbal and non-verbal, visual and aural – in a filmic text. The interaction between any of the modes or sign systems can be included in the study of multimodality. Multimodality can potentially provide an unbiased and productive perspective to examine filmic texts as STs for translation purposes and as TTs. Multimodality has already informed studies in the field of AVT studies. For example, Chuang (2006, 2009) has drawn on core concepts in multimodality to investigate how the concept of mode works in the subtitling process and how the translator represents the meanings of the ST through the target modes. Film makes great use of multiple modes, and a good understanding of the relationship between subtitling and the meaning-making modes in film can provide translation theorists with a different angle to look into how meaning-making is achieved in the process of audiovisual translation, and also help translation practitioners with decisions on translation strategies. This current study is not geared at exploring the application of multimodality theories to study subtitling; however, the analysis and discussions that will be carried out in the later part of this thesis can be seen as from a multimodality stand point.

## **2.4 Translation Strategies in Subtitling**

Studies on translation strategies in subtitling usually go side by side with studies on its medium-bound features and the consequent medium-specific constraints on the translation process. Translation strategies are an important consideration in Translation



Studies in general. Methodologies, terminologies and taxonomies of translation strategies related to traditional written translation have greatly informed studies in AVT.

In the following sections, first of all, a general picture of translation constraints on subtitling is provided to explain the incentives for the application of translation strategies. Studies that attempt to compile taxonomies accounting for general translation strategies in subtitling are then presented, followed by a summary of literature on strategies for more specific translation-related issues in subtitling. After that, Pedersen's (2008) research on translation strategies from a speech act perspective is given special attention as his approach is thought-provoking and can potentially inspire further research beyond subtitling strategies.

#### ***2.4.1 Translation constraints on subtitling***

Based on the medium-bound features of subtitling discussed before, it is apparent that the characteristic constraints of subtitling are three-fold: 1) cross-medium constraints (the semiotic switch from spoken to written language), 2) feedback-effect constraints (the cohabitation of the ST and TT), and 3) technical restrictions (mainly the spatial and temporal constraints).

##### Cross-medium constraints

Because of the cross-medium nature of subtitling, what strikes translation researchers first might be the "general problem of register" with which subtitling is associated (Kovačič, 1998: 80). Although subtitles are supposed to reflect spoken communication, they are written sentences after all and the very move from the spoken to the written format "brings with it a necessity for editing" (Pedersen, 2011: 11). It is not possible or even desirable to incorporate all of the features conveyed by speech in the subtitles, especially when it is spontaneous and non-scripted speech; otherwise it would simply be a gibberish verbatim transcript in a different language. Therefore suprasegmental features of speech (hesitations, incomplete utterances, interpersonal signals, etc.) are usually absent in subtitles; otherwise "the audience would be taken aback by reading the oddities of spoken discourse" (H. Gottlieb, 1997b: 113).

However, film dialogues are not natural conversation. They are a variety of language that has been described as fictional, "simulated" (Pavesi & Freddi, 2009: 11), "pre-fabricated" (Chaume Varela, 2004: 168; Romero, 2011: 19) and "written to be spoken

as if not written”(Gregory & Carroll, 1978: 42). Film dialogues have a double-layered nature and operate “by duplicity” (Kozloff, 2000: 16) in the sense that they are not spontaneous but must appear to be so and that they are permanent but must appear to be as ephemeral as the speech they imitate.

Research into the linguistic features of film dialogues has shown that in some cases there is a strong similarity between dialogues in films and TV and spontaneous spoken language (e.g. Quaglio, 2008; Quaglio & Biber, 2006) especially in more recent films, as there is a historical trend towards a greater degree of realism in film language in general (Perego & Taylor, 2009: 60). In some other cases, certain features typical of the spoken language in its natural form, spontaneous and unselfconscious, are less frequent or conspicuously missing in film dialogues (Taylor, 2006) where there seems to be a co-existence of written language features (e.g. complete sentences, grammatical accuracy, logical progression, polished final product, high lexical density) and spoken discourse (e.g. self-correction, frequent use of linkage items such as discourse markers, overlapping speech, low lexical density) (Perego & Taylor, 2009: 61).

Although film dialogues do not share all the features of spontaneous speech, they are speech after all and certain features may be edited when they are subtitled. Researchers have looked into the editing of some specific linguistic units in film dialogues when they are subtitled, for example vocatives (e.g. Bruti & Perego, 2010; Szarkowska, 2010), but more systematic studies are yet to depict the overall picture of retention and editing of linguistic features of film dialogues in subtitling.

#### Feedback-effect constraints

Due to the cohabitation of the ST and TT in the context of subtitling, the TT recipients may react to a particular translation solution based on the information they receive at the same time from other channels of the film. This possible reaction is called “feed-back effect” by Nedergaard-Larsen (1993). Although she sees that feed-back effect may give rise to medium-related factors that determine the scope of translation problems in subtitling, Nedergaard-Larsen also positively believes that this effect can be made good use of by the translator to compensate for loss of information due to cross-medium constraints and/or technical restrictions.

<b>Feed-back effects in subtitling</b>	
Visuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gestures, facial expression</li> <li>• Objects, scenery</li> <li>• Text (signs)</li> </ul>
Soundtrack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosody</li> <li>• Dialect etc.</li> <li>• (proper) names</li> <li>• The order of elements</li> <li>• Sound effects</li> </ul>

*Table 2-1 Feed-back effects in subtitling (adapted from Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993: 212)*

### Technical restrictions

Technical restrictions on subtitling that give rise to translation constraints are mainly from the spatial and temporal dimensions. Relevant factors that have been discussed most in literature include the maximum number of lines, the maximum number of characters in each subtitle and the minimum reading time for the viewer. Researchers, for example Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), have taken into consideration other factors that can impose constraints on subtitling to various extents.

<b>Technical considerations relating to the spatial and temporal dimensions in subtitling</b>	
Spatial dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum number of lines and position on the screen</li> <li>• Font type and number of characters per line</li> <li>• One-liners and two-liners</li> <li>• Centred and left-aligned</li> </ul>
Temporal dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spotting and duration of subtitles</li> <li>• Synchronization</li> <li>• Multiple voices</li> <li>• Shot changes</li> <li>• Delay function between subtitles</li> <li>• One-liners and two-liners</li> <li>• Timecodes</li> <li>• Reading time</li> <li>• Six-second rule</li> <li>• DVD reading speed</li> </ul>

*Table 2-2 Technical considerations relating to the spatial and temporal dimensions in subtitling (Slightly revised from Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007: 69-101)*

A number of researchers have looked into the translation constraints related to subtitling. The following are examples of such work. Gottlieb (1992) speaks of two types of constraints: formal (or quantitative) and textual (or qualitative). The former refers to the spatial-temporal factors and the latter refers to the visual context of the film. Other

researchers consider more specific constraints such as synchronisation of the subtitles with the image (Kovačič, 1998) and the difference between the speed of spoken language and the speed of reading the subtitles (Schwarz, 2002). Bogucki (2004: 110-118) lists six types of constraints on subtitling: quantitative constraints (length of the subtitles), cross-medium constraints, cultural constraints, constraints on register and style, fixed equivalents constraints and language-specific constraints.

#### ***2.4.2 Studies on subtitling strategies***

Due to the medium-bound nature of the activity and the consequent translation constraints, the strategies employed by the translator in subtitling are threefold (Nir, 1984: 91): those employed to deal with traditional translation problems arising from the transfer of text from one language to another; those employed to resolve language style problems as a result of the medium conversion from speech to writing; and those employed to overcome the cohesion problems caused by the fact that subtitles only form part of a polysemiotic target text.

In the early writings about subtitling, researchers usually saw medium-bound features as hurdles for translation and they were keen on giving advice on how subtitles should be done and therefore most writings then were prescriptive in nature. In fact, in Translation Studies in general, most earlier writings on strategies carried a strong prescriptive tone (e.g. Wilss, 1983). Later researchers were generally critical of this ‘We Know Better’ approach (e.g. Lörscher, 1991; Toury, 1995) and tend to take a descriptive stance. Leppihalme (1997: 26-7) has observed a tendency to use the term strategy both in a descriptive and a more or less implicitly prescriptive sense and she believes that it is appropriate to do so in the kind of translation research which hopes to have practical and pedagogical implications. Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) emerged as a branch of Translation Studies in the 1980s, aiming to find out “what (a segment of the vast phenomenon of) translation *is* like (and *why*, as DTS is descriptive-explanatory), and not what translation *should be* like” (Pedersen, 2011: 25, emphasis in the original). More detailed discussion on DTS will be carried out in Section 3.2.1.

Since the 1990s, in line with the overall trend in Translation Studies, studies on translation strategies in subtitling have also tended to be more descriptive and can be roughly broken down into three categories: attempts to compile general taxonomies of

strategies in subtitling, case studies on strategies in specific films or work of directors, and studies on strategies dealing with specific types of linguistic issues.

### General subtitling taxonomies

Translation strategies are usually presented as taxonomies. As Gambier (2010: 413) has observed, “most of the publications on strategy deal with types of texts and/or types of problems – both types can be combined.” For example, there are general translation taxonomies (e.g. Chesterman, 1997; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/2004) and more specialised taxonomies for rendering various forms of cultural items (e.g. Leppihalme, 1997; Newmark, 1981); there are general subtitling taxonomies (e.g. Gottlieb, 1992; Lomheim, 1999) and more specialised subtitling taxonomies for rendering culture (e.g. Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993; Pedersen, 2011). In the coming paragraphs, the taxonomies of strategies established by Gottlieb (1992), Lomheim (1999) and Georgakopoulou (2010) will be presented and discussed.

Gottlieb is among the pioneers who attempted to compile taxonomies to account for translation strategies in subtitling. In 1992, he presented a taxonomy of ten strategies (Gottlieb, 1992: 166) and described half of them as related to a media-specific type:

<i>Type of strategy</i>	<i>Character of translation</i>	<i>Media specific type?</i>
1) Expansion	Expanded expression, adequate rendering (culture-specific references etc.)	No
2) Paraphrase	Altered expression, adequate rendering (non-visualized language-specific phenomena)	No
3) Transfer	Full expression, adequate rendering (‘neutral’ discourse – slow tempo)	No
4) Imitation	Identical expression, equivalent rendering (proper nouns, international greetings etc.)	No
5) Transcription	Anomalous expression, adequate rendering (non-standard speech etc.)	Yes
6) Dislocation	Differing expression, adjusted content (musical or visualized language-specific phenomena)	Yes
7) Condensation	Condensed expression, concise rendering (normal speech)	Yes

8) Decimation	Abridged expression, reduced content (fast speech of some importance)	Yes
9) Deletion	Omitted expression, no verbal content (fast speech of less importance)	Yes
10) Resignation	Differing expression, distorted content (‘untranslatable’ elements)	No

*Table 2-3 Gottlieb’s taxonomy of translation strategies in subtitling (1992: 166)*

Gottlieb points out that ‘condensation’ is often seen as the prototype of subtitling, but he criticises the usual confusion between quantitative reduction (of the number of words etc.) and semantic reduction. He distinguishes ‘condensation’ from ‘decimation’ and believes that the former involves only a loss of “redundant oral language features” (1992: 166-7), but does convey the meaning and most of the stylistic features. He believes that among the ten local strategies, only ‘decimation’, ‘deletion’ and ‘resignation’ involve a loss of semantic or stylistic content of the utterance. Gottlieb also believes that the audiovisual tracks can provide positive feedback and that “the translated version as a whole will often manage in conveying the message” (ibid: 167).

In the same study, Gottlieb applies the ten strategies in analysing the Danish television subtitling of Mel Brook’s feature film *Young Frankenstein*. He reports that all of the ten strategies have been used by the translator and the most frequently used one is ‘transfer’. He also claims that only 16% of the original verbal segments suffer a loss of semantic or stylistic information, and further points out that since not all informative value of the original segments is lost when they are subtitled, the total loss of verbal information in this particular film is considerably smaller than 16% percent. Gottlieb has not defined what he meant by ‘verbal segment’ or clarified how the figures concerning loss of information were calculated. The significance of Gottlieb’s work is that it shows that translation strategies in subtitling do not differ greatly from those in traditional written translation and that the central difference lies in the frequency with which these strategies are used. His work also shows that loss of information in the subtitles of feature films may not be as significant as in some other types of programme (such as TV comedy) or in findings by other researchers.

Gottlieb’s work is influential, and a number of researchers have drawn on his taxonomy and adapted it for their own research objectives. Lomheim (1999) comments that

Gottlieb’s strategies are problematic and not user-friendly due to the large number of categories and ambiguous distinction between some of them. He aims to present the subtitling process in a graphical way and more simply. He suggests six strategies – reduction, expansion, generalisation, specification, neutralisation and translation – and presents them in the following two-axis model. It is necessary to point out that Lomheim distinguishes between *omission* and *compression* in his analysis. The former is where items are entirely omitted in the subtitles and the latter is where text is merely edited down in the subtitles. It is believed that both *omission* and *compression* are encompassed in the notion of *reduction*.

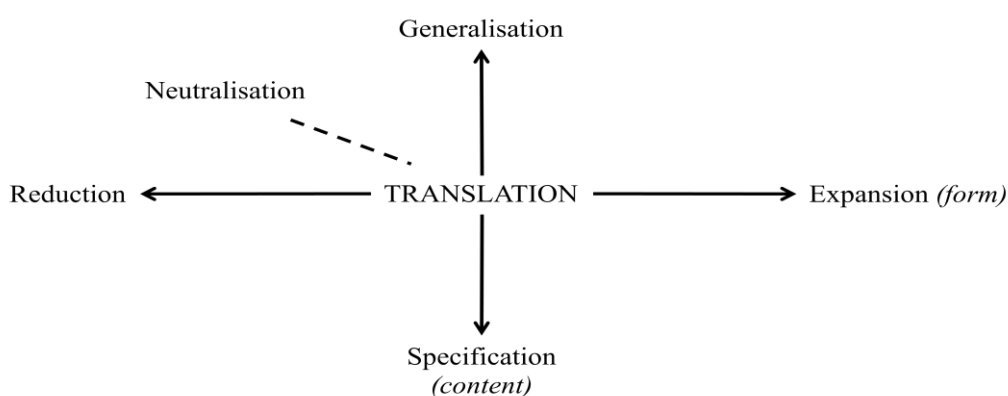


Figure 2-1 Lomheim’s translation strategies (1999: 207)

The horizontal axis represents form and the vertical axis represents content. The intersection of the two axes represents what Nida and Taber (1974) call “equivalent translation” where the form and meaning of the original are reproduced in full in the subtitles. Lomheim (1999: 200) uses the term ‘translation’ to refer to the strategy that “meets the requirements for equivalent translation” but Georgakopoulou (2010: 149) comments that this is “suspicious”.

With a focus on reduction, Lomheim applies his category of strategies in the analysis of three films that belong to different genres. His results show that the reduction levels vary in the three films and the primary reason is believed to do with the different genres of the films. Some researchers (e.g. Georgakopoulou, 2010) believe that the value of Lomheim’s classification lies in the fact that it consists of more clear-cut and easier to use categories. It is held in this study that Lomheim’s two-axis subtitling model is also of merit in showing the relations between form and content.

Due to the translation constraints on subtitling, especially the spatial and temporal constraints, many researchers have shown a great deal of interest in reduction as a translation strategy. Georgakopoulou (2010), for example, devotes a whole monograph to investigating reduction levels in subtitling from a dual perspective – the extent to which filmic characteristics determine the degree of text reduction in subtitling and whether national characteristics of European countries affect reduction levels.

Georgakopoulou further reduced the categories of strategies to three – expansion, reduction and transfer – to encompass different terms used by Gottlieb and/or Lomheim. Georgakopoulou (2010: 152) uses the following figure to show how her taxonomy draws on Gottlieb’s and Lomheim’s classifications.

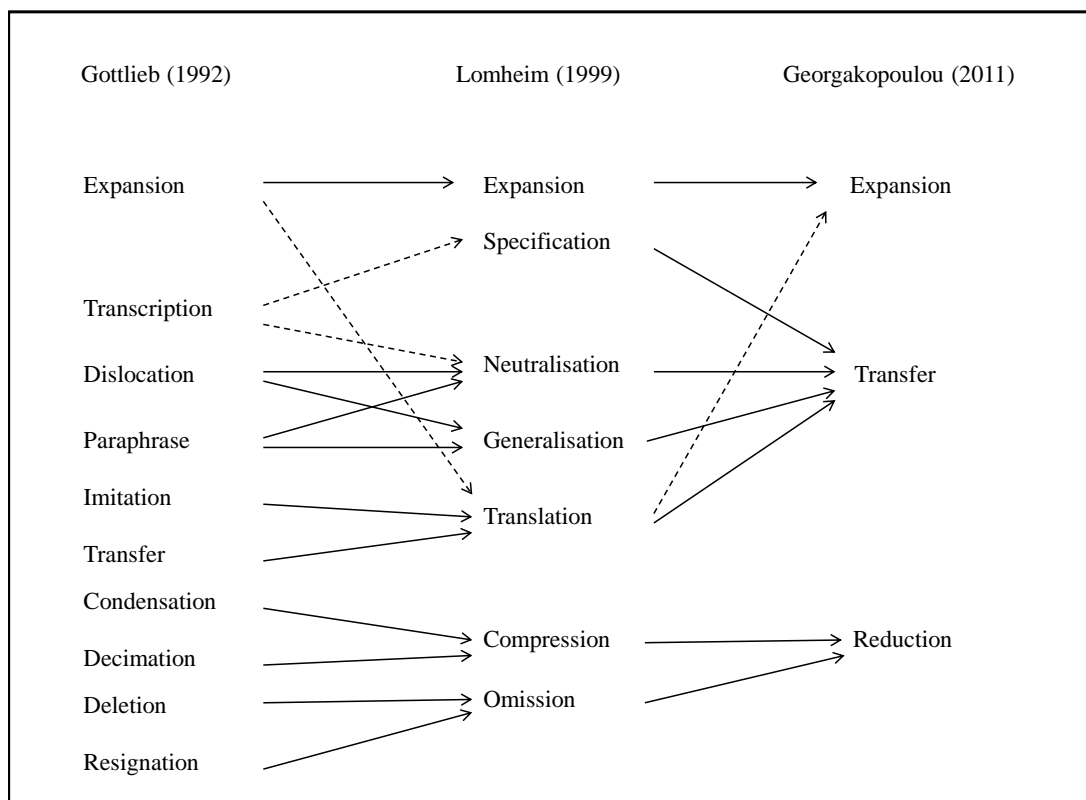


Figure 2-2 Comparison of translation strategies taxonomies: Gottlieb (1992), Lomheim (1999) and Georgakopoulou (2010)

The above three taxonomies are examples of how researchers present general translation strategies in subtitling. Their descriptive approach has shed light on the otherwise not directly observable process of subtitling. Their clarifications have however shown some common problems among taxonomies of translation strategies. The most obvious



problem may be the possible confusion caused by the various labels different researchers give to their categories. Different researchers may use different labels to refer to the same or fairly similar content or they may use the same label for different contents. Another problem lies in the degree of elaboration and sub-categorisation. According to Pedersen's (2011: 73) observation, some taxonomies have too many categories with a rather high degree of fuzziness between categories and are difficult for other researchers to follow, while some, on the contrary, have too few categories with limited explanatory power.

Gambier finds through his survey of translation taxonomies that most such taxonomies consist of 5-7 strategies (2010: 413). Pedersen (2011: 73-4), in line with Gambier, believes that an effective taxonomy consists of six categories at its baseline and that there can be further specifications, i.e. sub-categories, added to the baseline according to different research objectives. On the basis of his own survey of previous taxonomies, Pedersen (2011: 73) states that "the labels of categories vary almost infinitely, but the content of the categories is fairly similar". His observation further reveals that the general trend when constructing taxonomies is to arrange the strategies along an axis of source- to target- orientation. The category that is firmly situated on the source-orientation end of the axis is 'Retention', the label Pedersen gives to strategies that retain the ST linguistic expression in the TT. The category that is firmly situated on the target-orientation end of the axis is 'Omission', the label Pedersen gives to strategies where ST items are omitted or deleted. In between the poles, Pedersen has four more categories: Direct Translation (covering both 'calque' and 'literal translation' as proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/2004); see Section 3.2.3 for 'calque' and 'literal translation'), Substitution (replacing a ST item with either a TL item or a better known SL item), Generalisation (a TT item being more general than the ST item) and Specification (a TT item being more specific than the ST item). The six base-line items in Pedersen's clarification can form a general subtitling taxonomy. Since Pedersen is particularly interested in the translation of extralinguistic cultural references in subtitling, he continues to elaborate his taxonomy by adding a number of more subcategories. This study will not go into details of the subcategories but to present his six base-line categories in the following figure.

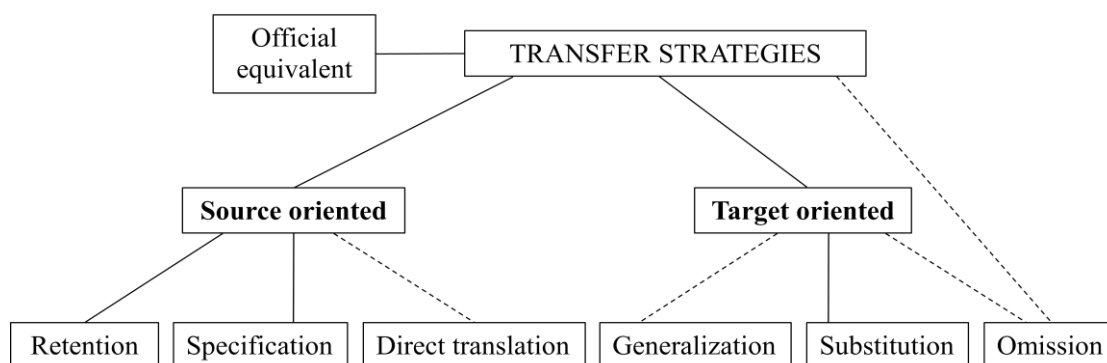


Figure 2-3 The baseline categories of Pedersen's taxonomy of subtitling strategies (adapted from Pedersen, 2011: 75)

### Subtitling strategies in case studies and on specific issues

In addition to compiling taxonomies of subtitling strategies, researchers have also shown interest in strategies in case studies and/or specific translation issues.

A large number of case studies have been carried out to discuss strategies used in certain films or TV series, or the work of well-known directors or film studios. Gambier (2008: 18) comments that these case studies on the whole give subtitling or even AVT a higher profile, but come nowhere near to developing specific issues in audiovisual translation. One main criticism Gambier (ibid) has of these case studies is that “some of them take subtitles more as a pretext for addressing a general translation strategy related problem [...] than as a specific corpus where the interplay of various channels in the polysemiotic text takes priority over linguistic perfection”.

Researchers also approach translation strategies by focusing on various specific issues. The most popular area of study seems to be cultural references and allusions. In recent years, almost every issue of journals and edited books on Translation Studies has articles and sections devoted to this area. Pedersen's (2005, 2008, 2011) work in recent years is worth special attention. He has not only drawn on traditional methods and approaches of general translation studies but also applied theories from neighbouring disciplines to explore subtitling strategies as components of creating an integrated polysemiotic TT. The following section will review one of his recent publications where a speech act approach is applied to translation strategies.

### 2.4.3 A speech act approach to translation strategies in subtitling

Speech act theory, developed by Austin in the 1960s, is one of the main models of language in use in mainstream pragmatics. According to Austin (1962), all utterances can be analysed as acts on three levels: a locutionary act (the actual utterance and its ostensible meaning), an illocutionary act (locutionary force related to the intention of the speaker, thus its real, intended meaning) and a further perlocutionary act (its actual effect on the hearer, whether intended or not). The speech act perspective has inspired pragmatics-oriented models of the translation process and “the assumption generally entertained has been that striving to achieve ‘equivalence’ in the act of translation is an attempt at the successful (re)performance of speech act” (Hatim, 2009: 205). In Blum-Kulka’s (1981) terms, translators, in the quest to approximate to the ideal of ‘sameness’ of meaning, constantly attempt to (re)perform locutionary and illocutionary acts in the hope that their rendition will have the same perlocutionary force in the TL.

Due to the various constraints on subtitling, Gottlieb (2000: 19) sees subtitling as a pragmatic form of translation and advocates speech-act-based translation strategies: “In subtitling, the speech act is in focus; verbal intentions and visual effects are more important than lexical elements in isolation”. Echoing Gottlieb, Pedersen (2008) also draws on aspects of speech act theory in exploring the basic unit of translation in subtitling and the hierarchy of translation priorities. Although his main purpose is to demonstrate how speech act theory can be used for quality assessment in subtitling, especially the translation of extralinguistic cultural references, his approach encourages discussions on subtitling strategies to go beyond the local level to a broader level.

Pedersen believes that it is important to know whom the dialogue in a filmic text engages (participants and non-participants) so as to locate the viewer’s position in a cinematic discourse. He follows Clark (1996) and identifies four different kinds of possible audience for any speech act: addressee, side participant, bystander and eavesdropper. The *addressee* and *side participant* are “ratified participants” by the speaker (Goffman, 1976). The ‘addressee’ is someone being directly addressed; the ‘side participant’ is not being directly addressed but may take part in the conversation if s/he wishes to do so. The *bystander* and *eavesdropper* are non-participants. They are overhearers who listen but have no rights or responsibilities in the conversation. The *bystander* is not a ratified participant, but the speaker is aware of them. The

*eavesdropper* listens in on the conversation without the speaker's realisation of their existence. Figure 2-4 below shows a model that includes all these participants and non-participants. This model was developed by Clark (1996) and adapted by Pedersen (2008).

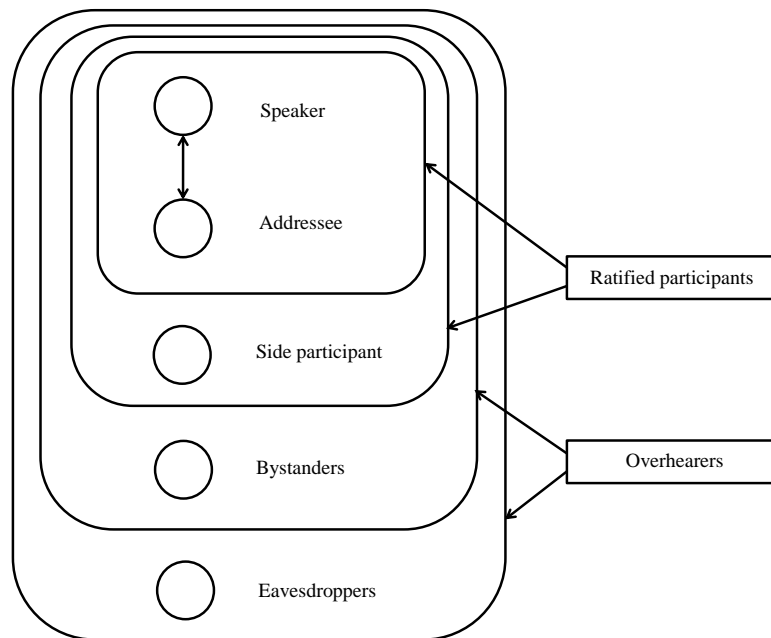
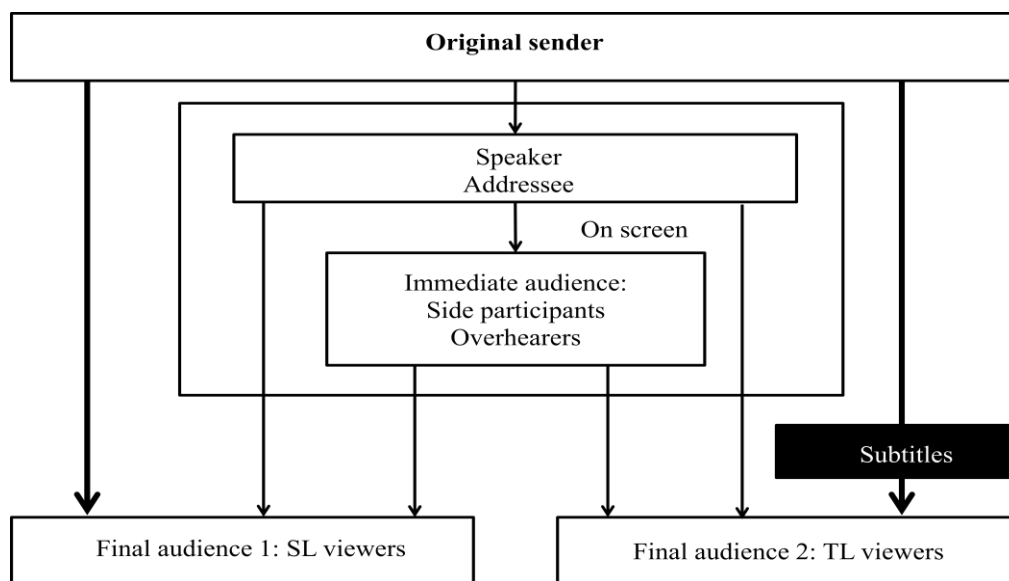


Figure 2-4 Clark's participant model (adapted by Pedersen, 2008: 108)

Where do the viewers fit in this model? Pedersen (2008: 109) labels them as eavesdroppers in that they do not participate in the conversation and their presence is not known to the participants. He continues to point out that these eavesdroppers, however, are the very reason for the conversation in a filmic text to take place. Although some researchers, such as Mason (1989: 16), class film viewers as participants due to the very fact that conversations in films and TV only take place because of them, the understanding of the viewers' position as eavesdroppers can be generally seen in film studies as well. For example, Kozloff (2000: 16-17) points out that film dialogue is purposely designed for the viewers to overhear and films disguise the extent to which the words are truly meant for the off-screen listener despite the fact that in reality a script-writer does communicate meaning to the audience via the dialogue of the characters on screen. On the basis of Goffman's work (1981), Pedersen (2008) proposes a model of communication structure in television to further elaborate

the overseas audience. Figure 2-5 below is an adaptation of Pedersen's model with TV-specific terms removed so that it can also show the communication structure in a film.

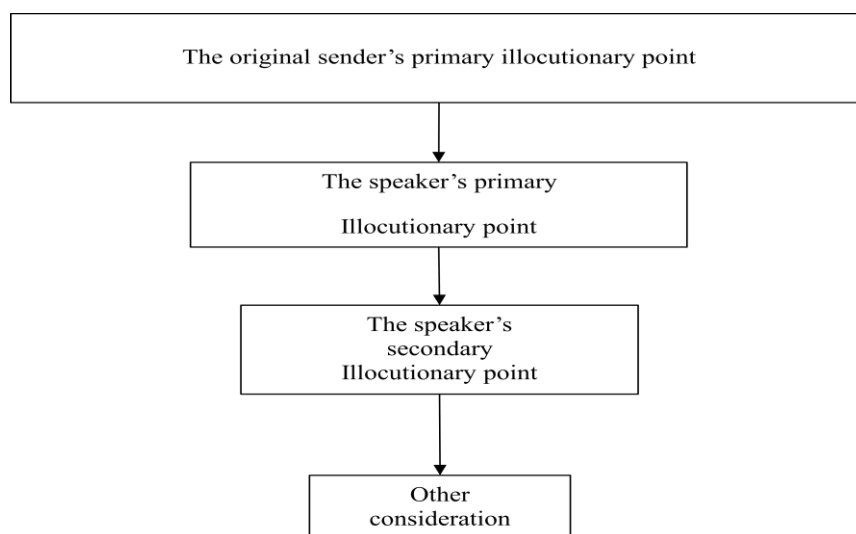


*Figure 2-5 Pedersen's communication structure in filmic text (adapted from Pedersen, 2008: 110)*

With regard to the model, Pedersen points out that although the speakers' speech actions on screen are at the centre of the viewers' attention, the real communication takes place on a higher level between the original sender and the audience. The original sender is an amalgam of people who are ultimately responsible for the production of the film or TV programme, and they communicate directly with the audience via the characters in the filmic text. When it is the case of a subtitled film, such communication is through the subtitles as well. Since subtitling is subject to various constraints, especially the spatial-temporal restrictions, it is not possible or even ideal to translate and include in the subtitles everything that is said in the dialogues. Therefore, the translator should not be confined to the actual term and form of an utterance but to regard a speaker's "primary illocutionary point" (Searle, 1979: 33) as the basic unit for translation. 'Primary illocutionary point' can be understood as what the speaker intends to achieve by making a particular utterance in a particular context (Pedersen, 2008: 107). Pedersen follows Searle and states that a speaker may convey two illocutionary points in the same speech act and the addressee needs to use inferential strategies to decide which one is primary and which one is secondary. When there is a conflict, the translator gives priority to and renders the primary illocutionary point. On other

occasions, if there is a conflict between a speaker's primary illocutionary point and that of the original sender's, priority is given to the original sender's primary illocutionary point.

Pedersen uses the following figure to illustrate the hierarchy of translation priorities based on illocutionary points. He believes that a felicitous translation can be achieved by adhering to the hierarchy because in this way it is true to the primary illocutionary point of the speaker and at the same time secures the illocutionary effect for the TT viewers.



*Figure 2-6 Pedersen's hierarchy of translation priorities (2008: 112)*

Pedersen's work draws attention to the position of the viewers in the cinematic discourse and stresses the importance of securing the illocutionary effect for the TT viewers. He advocates a broader perspective to look into translation strategies in subtitling, rather than merely concentrating on isolated linguistic items. His work can provide a good starting point for further studies: First of all, although Pedersen's discussion focuses on the viewers' position in the cinematic discourse, one can take his line of argument and discuss the translator's position in a subtitled film and his/her linguistic behaviour related to such a position. Secondly, Pedersen points out that subtitling, as a pragmatic form of translation, requires the translator to give priority to the speaker's primary illocutionary point over the surface structures of the utterances. However, he only states that one can use inferential strategies to identify the speaker's primary illocutionary point (2008: 111), and his study does not go further to explore the

possible factors that motivate the translator's inferential strategies. A translator participates in the cinematic discourse as a professional in order to translate the speaker's utterances into a different language for the target viewers. The inferential strategies that the translator uses to understand the speaker's primary illocutionary point are closely linked with the translation strategies s/he uses in the translation process. Both the inferential strategies and the translation strategies are processed in what Holmes (1972/2000: 177) calls "the 'little black box' of the translator's mind". Therefore, a cognitive approach is necessary to shed light on further understandings of these strategies and translators who employ them, which is what this current study aims to achieve.

## **2.5 Translation strategies – a Point of Departure for Further Studies on the Translator**

Medium-bound features and translation strategies are two central issues in the study of subtitling. The two issues are closely linked with each other and are often dealt with by researchers concurrently.

It is now an established approach to understand the medium-bound features of subtitling from a semiotic perspective. This approach highlights the semiotic cohesion and coherence achieved through the interaction between the various meaning-making channels in the original polysemiotic text and their collective impact on the subtitling process. It calls for a harmonious interplay between subtitles and the original polysemiotic text as an ideal practice. The semiotic approach has not only provided a fairly objective picture of the nature of subtitling but also facilitated the evolution of some key notions in Translation Studies such as 'ST', 'TT' and even the very concept of 'translation'. In recent years, researchers have also drawn on theories from the field of multimodality to study subtitling. This is believed to be a positive step forward in that multimodality takes into consideration more factors that influence meaning making and can provide a broader scope for the study of subtitling.

Studies on the translation strategies in subtitling have been deeply influenced by concepts in DTS, especially the notion of norms. Researchers have put forward various models and presented strategies in the form of taxonomies. At the same time, more

neighbouring theories have been applied to look into translation strategies from different perspectives. These studies have promoted a good understanding of both the process and result of the language transfer taking place in this particular form of translation. Findings of strategies can also have a high pedagogical value to nurture desirable professional practice, which can directly enhance the target viewers' cinematic experience.

Researches into the two central issues have helped raise the profile of subtitling and the whole domain of AVT, and have also contributed to the more dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies. However, many of the studies seem to be confined to the polysemiotic texts, in which subtitling operates, and content with descriptive findings of the employed strategies and the influence of various semiotic channels. The translator, who is situated at the very locus of the translating act, has been largely overlooked. It is important to go beyond descriptive findings and ask what subjective beliefs the translator holds, consciously or unconsciously, may have guided him/her to make such choices. Translation strategies are by nature concerned with prioritising and presenting messages of the original utterances to facilitate cross-culture communication. Therefore, the subjective beliefs that the translator holds can be seen as 'the translator's communicative assumptions'. The current study wishes to propose this concept and carry out research into the area of translator's subjectivity. The definition of this concept will be refined through theoretical explorations with the purpose to establish a model for the investigation of the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling. Findings about medium-bound features and translation strategies in subtitling can serve as a point of departure for the theoretical exploration.

Since humans are not always consciously aware of their subjective beliefs when making choices or decisions, knowledge about their beliefs can be acquired through studying their linguistic products that are shaped by such beliefs. Therefore, when aiming to learn about translators' communicative assumptions in subtitling, the first step one can take is to study subtitles in comparison with the original film dialogue. Findings from the first step should then be analysed in a framework informed by theories from the fields of film studies and human cognition so as to reflect the possible nature and features of translators' communicative assumptions in subtitling. Theoretical explorations will be made in the next chapter to look at how textual comparison should be conducted and



what possible results can be obtained and also to discuss what theories should be considered in order to form a sound framework to analyse the results of textual comparison in order to conclude about translators' communicative assumptions. It is hoped that the concept of translators' communicative assumptions can be refined and that a model to study the assumptions can be established in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Towards a Methodology to Study Translators' Communicative Assumptions in Subtitling: a Comparative-Analysis Model**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 has shown that vigorous studies about the medium-bound features and translation strategies as two central issues in subtitling have made important contributions but that the translator, in spite of his/her position in the locus of the translating activity, has been largely overlooked in academic exchanges. Therefore, the concept of 'the translator's communicative assumptions' has been proposed to highlight the translator's subjective beliefs that shape their linguistic behaviour in the process of subtitling, including their choice of translation strategies. This current chapter intends to make a theoretical exploration to refine the concept and establish a model for the investigation of the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling.

Section 3.2 starts with a brief account of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and its central notion of translational norms. Although this current study is not geared to revealing translation norms, it is believed that DTS and the notion of norms are able to provide a sound methodological approach to studying the translator. The concept of 'the translator's communicative assumptions' is tentatively explained in this section. The investigation into the translator's assumptions can be a way to visualise "the translator's voice" (Hermans, 1996) and to bring about more profound knowledge about the translator engaged in subtitling. The investigation of the assumptions can follow a bottom-up model starting with identifying and mapping micro-structural translation shifts by comparing subtitles with the original filmic dialogue. The current study argues that translation shifts are the manifestation of the translator's voice.

The translator's communicative assumptions fall under the domain of cognition. Section 3.3 first touches upon film perception and cognition and then discusses about the function of filmic dialogue and the lack of research in this area. It then highlights the dual role that translators play when participating in the cinematic discourse as a professional. The revelation of translators' communicative assumptions can be a key to understanding the link between the translators' dual role and their linguistic behaviour.

This section is to prepare a background for the analysis and interpretation of the translation shifts in subtitling.

The concept of ‘the translator’s communicative assumptions’ is further developed in Sections 3.4 and 3.5. The two sections are complementary to each other, delineating how Text World Theory (a cognitive theory of discourse) and Relevance Theory (a cognitive approach to communication) can lend theoretical and analytical perspectives for the interpretation of the results achieved in translation shift analysis. It is hoped that this chapter can lay a theoretically and methodologically sound foundation for the establishment of a repeatable model in the next chapter to investigate the communicative assumptions of the translator in the context of subtitling.

## **3.2 The Translator’s Voice in the Context of Subtitling**

### ***3.2.1 Descriptive Translation Studies and the notion of norms***

Chapter 2 shows that studies on subtitling are now conducted from a more descriptive perspective and carry a more positive tone compared to the prescriptive studies carried out in the earlier days. This current section firstly looks at the features of DTS and its status in the discipline of Translation Studies, and then explores how translation norms as a central notion of DTS can facilitate research on the translator involved in subtitling.

As a branch of the discipline of Translation Studies, the term DTS emerged in the 1970s following Holmes’s (1972/2000) attempt to chart the territory of Translation Studies as an empirical and historically oriented scholarly discipline (Baker, 1998/2001: 277) (see Figure 3-1). According to Holmes’s map of Translation Studies (1972/2000), *pure translation studies* and *applied translation studies* are the two major areas in the discipline.

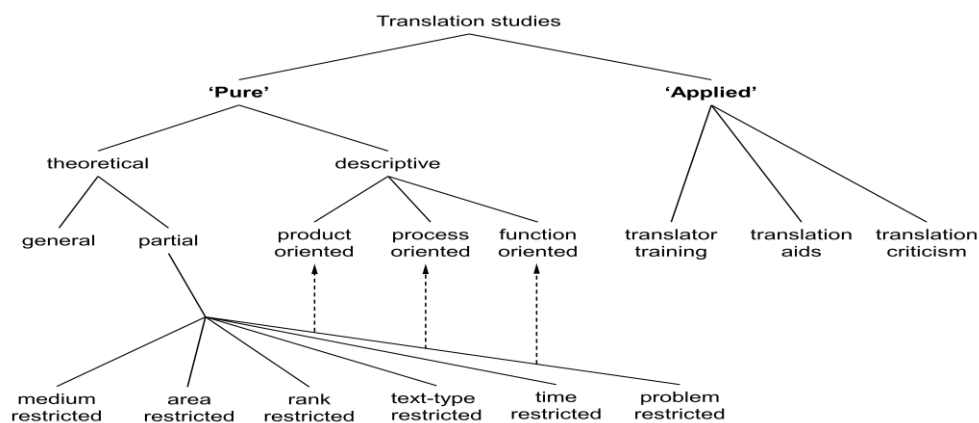


Figure 3-1 Holmes's 'map' of translation studies (Toury, 1995: 10)

Prescriptive approaches, which were influential throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and remain so at the present day, are relegated to the applied branch. Prescriptive approaches are most frequently seen in the context of translator training, serving the practical purpose of cultivating better translators and producing better translations. They are also employed by politically committed translation studies theorists, such as Venuti (1995), Baker (2006) and Tymoczko (2007), who “prescribe a certain way of translating which entails an activist and interventionist role on the part of the translator” (Brownlie, 2009: 79).

In contrast to prescriptive approaches, DTS is subsumed under pure translation studies and aims “to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience” (Holmes, 1994: 71). Holmes sees the main objectives of Translation Studies as to “describe, explain and predict translational phenomena” (Brownlie, 2009: 77), hence the importance of DTS. Holmes's vision was later greatly developed and refined by Toury (1980, 1995) who has made important theoretical and methodological additions to DTS.

Drawing on Even-Zohar's (1979) polysystem theory, Toury argues that translational phenomena could be ultimately explained by their systemic position and role in the target culture. Challenging the centuries-long dominance of prescriptive source-oriented approaches, Toury's approach is firmly target oriented. He advocates considering translations as “facts of real life” (Toury, 1995: 1) and sees the characteristics of translation being conditioned by forces of target culture. Toury emphasises the

importance of the social contexts for which and in which translation takes place and has proposed the notion of norms as another source of explaining translational phenomena.

Toury's notion of norms (1978, 1980) refers to regularities of translational behaviour within a specific sociocultural situation. He emphasises that being a translator is by no means simply transferring phrases and sentences across a linguistic boundary but involving a social role and fulfilling a function specified by the community. Therefore, translation, just like other social activities, is governed by norms that represent the shared values and ideas in a community at a certain place and time in judging right from wrong, acceptable from rejected and conventional from pioneering. In spite of what the term might imply, Toury has always stressed that norms are a category of descriptive analysis and not a prescriptive set of options thought to be desirable by the analyst or scholar (Baker, 2009: 190).

DTS and the notion of norms have been warmly embraced by AVT studies researchers (eg. Díaz Cintas, 2004a), and have informed a number of AVT studies (eg. Karamitroglou, 2000; Pedersen, 2011). An important reason for such an enthusiasm is that Toury chooses not to give an abstract definition of translation since what translation is can only be revealed after descriptive studies are undertaken. He takes what he calls "assumed translations" (Toury, 1995: 32) as the objects of study, which are individual texts and corpora considered to be translation in the society concerned. Since equivalence is treated as a given and always assumed in DTS, this can and has helped put an end to the debate on whether subtitling is a form of translation.

Toury (1995) suggests a three-stage procedure to identify norms through studying assumed translations. First, according to different research objectives, a TT or a corpus of TTs is presented together with their standing in the target culture. After that, the link between a TT and its ST is established by first identifying the ST and then mapping the TT's segments on their ST's counterparts. How the coupled pairs are isolated, extracted and analysed is also according to the different objectives of different research projects. In the third stage, tentative generalisations are made and norms governing equivalence for the selected pair of texts are formulated on the basis of the relationships established between the TT and ST. Different types of translational norms can be identified through

the realisation of different research objectives. Toury (1980: 53-7; 1995: 56-61) discusses three types of norms: initial, preliminary and operational norms.

Toury's initial norms involve a basic choice between adhering to the norms of the source language and culture so as to produce an "adequate" translation with respect to the ST and adhering to the norms of the target language and culture so as to be "acceptable" in that culture. Hermans (1995, 1999) criticises the two terms – 'adequacy' and 'acceptability' – for being confusing and conceptually suspect. He argues that a better alternative to replace the terms is "source-oriented" and "target-oriented" (Hermans, 1999: 77). Echoing Hermans, Pedersen (2011: 35) comments that 'source-oriented' and 'target-oriented' are positively "more neutral and transparent".

The preliminary norms concern translation policy and directness of translation. They are related to questions such as the text types and individual texts selected to be translated, the tolerance of relay translation in a society, etc. Pedersen (2011: 35) questions Toury's decision to place these norms after the initial norms and comments that it is like "putting the cart before the horse" due to the fact that a ST has to be chosen before deciding how to translate it.

Toury's operational norms pertain to the actual act of translation and are of two types: matricial norms and textual linguistic norms. The former relates to the macro-structure of the TT (degree of abridgment, changes in segmentation, etc), and the latter relates to the micro-level and governs local linguistic choices.

It can be seen that Toury's norm system takes into consideration not only translation products but also the whole process, and this holistic feature is regarded as its advantage by Pedersen (2011: 35). Much of the criticism of Toury's norms is related to its somewhat ambivalent terms (see Herman's above). Furthermore, Pedersen points out that in Toury's system all norms seem equally pertinent but in reality they have very unequal leverage. Researchers can, however, overcome this drawback by clearly defining their objectives and focusing on specific norms accordingly.

Chesterman (1993, 1997) has attempted to refine the notion of norms further by distinguishing between expectancy norms and professional norms. In contrast to

Toury's norms, Chesterman's norms are based on "the originators of norms, rather than on the translation process" (Pedersen, 2011: 35).

The expectancy norms are product norms that "are ultimately constituted by the expectancies of the target language readership" (Chesterman, 1997: 64). The readers' expectations are shaped by their experience as readers of translations produced by translators; therefore expectancy norms are influenced by the reciprocal interaction between readers and translators.

The professional norms are subordinate to expectancy norms. As summarised by Baker (2009: 191), they "emerge from competent professional behaviour and govern the accepted methods and strategies of the translation process". Professional norms are subdivided into three types: 1) the accountability norm, which is an ethical norm calling for the translator's responsibilities for his/her decisions; 2) the communication norm, which emphasises translation as social interaction and calls for optimised communication in translation; and 3) the relation norm, which is linguistic in nature, calling for the establishment of an appropriate ST-TT relation through the translator's understanding of the original text producer, the assumed readership and the purpose of the translation.

This current study aims to design a model and employ it to acquire more knowledge about the translator engaged in subtitling. A subtitled film is the assumed translation of the original version of this film. Regularities in translational behaviour identified in the subtitles can provide objective evidence to achieve the aim. Norms derive from regularities: once socially noticed, regularities of behaviour become conventions (Pedersen 2011: 31); when internalised by people and gaining a directive character, conventions become norms (Hermans 1999: 81). This is to say that the procedure Toury (1995) suggests to identify norms and both Toury's (1980, 1995) and Chesterman's (1993, 1997) categorisation of norms are helpful in the search of regularities in translational behaviour with the aim to know more about the translator.

It has been briefly mentioned earlier in this section that DTS and the notion of norms have informed of a number of AVT studies. Karamitroglou is a researcher in pursuit of a methodology for the investigation of norms in AVT. He believes that "what

characterises norms is the underlying coherent and systematic pattern of behaviour” (2000: 64) and points out that the emergence of a coherent behavioural pattern is generated by the systematic constellation of a series of factors. The translator is a rational, free-willed social being and his/her subjectivity should be among the series of factors. On the one hand, the translator’s professional behaviour is governed by norms; on the other hand, his/her subjectivity also has an impact on the evolution of norms. The translator’s subjectivity can be approached from different angles. This current study is most interested in the assumptions that s/he holds on how to achieve efficient communication in the process of subtitling as an act of communication.

It is believed that DTS and the notion of norms, especially Chesterman’s system of norms, can provide a good methodological approach to studying translators and their assumptions. An outstanding advantage of Chesterman’s system is its distinction between expectancy (product) norms and professional (process) norms and its emphasis on the role and influence of the translation receivers (Pedersen, 2011: 36). He places translation receivers in focus and attaches high importance to their expectations. In the context of subtitling, the impact that the medium-bound features and the consequent translation constraints have on the target audience makes it crucial to have the target audience in focus. As a result, the translator’s professional behaviour is geared to meeting the communicative needs of the audience.

### ***3.2.2 The translator’s voice and communicative assumptions***

Looking back at the history of the study of translation, one can see that translation theory seemed “locked” (Munday, 2008: 19) in a “sterile” debate (Steiner, 1998: 319) over the triad of ‘literal’, ‘free’ and ‘faithful’ translation for centuries until the second half of the twentieth century. After that, academic writings on translation focused on translation approaches and texts, and still largely neglected the translator until the “cultural turn” (Snell-Hornby, 1990) in Translation Studies in the 1980s. Through the cultural turn, a basic profile of Translation Studies as an independent discipline was established (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 47) and researchers started to move “beyond” the text and focus on the extralinguistic determinants of the process of translation (Lefevere & Bassnett, 1990: 4). In Sun and Mu’s (2008: 66) terms, the cultural turn “discovers” the translator, and as a result, translators and their professional behaviour have attracted increasing academic attention.



The cultural turn provided a historical opportunity and theoretical support to the study of the translator. New methodological approaches, especially DTS, have inspired and equipped the researchers to conduct studies in this area. Generally speaking, prescriptive, ST-oriented approaches do not attach importance to the status of the TT in the target culture and tend to prescribe what the translator should do. They naturally do not allow much space to study the translator as a rational, free-willed social being. DTS has broken up the dominance of prescriptive, ST-oriented approaches and places its focus on authentic translations in the target culture, which provides a sound paradigm to study translators and their behaviour.

Studies on the translator have mainly been carried out in the area of literary translation so far. In 1995, Lawrence Venuti published a book entitled *The Translator's Invisibility*. In this book, he argues that fluent, “invisible” translation into English insidiously inscribes neo-capitalist values in translated texts and results in the suppression of the foreignness of the source text. He urges the translator to use foreignizing translation strategies to challenge the status quo in the target culture so as to fight against ethnocentric violence. Venuti takes a prescriptive approach and does not attempt to account for the translator’s individual presence in the translated texts. However, his work has greatly aroused academic interest in the translator.

At around the mid-1990s, a number of researchers in the field of literary translation turned to narratology in their investigation of the translator’s discursive presence in translated fictions, with Theo Hermans as a representative figure. Hermans emphasises that narratology does not usually distinguish between original and translated fiction or pay any attention to the translator. The main question he poses is whose voice comes to the reader when s/he reads a translated text. He argues that “translated narrative discourse always contains a ‘second’ voice, ... the translator’s voice, as an index of the translator’s discursive presence” (Hermans, 1996/2010: 198).

Hermans’s views are shared by other researchers who also look at the translator’s discursive presence from the perspective of narratological models. Schiavi (1996: 14) believes that it is not possible for a translator to produce a text without leaving his/her imprint on it. She points out that the translator constantly co-produces the discourse

along with shadowing and counterfeiting the original words in the source text. May (1994: 33) states that “the translator represents a separate owner-creator with respect to the text, forming a complex triad with the original author and the internal narrator”. Bosseaux (2007) uses the concept of the translator’s voice as an entry point to the recognition of the transformations brought about by translation. She finds that the feel of the texts is not an inherent part of an original text because the linguistic manifestations of point of view, which is influenced by the translator’s discursive presence, can alter the feel of the original.

With regard to the manifestation of the translator’s voice, Hermans points out that the voice can be more or less overtly present in the text and it can also wholly hide behind the voice of the narrator. He himself is more interested in open or visible interventions of the narrative voice by the translator, for example, when metalinguistic, paratextual notes or comments are added (Hermans, 1996: 28). On the other hand, the covertly present voice is not directly observable and can be identified by a detailed comparison between a ST and its corresponding TT.

Giving examples taken from several (two English, one French and one Spanish) translations of a single Dutch novel *Max Havelaar* by Eduard Douwes Dekker under the pseudonym Multatuli, first published in 1860, Hermans talks of three types of situations where the translator is under pressure to “come out of the shadows and directly intervene in a text which the reader had been led to believe spoke with only one voice” (ibid). All the three types of situations involve what Hermans terms “performative self-contradiction” (ibid):

1) Where “the text’s orientation towards an Implied Reader and hence its ability to function as a medium of communication is directly at issue” (ibid). In this case, there are usually topical references and allusions that need the translator’s intervention for background information to ensure smooth communication. 2) Where self-reflexiveness and self-referentiality involve the medium of communication itself. Puns or polysemy can usually be found in this case. 3) Where “contextual overdetermination” (ibid) is involved. This can be “features or statements which create a credibility gap that the reader can only resolve by reminding themselves of the fact that they are reading a translation” (Baker, 2010: 194).

All the three types of situations can also be present in subtitling. However, in subtitling, there are always at play characteristic translation constraints caused by the medium-bound features of this unique type of translation, so certain local strategies frequently used in literary translation, such as footnotes, are not applicable to subtitling. The characters' voice in the original film and the translator's voice conveyed by the subtitles are present at the same time although the former is audible while the latter is silent. These voices are like a special form of chorus realised through the coordination of various meaning-making channels acoustically and visually. The subtitles are the indicator of the physical existence of the translator but his/her voice is muted and can only be accessed through a detailed comparison between the original dialogue and the subtitles.

The notion of the translator's voice has been applied to study AVT. For example, Munday (2006) applied the notion to study translational stylistics in AVT and regards 'style' as the "manifestation" (ibid : 21) of the translator's discursive presence. In his study, 'style' refers to not only the consciously motivated choices as described by Hatim and Mason (1990: 4) but also the "linguistic thumbprint" (Leech & Short, 1981) left by the translator's unconscious patterning of language selections that may manifest itself in a preference for particular lexical items, grammatical words, idioms or syntactic structures (Munday, 2006: 22-3). Munday points out that despite the crucial role of the visual element in films and the argument about subtitling being more like interpreting than written translation, "there is no inherent reason why the linguistic element of film and written translation should not be analysed in similar fashion even if the results of the stylistic analysis eventually demonstrate differences between the media" (ibid: 27). Although not geared to investigating style in AVT, this current study agrees that linguistic comparison between an original film and its subtitled version can lay a good basis for the revelation of the translator's voice.

The notion of the translator's voice is an important conceptual contribution to Translation Studies. It is a positive validation of the translator's subjectivity as a legitimate interference in the translated text. It encourages researchers to study the translator and the impact of his/her linguistic behaviours in authentic translated texts, which is in line with the pursuit of DTS. The application of this notion in the field of subtitling can further the understanding of the translator engaged in this unique type of

translation where constraints are at their most vivid due to the characteristic medium-bound features. This current study is interested in investigating the voice from a communicative perspective, especially how such voice is related to the facilitation of communication in subtitling, rather than from a narratological perspective such as in Hermans's work (1996).

Subtitling, like other types of translation, is a purposeful communicative activity. The translator of a feature film is expected to facilitate the target audience in understanding a polysemiotic text in which the characters speak a foreign language. It was discussed in Chapter 2 that peculiar constraints are imposed on the translator in the context of subtitling, who in turn employs various translation strategies in composing subtitles. It is believed that any linguistic choices the translator makes, consciously or unconsciously, are intended to meet the target audience's needs for information in their cinematic experience. Therefore, the assumptions, which translators hold concerning what they are supposed to do in order to fulfil such an intension, have a direct impact on the translation process and the content of the subtitles. Such assumptions are termed 'the translator's communicative assumptions' in this study and refer to any beliefs the translator holds, consciously or unconsciously, in regulating his/her linguistic choices in the purposeful communicative activity of subtitling. The translator's communicative assumptions are believed to form part of the translator's voice. Knowledge of the assumptions in the context of subtitling can lead to a better understanding of the motive behind the translator's choices of translation strategies and reveal the translator's approach in handling information conveyed in the various meaning-making channels in the original feature film. Findings on the assumptions can also shed light on how the reviewers' cinematic experience is influenced by the translator. The current study aims to establish a model for the investigation of the assumptions and apply the model to study the translator subtitling Chinese feature films into English. It is hoped that the concept of the translator's communicative assumptions will be refined and a detailed picture of the assumptions of translators engaged in the language pair of Chinese and English can be depicted at the conclusive stage of the study.

The translator may not always be consciously aware of the assumptions that s/he holds but their voice is already embedded in the TT. Therefore a detailed comparison between the ST and TT can vocalise the muted voice and reveal the translation assumptions.

Detailed text comparison first leads to the identification of translation shifts, which can provide a footing for the investigation of the assumptions. In the next section, the concept of translation shifts will be discussed and special attention will be given to van Leuven-Zwart's (1989) model for identifying and categorising micro-structural translation shifts.

### ***3.2.3 Translation shifts and van Leuven-Zwart's model***

Translation shifts refer to changes that occur in the translation process. The concept of shift belongs to the domain of linguistic performance (Bakker et. al, 2009: 269) and started to influence Translation Studies since the 1950s as a linguistic approach to the analysis of translation products in an effort to categorise the translation process. There have been further elaborations of the concept over the past decades, and researchers have proposed various typologies and taxonomies of translation shifts with a presupposed descriptive point of view.

Shifts are “a categorical quality” (Van den Broeck, 1984-5) of translation. Firstly, the systemic differences that exist between the source and target languages and cultures are “part of the opening conditions for translation” (Bakker et. al, 2009: 269). Secondly, the constraints that are inherent in the form of different types of translation make it not only necessary but also desirable for changes to take place in the process of translation. In the context of subtitling, characteristic constraints include cross-medium, feedback-effect and technical constraints (see Section 2.4.1). Translators deal with the systemic differences and constraints through their linguistic behaviour and generate translation shifts. Translators' linguistic choices may be arbitrary at times but they are largely governed by translation norms; therefore patterns can be found in shifts and the analysis of the patterns can lead to further understanding of translators.

In the 1950s, Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) carried out a comparative stylistic analysis of published French and English translations. They noted differences between the two languages and identified two general translation strategies that comprise seven procedures (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/2004: 128-37). The two general strategies are direct translation and oblique translation, which are similar to the literal vs. free division. Their notion of procedures is in effect similar to what Catford later calls “shifts” (1965). The seven procedures (1958/2004: 128ff) are 1) borrowing: the direct transfer of a SL

word to the TL; 2) calque: a “special kind of borrowing” (1958/2004: 129) where a SL expression or structure is directly transferred; 3) literal translation: word-for-word translation; 4) transposition: a change of one part of speech for another without changing the sense; 5) modulation: a change of semantics and point of view; 6) equivalence: same situation described by different stylistic or structural means; and 7) adaptation: a change in cultural reference. The first three procedures are subsumed under direct translation and the further four under oblique translation. In their discussions, Vinay and Darbelnet make a distinction between servitude and option (1958/1995). The former refers to obligatory changes dictated by differences between linguistic systems. The latter refers to non-obligatory changes due to the translator’s own style and preferences, which is stressed by Vinay and Darbelnet as the translator’s main concern (ibid: 16). Another key question they discuss is the “unit of translation” (ibid: 21), which they see as a combination of a “lexicological unit” and “unit of thought” and is defined as “the smallest segment of the utterance whose signs are linked in such a way that they should not be translated individually” (ibid). They suggest numbering the translation units in both the ST and TT in order to facilitate analysis: the units that have the same number in each text can be compared to identify the adopted translation procedure. Vinay and Darbelnet’s work is one of the pioneer and highly influential studies. Their detailed classifications still provide a framework for much translation teaching and practice today (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 24) and serve as a source of inspiration for later studies on shifts, such as van Leuven-Zwart’s methodology (1989, 1990).

The term ‘shift’ originated in Catford’s *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965) where he discusses shifts on the grammatical and lexical levels within the boundaries of the sentence. Catford (ibid : 27) makes an important distinction between textual equivalence and formal correspondence: a textual equivalent is “any TL text or portion of text which is observed on a particular occasion [...] to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text”; a formal correspondent is “any TL category (unit, class, structure, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the ‘same’ place in the ‘economy’ of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL”. Like any other transfer operation, translation involves an “invariant under transformation” (Bakker et. al, 2009: 269); therefore shifts are usually discussed together with the concept of invariance. Catford employs formal correspondence as the

invariant of comparison and points out that the textual equivalence between a given TL instance and its SL form does not entail formal correspondence between the units under comparison. He uses shifts to detail the type and degree of divergence between formal correspondence and translation equivalence and defines shifts as “departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL” (1965: 73). Catford considers two major kinds of shifts – level shifts and category shifts, and gives most analysis over to the latter (*ibid*: 73 ff.). A level shift refers to an instance where a SL term (e.g. expressed by grammar) has a TL equivalent at a different level (e.g. lexis). Category shifts involve four further types: structure shifts (changes of structure), unit shifts (changes of rank), class shifts (changes of class) and intra-system shifts (changes of term) (Bakker et. al, 2009: 272). Catford’s book is seen as an important attempt to apply to translation advances in linguistics at the time in a systematic fashion (Munday, 2001: 61). However, his work has been heavily criticised for its static comparative linguistic approach (e.g. Delisle, 1988) and the idealised and decontextualised sentences given as examples (almost all of his examples are invented and he never looks above the level of sentences) (Munday, 2001: 62).

In the 1960s and 1970s, researchers introduced a literary aspect in their writings on translation shifts. Popovič (1970, 1976) is one of the representative figures. He defines shifts as a stylistic category and emphasises the importance of the “shifts of expression” (1970). Popovič (*ibid*: 84) believes that a systematic classification and evaluation of the shifts of expression that occur in a translation should be carried out in relation to the entire system of expression. This system of expression is a necessary precondition for the establishment of shifts “in the sphere of style” (*ibid*: 83). Popovič uses style as an invariant for the comparison of source and target texts because he sees style as a multi-layered and hierarchically organised concept that covers not only specific stylistic means but also more abstract and general categories and qualities (Bakker et. al, 2009: 272). In Popovič’s (1970: 16) terms, there are constitutive shifts and individual shifts: a constitutive shift is “an inevitable shift that takes place in the translation as a consequence of differences between the two languages, the two poetics and the two styles of original and translations”; an individual shift is caused by the stylistic propensities and the subjective idiolect of the individual translator. It can be seen that the two concepts are close to but wider than Vinay and Darbelnet’s servitude and option and give more emphasis to style. Popovič (*ibid*: 82) believes that the style of a

translation is necessarily determined by shifts because of its “dual character” to comply with both the norms of the original and a given target “translation ideal”. The links between style and shifts that Popovič makes have been further explored by researchers. For example, Pekkanen (2007) sees a translation as a duet of the author and the translator and looks at style through shifts in literary translation.

Toury has also discussed shifts when developing his notion of translation norms. Within his methodology (1980: 89-121), the invariant of the comparison is adequacy at the textemic level. An Adequate Translation in Toury’s terms is not an actual text but a hypothetical construct, serving only methodological purposes: it is “a reconstruction of source text textemes and consists of an explicitation of the textual relations and functions of the source text” (Bakker et. al, 2009: 272). Toury takes the equivalence between a ST and its TT as a given. The comparison of a ST and its TT is to determine the distance between the actual equivalence found between the two texts and the maximal norm of Adequate Translation, and therefore to position the actual translation equivalence between adequacy and acceptability. Therefore, shifts are defined as deviations from adequacy. Toury is only interested in optional shifts that reflect the translator’s preferences but not in the system-bound obligatory shifts. Toury believes that further generalisation and expansion of the investigated corpus of STs and TTs can show certain patterns or statistical regularities of shifts and that such patterns and regularities ultimately lead to the discovery of the translational norms that govern translational behaviour. It has been discussed before that Toury’s DTS approach, his notion of norms and his assumed equivalence between a ST and TT have all made important contribution to the development of Translation Studies; however Hermans (1995: 218-20; 1999: 55-7) has made a critical assessment of Toury’s concepts of adequacy and acceptability (see Section 3.2.1).

Van Leuven-Zwart (1989, 1990) has made the so far most explicit and detailed attempt to produce and apply a model of shift analysis (Hermans, 1999: 58; Munday, 2001: 63). This model was designed in the first instance for application to “integral translations of fictional texts” (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 154) and follows a bottom-up procedure to compare originals and translations on an equal footing without privileging either side. Van Leuven-Zwart makes a distinction between shifts at the level of a text’s micro-structure and the effects the micro-structural shifts have at the macro-structural level.



The micro-structural shifts are identified and categorised through the application of a comparative model, and the accumulated effect is evaluated through the application of a descriptive model. The comparative model and descriptive model are complementary, and van Leuven-Zwart considers that the trends identified by applying the models can provide indications of the translational norms adopted by the translator.

At the micro-structural level, where the comparative model is applied, the invariant of the comparison is the architranseme (ATR) and the comparison is carried out at the ‘transeme’ level. A ‘transeme’ is a “comprehensible textual unit” bigger than a word but smaller than a sentence (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 155)<sup>5</sup>, which is determined with the aid of criteria derived from Dik’s *Functional Grammar* (1978). Van Leuven-Zwart identifies two types of transemes: the ‘state of affairs transeme’ and ‘satellite transeme’. Both terms are based on Dik’s notion of ‘state of affairs’ and ‘satellite’. An ATR expresses the common denominator in the relation between a pair of ST and TT transemes. A comparison is then made between each of the transemes in the pair and the ATR. The relationship between the two transemes is therefore established. The ATR has to be established separately for each pair of transemes. If both transemes have a relation of complete conjunction with the ATR, no shift is deemed to have occurred. Aspects of disjunction indicate the existence of shifts in translation. Identified shifts are divided into three main categories with a number of subcategories (see Table 3-1). Van Leuven-Zwart only logs substantial shifts, which are shifts of a semantic, stylistic or pragmatic nature that substantially affect meaning.

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<sup>5</sup> There are more detailed discussions on ‘transeme’ in Section 4.3.1.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>SUB-CATEGORY</b>
00 SEMANTIC MODULATION generalisation specification	01 – f/c/m 02 – aspectual element 03 – subjective element 04 – specific element 05 – intensive element
10 STYLISTIC MODULATION generalisation specification	11 – register element 12 – professional element 13 – temporal element 14 – text-specific element 15 – culture-bound element 16 – syntagmatic element 17 – paradigmatic element
20 SEMANTIC MODIFICATION	21 – f/c/m 22 – aspectual element 23 – subjective element 24 – concrete element 24 – intensive element
30 STYLISTIC MODIFICATION	31 – register element 32 – professional element 33 – temporal element 34 – text-specific element 35 – culture-bound element 36 – syntagmatic element 37 – paradigmatic element
40 SYNTACTIC-SEMANTIC MODIFICATION	41 – tense 42 – person 43 – number 44 – gram. class/function 45 – function word
50 SYNTACTIC-STYLISTIC MODIFICATION	51 – explicitation 52 – implicitation
60 SYNTACTIC-PRAGMATIC MODIFICATION	61 – speech act 62 – deixis/anaphora 63 – thematic meaning
70 MUTATION	71 – deletion 72 – addition 73 – radical change of meaning

*Table 3-1 Van Leuven-Zwart's categories of shifts (1989: 170)*

A modulation shift occurs where a ST transeme or a TT transeme shows one or more aspects of disjunction with the ATR; a modification shift occurs where both a ST transeme and a TT transeme show one or more aspects of disjunction with the ATR; a

mutation shift occurs where no aspect of conjunction can be found and therefore no ATR can be established. It can be seen that van Leuven-Zwart has drawn on Dik's *Functional Grammar* (1978) when clarifying the unit of comparison and that she takes as the point of departure some of the categories proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995).

Van Leuven-Zwart believes that the micro-structural shifts in each category have their cumulative effect on the macro-structural level. Her descriptive model is designed to evaluate such effect by interweaving two levels of narratological analysis (story and discourse) with three general functions of language (interpersonal, ideational and textual). The descriptive model is based on concepts borrowed from systemic functional grammar (Halliday, 1973), narratology (Bal, 1985) and stylistics (Leech & Short, 1981). In the end, van Leuven-Zwart presents a chart matching specific micro- and macro-structural shifts to the three functions on the discourse and story levels.

Van Leuven-Zwart's model has been applied by around seventy of her postgraduate students to some eighty Dutch translations of mainly Spanish and Latin American literary texts. The results showed a preponderance of semantic shifts, with semantic modulation and syntactic-semantic modification topping the list. Within the two categories, the frequency of specification was noticeably higher than that of generalisation, which runs counter to the widely held belief that generalisation rather than specification is a common feature of translation. There is also a clear tendency to explanation, mainly due to the insertion of function words and connectives (van Leuven-Zwart, 1990: 88-90), which is in line with findings in other studies where logical and syntactic relations are made more explicit in translation.

Munday (2001: 65) comments that van Leuven-Zwart's effort to relate the results of the micro-structural shifts to higher-level discourse considerations and her attempt to identify the norms in operation mean that her model goes further than the mainly linguistic comparisons which characterise Vinay and Darbelnet's and Catford's work. Hermans (1999: 62) states that van Leuven-Zwart's model is the "most detailed and systematic" bottom-up analytical tool built on "relatively clear and explicit concepts" with "the added advantage of comparability". Hermans (ibid) also sees the extension

into the domain of narratology as a bold move although further research should be done in this area.

However, there have also been criticisms on the drawbacks to van Leuven-Zwart's model. Firstly, the comparative model is extremely complex and not all the subcategories are carefully defined and differentiated (Munday, 2001: 66). This would make it quite difficult for other researchers to repeat the model. Secondly, due to the complexity and intricacy of the comparative model, it can hardly be applied to longer texts. The selection of fragments would be problematic as it would be difficult to evaluate the representativeness of the fragments (Hermans, 1999: 62). Thirdly, the application of the model involves a strong interpretive element, but interpretation is not given adequate space in the whole procedure (ibid). For example, when a shift occurs, it is possible that it affects meaning on more than one linguistic level at the same time, but the model only categorises one shift under one subcategory. Fourthly, it remains unclear how an accumulation of micro-structural shifts make a difference on the macro-structural level (Hermans, 1999: 63; Munday, 2001: 66). Van Leuven-Zwart (1990: 87) herself has recognised that the qualitative importance of some shifts outweighs the quantitative aspects, but her model does not clarify the difference in qualitative significance between categories of shifts.

It is believed in this study that the above-listed drawbacks of van Leuven-Zwart's comparative model can be overcome, and the shifts identified and categories through the application of this model can provide rich data that lead to the revelation of the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling. Details about how to apply van Leuven-Zwart's comparative model will be discussed in Section 4.3. Her descriptive model is not relevant to the aim of this study and will not be discussed further in this study.

In the next section, discussions will be about how translators participate in the cinematic discourse in the subtitling process. This is to explore the various factors that may have an important bearing on the emergence of the translator's communicative assumptions.

### **3.3 Translator in Cinematic Discourse**

A feature film is a filmic text, which is polysemiotic in nature. It consists of various signs that combine to create a fictional world through four meaning-making channels: aural-verbal, aural-nonverbal, visual-verbal and visual-nonverbal channels. Translators are assigned to render the aural-verbal messages only but inevitably expose themselves to the influence of messages conveyed in all other channels in the translation process. It is pertinent to look at how translators are engaged in the cinematic discourse in order to understand their linguistic behaviour. In this study, ‘text’ (such as ‘filmic text’) refers to an individual, concrete occurrence whereas ‘discourse’ (such as ‘cinematic discourse’) applies to a higher level and refers to the total event in which the text is functioning.

A translator in the context of subtitling is first a viewer and his/her linguistic output is meant to be received by its target viewers. Therefore, first of all, Section 3.3.1 discusses how narrative comprehension is realised through the viewer’s active perception and cognition. Then Section 3.3.2, through the discussion of three important concepts of filmic narration – fabula, syuzhet and style, looks at how the materials and form of the film are to encourage the viewer’s active engagement in narrative comprehension. After that, Section 3.3.3 focuses on filmic dialogue – a component of the film that is largely ignored by film theorists but placed at the translators’ disposal. Finally, Section 3.3.4 looks into the differences between the translator as viewer and the general audience and points out that these differences are among the contributing factors for the emergence of translators’ communicative assumptions.

#### ***3.3.1 Filmic perception and cognition***

When translating a feature film, the translator is first a viewer, whose linguistic behaviour when composing the subtitles is greatly influenced by their understanding of the filmic narrative. Theorists have approached the concept of narrative from three different perspectives: either as a representation, a structure or a process. To treat a narrative as a representation is to consider the story’s world, its portrayal of some reality, or its broader meanings, such as most studies of realism or character in fiction (Bordwell, 1997a: xi). To regard a narrative as a structure is to see it as a particular way of combining parts to make a whole, and Todorov’s (1977: 218-33) studies of narrative “grammar” are a good example in question. Alternatively, a narrative can be studied as

a process – an approach that is energetically advocated by Bordwell (1997a) who subscribes to the influence of the Constructivist theory of psychological activity, the dominant view in perceptual and cognitive psychology since the 1960s. Bordwell (ibid: xi) calls the process narration and refers to it as “the activity of selecting, arranging and rendering story material in order to achieve specific time-bound effects on a perceiver”. Following this vein of argument, Bordwell sees film viewing as a dynamic perceptual-cognitive process where the viewer actively deals with the story material and aims to achieve narrative comprehension. From a translation studies point of view, Bordwell’s approach to narrative as a process emphasises the viewer’s active participation and can yield a considerable scope for studying translators’ role and their communicative assumptions in the cinematic discourse.

In the field of film studies, the viewer used to be either neglected or depicted as a passive receiver of stimuli, such as studies informed by mimetic theories (e.g. Eisenstein, 1949) and diegetic theories (e.g. Metz, 1974). Since the early 1970s, both psychologists and linguists have conducted a number of empirical studies aiming to find out how people comprehend and recall stories (e.g. Mandler & Johnson, 1977; Rumelhart, 1975). Their most significant finding is that people perform operations on a story including inferring or guessing missing information, and making temporal, spatial and causal connections among events. This is in line with the claim of Constructivist theory that both perceiving and thinking are active, goal-oriented processes. Bordwell, therefore, asserts that the principal aim of narration is enabling the viewer’s comprehension of the story (1997a: 30) and that viewers “must take as a central cognitive goal the construction of a more or less intelligible story” (Bordwell, 1997a: 33) in order to comprehend a filmic narrative. Therefore, a film needs to be made in a particular way so that it can cue the viewer to “execute a definable variety of *operations*” (ibid : 29, emphasis in the original) in order to construct of a story and its world out of the film’s representation. Section 3.3.2 will concentrate on filmic systems, and in the following paragraphs of this section, filmic perception and cognition will be discussed in more details.

Inference making is a central notion in Constructivist psychology and can proceed from the bottom up in some cases and from the top down in some other cases. The construction of a story is realised through a viewer’s perception and cognition on the

basis of inferences. Perception and cognition are two closely connected concepts. According to Bordwell (1997a: 31), the typical act of perception is the identification of a three-dimensional world on the basis of cues, which tends to be anticipatory and is a process of active hypothesis-testing. Cognitive activities depend on inferential processes to help frame and fix perceptual hypotheses by “reckoning in probabilities weighted to the situation and to prior knowledge” (ibid). Cognitive physiologists generally believe that human cognition is structured around clusters of knowledge, called schemata: humans store information about familiar types of events and situations in their memory and cope with unfamiliar situations by comparing them with these stereotyped sequences of events associated with more familiar contexts (Gavins, 2007: 3).

When watching a film, the viewer actively applies sets of schemata derived from the context, existing knowledge and prior experience in order to assign the narrative some coherence at both a local level (e.g. character relations, lines of dialogue, relations between shots, etc.) and a broader level (e.g. consistency and relevance of the narrative) (Bordwell, 1997a: 34). Schemata play an important role in guiding hypothesis making and testing in the cinematic discourse. In principle, any schemata for events, locations, time and cause/effect may be pertinent to comprehend a filmic narrative. Hastie (1981: 39-88) has distinguished four different kinds of schemata: prototype, template, procedural and stylistic schemata.

Prototype schemata involve identifying individual members of a class according to some posited norm (ibid). They are most relevant for identifying individual agents, actions, goals, and locales and therefore each film calls on a particular configuration of them.

Template schemata refer to the tendency that prototypes operate in a larger structure. They are like filling systems allowing the addition of missing information and testing for classification of data. Researchers (e.g. Bordwell, 1997a: 35; Buckland, 2009: 7) believe that the viewer tends to presuppose a canonical story format and let this type of master schema to guide his/her inferences in narrative comprehension. The concept of canonical story format refers to an ideal scenario and is described in a sequence as “introduction of setting and characters – explanation of a state of affairs – complicating action – ensuing events – outcome – ending” (Bordwell, 1997a: 35). During the course

of film viewing, the viewer constantly makes sense of the temporal, spatial and causal connections of details and events and gauges how well the narrative at hand can fit into the canonical story format.

Procedural schemata involve employing prototype schemata and template schemata. They are in nature operational protocols concerning acquiring and organising information and framing inferences. Russian Formalists believe that procedural schemata operate by following characteristic rules, or “motivations”, and distinguish four different types (Tomashevsky, 1965): (a) compositional motivation – the viewer’s judgement about the relevance of certain material to story necessity; (b) realistic motivation – the viewer’s application of a notion of plausibility derived from the real world; (c) transtextual grounds – the viewer’s expectations or inferences based on the genre of narrative; and (d) artistic motivation – when the viewer decides that something is present merely for its own sake. The first three rules often cooperate with one another. Compositional and transtextual motivations are the most often employed, while realistic motivation is usually a supplementary factor. Artistic motivation is distinct from the three and is only resorted to by the reviewer when the others do not apply (Bordwell, 1997a: 36).

Stylistic schemata are closely linked to the reviewer’s prior cinematic experience and are applied as a top-down process. Theorists generally believe that the viewer’s schemata tend to favour narrative patterning and neglect, to some extent, purely stylistic patterns (Dijk, 1979; Fodor, 1983). The viewer can employ stylistic templates to infer or guess the reason for the use of certain cinematic techniques and can also employ procedural schemata at the same time to comprehend stylistic options unfamiliar to him/her; however s/he will still seek cues for constructing a story when confronted with a film that emphasises its stylistic features (Bordwell, 1997a: 36).

So far it has been established that film viewing is a complicated, constructive and dynamic psychological process. In this process, the viewer actively applies his/her schemata derived from everyday world, other artworks and other films in order to comprehend the filmic narrative. The coming section will look at how a film is organised in a way to shape the viewer’s application of schemata and his/her cinematic experience.



### 3.3.2 *Film as a phenomenal process: fabula, syuzhet and style*

It has been discussed in Section 3.3.1 that narrative comprehension, a central goal of film viewing, is achieved by the viewers through the construction of a more or less coherent story. The story is a set of inferences or an “imaginary construct” created in the viewer’s mind “progressively and retroactively” (Bordwell, 1997a: 49). In Russian Formalists’ term, the story is called *fabula*. Film theorists stress that the fabula is not materially present in any of the meaning-making channel of a film and that it is not a profilmic event or any kind of raw material available for the making of the film (e.g. Bordwell, 1997a: 49; Rowe & Wells, 2003: 79).

Since the fabula is constructed as mental representations by individual viewers, it is subjective and certainly “not a given” (Tynianov, 1978: 20). What is given is what is phenomenally present in a film – materials and forms that the viewer encounters. According to Bordwell (1997a: 50), a film consists of two systems – *syuzhet* and style, and a remaining body of material – “excess” (Thompson, 1981: 287-295). The components of film as a phenomenal process can be illustrated in the following diagram:

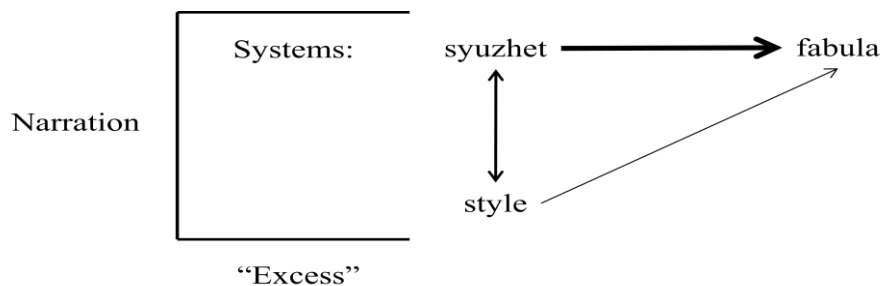


Figure 3-2 *Film as phenomenal process (adapted from Bordwell, 1997a: 50)*

Syuzhet is a term used by Russian Formalists, which is usually translated as ‘plot’. As opposed to fabula, the syuzhet is “the actual arrangement and presentation of the fabula in the film” (Bordwell, 1997a: 50) with the story events and state of affairs arranged according to specific principles. In Figure 3-2, the arrow going from syuzhet to fabula illustrates that syuzhet is “the architectonics of the film’s presentation of the fabula” (ibid: 50). This means that the syuzhet is the dramaturgy of the film. The syuzhet works on the fabula by first of all giving logic to what the viewer defines as events. The events are linked in a causal way and can be, for instance, derived from character traits and

their relationship with events. The syuzhet not only systematically encourages the viewer to make linear casual inferences but also facilitates the construction of the fabula in a particular temporal order and with specific spatial reference. In this way, a film narrative is presented as “a chain of events in a cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space” (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008: 75).

From the viewers’ perspective, their schematising and hypothesising activities towards narrative comprehension are guided by the syuzhet’s cues about causality, time and space. The specific way in which syuzhet presents the fabula leads to particular spectatorial effects. The tactics of syuzhet construction include the creation of various sorts of gaps in the viewer’s construction of the fabula and the composition of syuzhet through retardation and repetition (Pearson & Simpson, 2001: 125).

Gaps are information holes in the fabula. They are created when certain pieces of fabula information are deliberately presented while others are held back. Temporal gaps are the most common sort and there are also causal and spatial gaps. The viewer strives to justify the presence of the various gaps by resorting to the different kinds of schemata discussed in Section 3.2.1. Retardation refers to the delay in revealing certain information, which can arouse deliberately sought reaction on the part of the viewer, such as anticipation, curiosity, suspense and surprise. The syuzhet also intentionally provides the same information on more than one occasion through the same or different meaning-making channels with the hope to reinforce the viewer’s assumptions, inferences and hypotheses about fabula information.

In addition to syuzhet, style also constitutes a system in the film. Most work from a film studies perspective equates style purely with aesthetics (Munday, 2006: 23) and this opinion is also found in Bordwell’s works (e.g. , 1997a, 1997b). Style is referred to as “the systematic and significant use of techniques of the medium” (Bordwell, 1997b: 4) – *mise-en-scène*, cinematography, editing, sound, etc, and “is, minimally, the texture of the film’s images and sounds, the result of choices made by the filmmaker” (ibid). As a technical process, style coexists with syuzhet and the two systems interact with each other in various ways. As Formalists see it, the syuzhet system is generally dominant and controls the stylistic system. This means that in a typical narrative film, patterns in the syuzhet’s presentation of fabula information are matched by stylistic patterns. In

other words, style is customarily used to serve syuzhet and is trusted to be compositionally necessary and relevant by the viewer. Therefore, in Figure 3-2, there is a second arrow going from style to fabula; this is to illustrate that style, to some extent, also contributes to the construction of fabula. It can be seen that the arrow going from syuzhet is much thicker than the one going from style; this is to reflect the fact that the construction of fabula is mainly based on the information provided by syuzhet. However, Bordwell also points out that the film's style is not just a vehicle for the syuzhet (1997a: 52). It is a notable factor in its own right because any stylistic choice made may have different effects on the viewer's perceptual and cognitive activities. In some films, the systematic employment of techniques are not justified by the syuzhet's manoeuvre to manipulate fabula information. When this is the case, style is independent of syuzhet/fabula relations and engages the viewer to apply the 'artistic motivation' discussed in Section 3.3.1.

In a narrative film, there are also elements that do not contribute to narration and lie beyond denotation and connotation, such as casual lines, colours, expressions and textures that become "fellow travellers" (Barthes, 1977: 64). Bordwell (1997a: 50) follows Thompson (1981: 287-95) and identifies these elements as "excess". Excess lies outside the concern of this study and will not be discussed further.

It has now been established that a film can be seen as a phenomenal process containing two systems: syuzhet and style. Syuzhet is the dominant and its basic task is to present fabula information – story logic, time and space – through various tactics. Although existing in its own right and contributing to some extent to the construction of fabula, style is customarily used to enhance the psychological plausibility and compositional necessity of the syuzhet. Both syuzhet and style are intentionally organised to encourage and cue the viewer to execute a variety of operations so as to construct the fabula and to realise cinematic enjoyment. The viewer is by no means a passive receiver of a filmic text but an active participant in the cinematic discourse.

However, it is worth pointing out that Bordwell (e.g. , 1997a, 1997b) does not discuss film dialogue in his works. His mention of sound is only limited to music and sound effect. Bordwell's approach is not surprising given the fact that there has been a long history of prejudices against speech in film studies.

### 3.3.3 *The function of filmic dialogue*

In retrospect, the success of *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature-length film with synchronized dialogue sequences produced by Warner Bros in 1927, heralded the commercial ascendance of the talking films and the decline of the silent film era. Although being embraced in practice upon its introduction, film dialogue was not accepted in theory immediately and still remains in periphery in film studies.

Many early film theorists were full of contempt and even fear for the entry of verbal language into film. Metz (1974: 51) commented in 1974 that “the introduction of speech into the cinema did not substantially modify the attendant theoretical positions”. Since the late 1970s, soundtrack has attracted enormous academic attention in film studies, a phenomenon which is called “the rediscovery of soundtrack” by Kozloff (2000: 6). Although numerous studies have been conducted on sound technology, film music, sound effects, and sound theory, they only minimally addressed the most important aspect of film sound – the dialogue (ibid).

Why has film dialogue encountered such prejudice and indifference? Remael (2001: 15) offers an explanation: since the birth of cinema, film has been launched as a visual rather than a verbal medium, and part of its history and the history of film studies have been devoted to establishing this visual film medium as an art in its own right. In order to do so, film scholars and teachers have often consciously focused on the filmic aspect of the art form and deliberately neglected the verbal component and even screenwriting.

The emergence of film semiotics in the structuralist era of the 1960s is a good example for Remael’s reasoning. This area in film studies searches for the structures of a filmic code and began with the hypothesis of homologies between language and film (Nöth, 1990: 463). French film theoretician Christian Metz is one of the first who pioneered theories of semiotics in film. His semiotics is based exclusively on the methods of structural linguistics, comparing film with natural languages and defining cinema as a language without language system (e.g. Metz, 1974). Similarly, many other theoreticians at that time used phrases such as ‘the language of film’, ‘film grammar’, ‘the syntax of film’ and ‘film punctuation’ in a metaphorical if not simply wish-fulfilling fashion.

In recent years, the role of dialogue in films has gradually been “acknowledged but remains subordinated” (Hauge, 1988: 134-135). Sarah Kozloff (2000) is one of the few researchers who have carried out in-depth research on film dialogue. Drawing on narrative theory and drama theory, she analyses the functions that dialogue typically serves in a film and explores how dialogue works in tandem with other cinematic elements.

The writing of film dialogue is one of the last stages in screenwriting, which does not start until the outline of the screenplay is established (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007: 48). Therefore, nothing about film dialogue is random and dialogue must collaborate and interact with the other semiotic systems of the film. British film director and producer Alfred Hitchcock, whose successful career was across silent films and early talkies, comments that the introduction of dialogue is an added touch of realism although dialogue is complementary in pure cinema (S. Gottlieb, 1997: 219). There are also other positive comments on the function of film dialogue: it can help develop structure, character, *mise-en-scène*, and theme (Remael, 1998: 210); it flows from the action and contributes to the evolution of the narrative; it also “intensifies the visual elements, contributes to the exposition and is an expression of a character’s breeding, education, intelligence, and ethnicity” (Karetnikova, 1990: 124-138). Kozloff (2000: 33-34) details nine functions that film dialogue may serve and categorises them into two groupings: six “fundamental functions” centrally involved in the communication of the narrative and three “further functions” related to aesthetic effect, ideological persuasion, and commercial appeal.

Relating the discussion about the function of filmic dialogue to that about film as phenomenal process, one can see that film dialogue forms part of the *syuzhet*. This is to say that the understanding of dialogue plays an important role in the viewer’s construction of the *fabula* and overall enjoyment of a film. Translation is a purposeful communicative act and the translator is aware that the target audience of the subtitled film rely on his/her professional work to complete a cinematic experience. In the coming section, discussions will concentrate on the role the translator plays when subtitling a feature film and the impact of such a role on the translation process and product.

### ***3.3.4 Translator in subtitling: a dual role***

In a subtitled film, the subtitles form an inseparable part of the filmic text and provide essential information for the target viewers to construct the fabula and achieve narrative comprehension. The translator who composed the subtitles is first of all a viewer of the original film and also a crew member of the subtitled version of the film. The dual role that translators play undoubtedly has a significant bearing on their communicative assumptions that shape their linguistic choices in the subtitles.

Firstly, translators at work do not watch a film just for enjoyment. They do not keep their viewing experience private but intends to share it with the target viewers through subtitles. Discussions about the translator's voice in Section 3.2.2 have shown that no translator can claim impersonal rendition of a ST into a TT. Discussions about the notion of norms have shown that patterns and tendencies can potentially be discovered in translators' linguistic behaviour because translation activities are governed by norms (see Section 3.2.1). This means that the study of subtitles can potentially show patterns or tendencies of translators' linguistic behaviour in the context of subtitling, which in turn can reveal the translator's communicative assumptions and made their voice heard.

Secondly, when viewers watch a film, they actively deal with the information conveyed by syuzhet, style and excess as it comes and enjoy the process of constructing the fabula. They normally have no control of the information flow in the film or may not have the desire to interrupt the flow by pausing it and going back to watch certain parts again before finishing the whole film. However, translators at work will be more than likely to pause and to go back and forth to watch some sections and/or listen to some dialogues until understanding is achieved to their satisfaction. The translator, therefore, becomes a sort of "omniscient reader" (Diaz-Diocaretz, 1984: 31), or rather an omniscient viewer in the context of film subtitling, in the sense that when they translates the dialogue from any point of the film, in most case, they already know what is going to happen later in the narrative. The translator may take advantage of such a position (consciously or unconsciously) when dealing with synzhets-related information that is embedded in the dialogue. How translators take advantage of such a position and to what extent are issues directly influenced by their communicative assumptions.

Thirdly and most importantly, translators are in a position to mediate between not only languages but also cultures. They have more knowledge about the language and culture in the original film than the average target viewers of the subtitled film. When a viewer does not understand the language and is unfamiliar with the culture presented in the film, it would be difficult for him/her to comprehend the filmic narrative by applying his/her established schemata (see Section 3.3.1 for details of schemata concerning filmic narrative comprehension). This is where the translator's help comes in. Potentially translators' linguistic choices in the subtitles bridge the gaps between viewers' established schemata, which in turn influences viewers' understanding of the film. To what extent translators recognise viewers' insufficient knowledge and in what way they prepares to help in a situation confined by characteristic translation constraints are also deeply shaped by translators' assumptions.

The translator participates in the cinematic discourse as a professional. Their linguistic behaviour directly manipulates information contributing to the syuzhet. Such manipulation is realised through the employment of translation strategies within strict translation constraints, reflecting the translator's interpretation of the syuzhet and his/her supposition of the target viewers' schemata. It is likely that the translator's work would cause alteration to the details of syuzhet presented to the target viewers and eventually have an impact on the target viewers' construction of fabula. The various linguistic choices result in translation shifts. There is a close relationship between translation shifts and alterations to the syuzhet. This study is interested in the translators' communicative assumptions that give rise to translation shifts. A comparative-analysis study is, therefore, called for to first pinpoint the moments where the shifts take place, and then to analyse the impact of shifts on the syuzhet and explore translator's communicative assumptions behind the shifts.

Van Leuven-Zwart's (1989) model of investigating micro-structural translation shifts, as discussed in Section 3.2.3, can provide a good basis for the comparative phase. In the context of film subtitling, micro-structural translation shifts are believed to be the linguistic manifestation of the alterations to the syuzhet with the translator's participation in the cinematic discourse. There are shortcomings in van Leuven-Zwart's model (see Section 3.2.3), but they can be overcome in application. Section 4.3 will

present details on how adaptation of van Leuven-Zwart's model can be made to map the translational shifts in subtitles.

In the analysis phase, the results achieved in the comparative phase should be interpreted in a way where the connection between translation shifts, alterations to syuzhet information and the translator's communicative assumptions can be established. It is believed that Text World Theory and Relevance Theory together can potentially provide a sound theoretical framework for such an analysis. The former is a cognitive model aiming to explain all human discourse processing and the latter focuses on human cognition and ostensive-inferential communication. The next two sections in this chapter will elaborate on some key concepts of the two theories and on how they can be employed in the analysis phase of the model that this current study aims to establish.

### **3.4 Translator in Subtitling: a Text World Theory Perspective**

#### ***3.4.1 Text World Theory: a brief account***

Text World Theory was proposed by Paul Werth in the 1980s (e.g. Werth, 1984) and has been revisited by Joanna Gavins (2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2007) and other theorists. This theory aims to present a unified and comprehensive framework to explore and explain the mechanics of conceptual configuration in all human discourse processing (Gavins, 2007). It draws on a wide range of cognitive, psychological and philosophical approaches to language and conceptualisation, including cognitive linguistics, systemic functional grammar, psycholinguistics, linguistic philosophy, pragmatics, internationalist linguistics, poetics and stylistics (Xin, 2009: 287).

Cognitive theories generally hold that human beings construct and store mental representations of their existence in their minds and actively refer back to the representations when encountering new situations and concepts; therefore participants involved in a communicative act understand the discourse in question by creating and processing mental representations in their minds. Text World Theory shares this belief and calls the mental representations 'text-worlds'. Various names are given to mental representations in other cognitive theories, including scripts, schemata, mental models, conceptual frames, etc. In spite of the different names, it is generally believed that humans' mental representations take an analogue form. This means that mental



representations are not like files of knowledge stored in separate, fixed mental folders; instead, they are perceptual wholes with a holistic nature bearing a direct resemblance to the real-world situations they represent. Gavins (2007: 4) points out that humans' ability to construct analogue mental representations also enables them to experience events by proxy; therefore humans are able to make inferences and predictions, to understand various discourses in which they are involved, and to make decisions about how to act in certain situations.

Text World Theory strives to provide "a methodological framework through which both factual and fictional discourses may be systematically examined in their entirety" (Gavins, 2003: 130). In order to achieve this objective, Text World Theory attaches great importance to context and deals directly with it by comprehensively applying cognitivist principles in analytical practice, which Gavins (2007: 8) believes to be the very feature setting Text World Theory apart from other cognitive frameworks. Xin (2009: 287) positively comments that Text World Theory contributes "a usable toolkit for practical cognitive discourse analysis". In application, Text World Theory recognises the crucial role that situational, social, historical and psychological factors play in the cognition of language and is, therefore, concerned with how the production and reception of a particular text is realised under the influence of its surrounding context made up of these factors (Gavins, 2007: 8-9).

In all cognitive studies of language, which are committed to understanding human communication in all its experiential complexity, contextual factors are considered to be vital because discourse does not exist without context. However, Werth (1999: 78-80) observes a reluctance that many of the cognitive linguists have to deal directly with context. He explores the reason by first making a distinction between verbal and situational context.

Verbal context, or "cotext" by other theorists (e.g. Butler, 1984), refers to "the language surrounding a particular sentence or proposition" (Werth, 1999: 79). The study of verbal context is relatively easy to manage as it can be achieved "with the same tools and units as sentence grammar" (ibid). Situational context, however, poses much more challenges because it consists of "the immediate situation and cultural background surrounding the language event under scrutiny" (ibid) and can, in theory, include any and all knowledge

a person brings to a communicative act. It is situational context that many linguists have fought shy of engaging with, and Werth believes that this is mainly due to the traditional understanding of situation as too vast and complicated a notion to encompass in a single descriptive apparatus.

Werth (1999: 80) recognises that other theorists, such as Barwise and Perry (1983) in their Situation Semantics, “have tried to make context more manageable by simplifying the notion of situation through reducing the content of the basic units”. However, he comments that these efforts result in content-free situations which have little contact with real-world situations and are therefore of limited value (ibid). Werth believes that an effective way to restrain the notion of situation is to restrict it in some principled way and proposes that the relevant context is limited and triggered by the very text produced in the discourse (ibid). This is the so-called principle of text-drivenness, a major element of Werth’s model. An important feature of context in Text World Theory is that it is not regarded as being static or given; instead, it is dynamic and constructed in a process of negotiation on the part of the discourse participants through knowledge incrementation driven by the text (ibid: 118-9). As a result, the common ground between the participants of a communicative act is established, which refers to the totality of information that the participants have agreed to accept as relevant for their discourse (ibid: 119). The shared knowledge between the participants is particularly important to the building up of the common ground. In Section 3.4.2, more discussions will be carried out about the relationship between discourse and context, the principle of text-drivenness and the concept of common ground.

It has been widely accepted that discourse and context have a dialectical relationship in the sense that each contains and shapes the other (e.g. Fetzer, 2011: 115; Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002: 15). This relationship is complex and multi-layered, but a properly comprehensive examination of a discourse can only be carried out together with context. Text World Theory fully acknowledges the importance of context and a typical analysis in the framework of this theory normally begins by separating a given discourse into the three interconnecting levels: the discourse-world, the text-world and the sub-world.

Werth (1999: 17) understands that all uses of language “presuppose occurrence in a context of situation, and that on top of this they also presuppose the existence of a

conceptual domain of understanding, jointly constructed by the producer and recipient(s)”. This statement outlines the two distinct conceptual levels that a discourse can be separated into in the framework of Text World Theory: the discourse-world and the text-world. The former refers to the immediate situation founded on real external circumstances. The latter refers to the conceptual domain of understanding jointly constructed by the participants in the discourse-world and is “a total construct”, which is “dependent on resources of memory and imagination, rather than direct perception” (ibid). Once the text-world is constructed and developing, countless other worlds start to be created by departing from the parameters of the initial text-world and form a further and final layer of Text World Theory – the “sub-worlds” (ibid : 210-58)<sup>6</sup>. The sub-worlds are also totally constructed by discourse participants. Stockwell (2002: 140) points out that sub-worlds “represent a variation in the texture of the world in focus, without the sense of leaving the current text world”. The different types of sub-worlds will be discussed in Section 3.4.3.

Both the text-worlds and sub-worlds may consist of world-building elements and function-advancing propositions, and in this sense, the text-worlds and the sub-worlds are equivalent in terms of structure (Stockwell, 2002: 140). World-building elements are the referential elements that define a deictic space, nominate objects and persons at present in a text-world or sub-world, and also give information about the personal and social relationships existing between them. Function-advancing propositions form the foreground of the text and propel the narrative or dynamic within the text-world or sub-world forward. More discussions about world-builders and function-advancers will be carried out in Section 3.4.3 where the three layers within the Text World Theory – discourse-world, text-world and sub-world – are under closer scrutiny.

In a typical cognitive analysis within the framework of the Text World Theory, researchers make use of various notations to draw text-world diagrams, which shows sub-worlds and world-builders and function-advancers in each world, in order to visualise how mental representations are created and maintained over extensive pieces of discourse. So far, Text World Theory has been applied to analyse a genre-specific

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<sup>6</sup> In Gavins’s Text World Theory model (2005a), the term “world-switches” is used to replace “sub-worlds”. This current study prefers Werth’s “sub-worlds” as this term indicates that the relationship between a text world and sub-worlds is that between an outer world and a number of inner worlds.

variety of texts (e.g. Gavins, 2007; Harbus, 2012; Hidalgo Downing, 2000; Stockwell, 2002) mainly as an attempt to provide scientific and cognitive accounts for literary intuition. This theory does not seem to have been applied to understand communication through translation in the cinematic discourse. It will be discussed in Section 3.4.4 how some key concepts of the Text World Theory can inform the study of translators who subtitle feature films.

### ***3.4.2 Context and discourse, text-drivenness and common ground***

Text World Theory is a discourse framework and deals directly with context. Discourse and context are “mutually constitutive” (Mazur, 2004: 1076). Discourse is generally conceived of as bounded, while context tends to be seen as an unbounded entity embedding discourse and contained in discourse. In other words, discourse is affected by context but in turn shapes or modifies context. Contextual factors are vital in all studies of human cognition. The theoretical construct of context has been approached from a number of different perspectives, which are grouped into three categories by Fetzer (2011):

Firstly, context is conceived of as a frame to delimit content. Sperber and Wilson (1986) have adapted this perspective to cognitive pragmatics and reflect it metaphorically as an onion in their relevance-theoretic conception of context. They stress not only the interconnected nature of context and content but also the fact that the order of inclusion corresponds to the order of accessibility. Inferring and the calculation of implicatures are key operations in natural-language communication. The multifaceted nature and complexity of context and discourse are of particular importance to the operations. The application of Sperber and Wilson’s Relevance Theory in Translation Studies will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.5.

Second, context is seen as a dynamic and relational construct that is interactionally organized in and through the process of communication. Context is therefore assigned the dual status of process and product, relating discourse participants, their communicative actions and their individual surroundings. As a result, meaning is also conceived of as relational, rather than as autonomous, because of the embeddedness and interdependence of linguistic expressions.

Third, context is viewed as given and is often referred to as common ground or background information. In this vein of thought, context is seen as a set of propositions that participants take for granted in communication. This view allows context to be seen as both a static conception external to the utterance and also an interactive one that is imported into the utterance while at the same time invoking and reconstructing context (Fetzer, 2011). Fetzer and Fischer (2007) believe that context is context-dependent and this is reflected in its status as 1) given and external to the utterance, 2) re-constructed and negotiated in and through the process of communication, 3) deictic, and 4) never saturated.

The three perspectives of the concept of context are not conflicting views. They rather provide different angles to look at the concept. Text World Theory emphasises that context is constructed by the participants in a particular discourse (Werth, 1999: 117) and is more interested in situational context rather than verbal context. In theory, context could be all the information in the vast store of knowledge and experience that a participant carries to a discourse-world and any of the information has the potential to impact upon the participant's production and reception of a text in any number of ways. However, not all information available to the participant is needed on any one occasion of communication. Text World Theory is concerned with how the context of a given discourse is actually used and only regards the extralinguistic information that is "*necessary to produce and comprehend a discourse*" (ibid) as the context of a particular discourse. Werth also stresses that context is not self-constructing or a mere by-product of an impersonal process of discourse formation (ibid: 118). Instead, the relevant context is negotiated by the participants by means of the discourse. In a normal communicative occasion, there is no secret channel of meaning between the participants other than the discourse itself. As Werth (ibid: 149) points out, since all the elements which express meaning are present in the discourse either in the text or in the context, the retrieval and selection of knowledge relevant to a particular discourse can only be driven by the text. This is the principle of text-drivenness in the Text World Theory terms, which specifies that it is the text produced in the discourse-world that determines which areas of a participant's knowledge are activated and needed to process and understand the discourse. Gavins (2007: 29) vividly compares this principle to a control valve as it provides a manageable route into the systematic examination of context.

Governed by the principle of text-drivenness, participants actively draw upon different areas of their perceptual, linguistic, experiential and cultural knowledge during a communication, and share with each other. Consequently, with the transfer of knowledge, participants increment their knowledge structures and the incrementation in turn activates further access of selected areas of knowledge. The whole process moves the communication towards the understanding of the discourse and the fulfilment of the communicative objectives. As the result of the incrementation, the context is constructed by the participants into an agreed set of ‘facts’, which Werth calls the “common ground” (1999: 117). The common ground is made up of background and foreground (ibid: 119). The information that constructs the text-world is the background information and is also referred to as “world-building” (ibid: 180) information. The information that constitutes what the discourse contributes is foreground information and is also referred to as “function-advancing” (ibid: 190) information. More detailed discussions on world-building and function-advancing will be carried out in Section 3.4.3. An important point Werth makes about the common ground is that it constantly evolves as the discourse progresses with new information added and old information decaying or modified in the light of later propositions (ibid: 120). This means that, as the text-world is updated, each new piece of information is managed to cohere with and to modify the common ground. Harbus (2012: 75) describes the construction of the common ground as a “silent and approximate co-operation” between the discourse participants and comments that this process “leaves not only a great deal of wiggle-room in terms of relevance, but also huge scope for various selection and deployment of ideas and, in turn, interpretation”.

What is particularly important to the building up of the common ground is the shared knowledge of the discourse participants. Werth (1999: 96ff) divides shared knowledge into general and mutual knowledge depending on the provenance and content of knowledge (see Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4). General knowledge is public knowledge that individuals have because they belong to particular social groupings, and is subdivided into cultural knowledge and linguistic knowledge. Cultural knowledge is “partially structured, open-ended and contingent” (ibid: 97) while linguistic knowledge is “structured, systematic and analytical” (ibid: 98). Mutual knowledge is private knowledge, which is the result of the construction of the common ground as the discourse proceeds. Mutual knowledge is subdivided into perceptual knowledge and

experiential knowledge. The former derived from the mutual perceptions of the immediate situation of the discourse while the latter derives from shared experience of the discourse participants. Cutting across this categorisation of knowledge, Werth also distinguishes two main modes in which knowledge is expressible: the propositional and the functional (ibid: 101-7). All the four kinds of knowledge may be propositional or functional. As Butler summarises, “propositional knowledge expresses facts of a cultural, linguistic, perceptual or experiential nature, while functional knowledge is concerned with the ability to act towards some particular goal” (2007: 57).

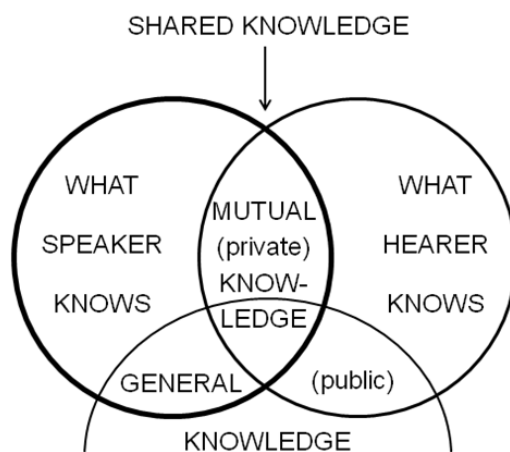


Figure 3-3 Relationship between the knowledge-bases of the individual participants in a discourse (Werth 1999: 94)

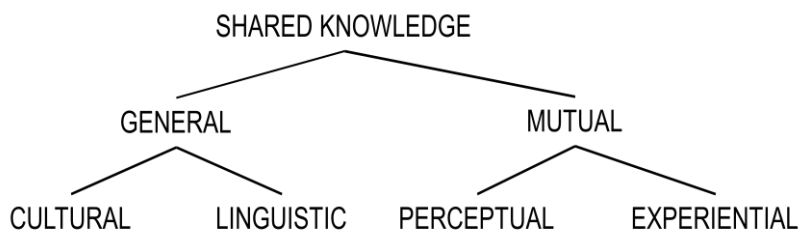


Figure 3-4 Subtypes of shared knowledge (Werth 1999: 96)

### 3.4.3. Discourse-world, text-world and sub-world

A typical Text World Theory analysis normally begins by separating a given discourse into three interconnecting levels. The first of the three levels is the discourse-world, which concerns the immediate situation surrounding a communicative act. The prerequisite condition for the existence of a discourse-world is the conscious presence of at least two participants who initiate a communication act – one communicator and

one addressee, such as two speakers in a conversation, an author and a reader, etc. Communication is seen as a fundamentally purposeful endeavour driven by volition of all the participants who expect and agree to perform coherently and cooperatively. The participants may share the same time and place, as in a face-to-face conversation, or they may locate in a split discourse-world occupying separate spatial and temporal locations as in various types of written communication. When the participants communicate through a written or any other type of pre-existing text (such as a letter, a novel, a film, etc.), the discourse-world also includes the text itself in addition to the participants and the objects and entities surrounding them. Text World Theory recognises that each participant brings their “personal baggage” (Gavins, 2003: 130) with them to the communicative act; therefore the factors in the discourse-world include not only “the *perceptions* of the immediate situation” (Stockwell, 2002: 136, emphasis in original) but also “the *beliefs, knowledge, memories, hopes, dreams, intentions* and *imaginings* of the discourse participants” (ibid, emphasis in original).

As the communicative act progresses, each participant constructs mental representations, or text-worlds, by which they are able to process and understand the discourse at hand (Gavins, 2003: 130). The text-world forms the next level of the Text World Theory analysis, which provides a framework to examine the structure and cognitive effects of individual mental representations from the bottom up. The precise structure and content of the text-world are dictated by the combination of each participant’s cognitive capability and the bottom-up input provided by the discourse itself (Nørgaard et al., 2010: 159). This means that even when different participants base their mental representations on the same text, each individual text-world is unique to its creator because there are no two participants with the same background knowledge and experience. Werth (1999: 20) defines the text-world as “a deictic space, defined initially by the discourse itself, and specifically by the deictic and referential elements in it”. Gavins (2007: 20) points out that “what is being negotiated between the participants in the discourse-world is the precise nature of the text-world they are constructing in their minds”.

It has been stated above that when a participant enters a communicative act, s/he brings to the discourse-world various domains of knowledge on the basis of which s/he would draw inferences. In order to prevent the mass of information being unmanageable in its



analysis framework, Text World Theory asserts that only the information which forms a necessary context, rather than all possible contexts, is used by the participant in the cognitive process (Stockwell, 2002: 136). The necessary context is actively constructed by the discourse participants, and the process is driven by the text in the particular discourse and leads to the establishment of the common ground between the participants. The principle of text-drivenness and the concept of common ground have been discussed in Section 3.4.2.

All text-worlds in general are made up of a combination of world-building elements and function-advancing propositions although the text-worlds that each individual discourse participant constructs are unique to its creator (Gavins, 2007: 35-8; 53-9; Werth, 1999: 180-203). World-building elements constitute the background against which the foreground events in the text-world will take place. It has been stated in Section 3.4.2 that background and foreground together make up the common ground established between the discourse participants. The world-building elements give a sense of time and space and specify entities (objects and persons) that populate the text-world and the relationships between them. These elements are named ‘time’, ‘location’, ‘object’ and ‘enactor’<sup>7</sup>. In contrast to world-building elements that which situate a text-world, various function-advancing propositions propel the narrative or dynamic within the text-world forward. Function-advancing propositions constitute “the states, actions, events, processes and any arguments or predications made in relation to the objects and characters in the text world” (Stockwell, 2002: 137). Gavins has borrowed concepts from Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar (e.g. Halliday, 1985; 2009: 81) and established the primary categories of function-advancing processes. They can be grouped into three primary types: 1) relational processes, 2) material processes and 3) mental processes<sup>8</sup>:

1) Relational processes specify the relationship between entities existing in a text-world and are of four types: intensive (*x is y* relationship), possessive (*x has y* relationship)

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<sup>7</sup> Gavins (2007) uses the term ‘enactor’ to replace Werth’s (1999) original “character” in order to “prevent a possible exclusive association with literary discourses” (Nørgaard et al., 2010: 160). This current study prefers the term ‘enactor’.

<sup>8</sup> Gavins (2007: 53-90) separates existential processes out from relational processes as the fourth basic type of function-advancing propositions.

circumstantial (*x is in/on/at/with y* relationship) and existential (to describe the existence of an element, such as the ‘there be’ construction in English and ‘有(yǒu)’ structure in Chinese). Each of the first three types of processes can occur in either attributive or identifying mode.

2) Material processes relate to any type of action or event in a discourse and are of three types: intention, supervision and event. Intention and supervision processes are conducted by an animate actor. The former occurs as the result of the actor’s will, while the latter taking place by accident. Event processes, in contrast, involve no animate actor.

3) Mental processes involve activities in the mind rather than physical actions of the body and are conducted by a sensor rather than an actor. There are four types of mental processes: perception (e.g. hearing, seeing, feeling), cognition (e.g. thinking, remembering), reaction (e.g. liking, hating) and verbalisation (e.g. saying, repeating).

These processes can move a text-world forward and also generate further text-worlds and/or sub-worlds. Texts usually require multiple mental representations for their comprehension and there are rarely texts that only require one text-world. In a normal circumstance, discourse participants are capable of creating multitudinous text-world networks instantly and without significant cognitive effort. Sub-worlds can be created for numerous reasons in a discourse and Werth identifies three types of sub-worlds: deictic, attitudinal and epistemic (1999: 216-58). Each different types of world will generate a different experiential effect for the discourse participants (Gavins, 2007: 73). The three types of sub-worlds can be created either by the discourse participants or by enactors in the text-world. In the former case, the sub-worlds are described as participant-accessible, and in the latter case, the sub-worlds are described as enactor-accessible (ibid: 77). Participants and enactors belong to different ontological domains. Participant-accessible text-worlds are created by participant(s) and can be verified by any co-participant. Enactor-accessible worlds are created by enactor(s) who only exist(s) at the text-world level outside the ontological parameters of the real world. Therefore, the reliability of their contents can only be assessed by the participants relying on other text-world elements. The previous experience and knowledge a participant draws from his/her own ontological environment cannot be made use of in the assessment.

Deictic sub-worlds are “departures from the basic deictic ‘signature’ of the conceptual world” (Werth, 1999: 216). Examples include flashbacks, flashforwards, direct speech, or any window onto another scene (e.g. a character reading a letter, etc.). Shifts into deictic sub-worlds involve a variation in one or more world-building elements of the existing text-world: time, location, enactor and object. For example, the world expressed within direct speech is a sub-world because direct speech is distinct from the surrounding discourse and often involves shifts from third to first and/or second person and other features deictically re-centred on the communicator within the narrative (Stockwell, 2002: 140). Deictic sub-worlds can be participant-accessible or enactor-accessible: if a flashback is recounted by the text producer (e.g. the author of a novel), the participants can trace the deictic alternatives and the sub-worlds in question are participants-accessible. On the contrary, if the flashback is in an enactor’s memory and not in the text-world’s definition, the sub-world constituted is an enactor-accessible sub-world.

Attitudinal sub-worlds are created when there emerge alternatives due to propositional attitudes of the discourse participants or the enactors. There are many possible propositional attitudes. Werth believes that desire, belief and purpose are the three most important areas of human conceptual activity and constitute ‘want worlds’, ‘believe worlds’ and ‘intend worlds’ respectively (1999: 227). It needs to be noted that attitudinal sub-worlds are cued up by notions entertained by the discourse participants or enactors as opposed to actions undertaken by participants or enactors. ‘Want worlds’ are usually prompted by predicates such as ‘wish’, ‘hope’, ‘want’, ‘dream’ and similar others. ‘Believe worlds’ are typically introduced by predicates such as ‘believe’, ‘know’, ‘think’ and other similar ones. ‘Intend worlds’ relate to the stated intentions of participants or enactors, such as promises, threats, offers, requests and commands, regardless of whether the action is actually carried out or not.

Epistemic sub-worlds are cued up by “modalised propositions” (Werth, 1999: 216) expressed either by discourse participants or enactors. This is how the Text World Theory handles the dimension of possibility and probability (Stockwell, 2002: 141). Werth talks of two types of epistemic sub-worlds: hypothetical worlds and modal worlds. In English, hypothetical situations are usually expressed by verb-tense

morphology. Chinese is not an inflectional language and does not have tenses, and hypothetical situations can be expressed by the use of aspect particles or adverbs. More details concerning the differences between Chinese and English will be discussed in Section 4.3.2. Werth believes that the hypothetical situations are associated with remote/conditional system and introduces the notion of remoteness. He points out that in the most common types of context and from the discourse participants' point of view: reported speech is more remote than direct speech; politeness is more remote than friendliness; tentativeness is more remote than decisiveness; conditional is more remote than indicative; and narrative is more remote than commentary. Modal worlds would be prompted by the use of modal words. In English, modal words are conventionally distinguished between root modals and epistemic modals. The former conveys obligation, permission, ability, volition, while the latter conveys some degree of probability. There are similar modals in the Chinese language (Yip & Rimmington, 1997). The modal sub-worlds are worlds built upon function-advancing propositions that are expressions along the scale of certainty-impossibility.

#### ***3.4.4 Translator in the framework of Text World Theory***

Translation is an act of purposeful communication realised by the translator working with his/her co-participants in the discourse-world. In the case of subtitling a feature film, the translator's co-participants include the filmmaking crew of the original film and the intended viewers of the subtitled film. In the coming pages, 'director' is used as a convenient term representing the filmmaking crew. When the translator composes the subtitles, the receptors of the subtitled film have not yet joined the scene of communication; hence the term 'intended viewers'. The actual viewers of the subtitled film are called 'target viewers'. The intended viewers are an imagined figure by the translator to communicate with. It is likely that the translator, according to his/her own understanding and assumption, endows this figure with the collective features of the real-world target viewers. Since the director, the translator and the target viewers occupy separate spatial and temporal locations, in the Text World Theory terms, they are situated in a split discourse-world.

It is important to point out that film cast members are not the translator's co-participants in the act of translation. The cast members and their performance form part of the filmic text, which is created by the director, partially (their speeches) modified by the

translator and received by the audience. In the Text World Theory terms, the characters played by the cast members would be the enactors populating the text-worlds that discourse participants create when they comprehend a feature film.

It has been discussed in Chapter Two that there are four meaning-making channels in a feature film – non-verbal visual, verbal audio, non-verbal audio and verbal visual. In an original film, most of the information that can contribute to the building and advancing of text-worlds is carried in the non-verbal visual and verbal audio channels, but some can also be carried in the non-verbal audio and verbal visual channels. Film viewers are sensitive to potential world building and advancing information to different extents due to differences in their world knowledge and past experience; therefore, the text-worlds created are unique to their creators and the effort that individual viewers have to make to create the text-worlds is also different.

At any point of a film, information conveyed in the four channels creates a co-text for each other. In an original film, the relation between the information conveyed in different channels (mainly between image and word) can be either anchoring or redundancy (Marleau (1982: 274), see Section 2.3.2). This relation is changed with the addition of subtitles to the film and the change has a direct impact on the target viewers' comprehension of the film. Although information carried in the original sound tracks remains the same in a subtitled film, it is of much less use for the target viewers than for the viewers of the original film. The target viewers rely on subtitles for this part of information.

The translator plays a dual role in subtitling: a viewer of the original film and also a crew member of the subtitled film (see Section 3.3.4). As a viewer, the translator's main communicative purpose is to understand the meaning intended in the original film, especially that in filmic dialogue. Since it is not possible for the translator to always consult the director or other crew members, the original film itself is the main source of information from which the translator's knowledge can be incremented. The contents of the filmic text determine which areas of the translator's vast store of existing knowledge and experience are activated to contribute to the process of knowledge incrementation.

As a crew member of the subtitled film, the translator's responsibility is to assist the target viewers to overcome the language barrier in their cinematic experience. The translator helps with the target viewers' knowledge incrementation about the film so that a common ground between the target viewers and the director can be established for the target viewers to comprehend the filmic narrative. As discussed before, when the translator composes the subtitles, s/he communicates with an imagined figure, i.e. the intended viewers; therefore, what the translator believes to be helpful for the actual target viewers can only be assumptions. Due to the split nature of the discourse-world, the immediate material environment surrounding the participants is of secondary importance. In other words, when the translator composes the subtitles, s/he is not likely to take into consideration the material environment the director or the target viewers are situated in. The translator's assumptions integrate the translator's understanding of the original film, the translator's knowledge and past experience about the target viewers' needs and the translator's belief of the most efficient way to linguistically assist the viewers in the context of subtitling where various constraints are at work (see Section 2.4.1 for translation constraints on subtitling). Subtitles are the vehicle to carry the translator's assumptions. When a subtitled film is watched by an audience, the subtitled film itself is the main focus of the communicative act participated by the translator, the director and the target viewers. It is also the main, if not the only, point of contact between the participants. Subtitles as the output of the translator's linguistic behaviour provides information for the target viewers to create text-worlds in the process of comprehending the feature film.

The translator's linguistic behaviour may lead to changes to both world-building elements and function-advancing propositions that the target viewers rely on to create and advance their text-worlds. The translation shifts identified through a comparison between the original filmic dialogue and the subtitles can show how the information on which the target viewers base their text-worlds is different from that presented in the original film. With the aim to reveal the translator's communicative assumptions, one needs to identify the translator's linguistic behaviour that may affect the target viewers' reception and also to explain the motivations behind the behaviour. Text World Theory provides a framework for identifying this type of behaviour but lacks an explanatory power for the motivations. This is where Relevance Theory shows its strength.

### **3.5 Translator in Subtitling: a Relevance Theory Perspective**

#### ***3.5.1 Relevance Theory: a few key concepts***

Relevance Theory was founded by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in the mid-1980s (Sperber & Wilson, 1986) as an efficiency-based cognitive approach to communication. It is built on and has advanced beyond one of Grice's central claims that an essential feature of most human communication (verbal and non-verbal) is the expression and recognition of intentions (Grice, 1975). Relevance Theory was soon applied by Gutt (1991) in the field of Translation Studies and has informed a number of studies across the sub-areas of this field. The current section does not intend to give a thorough review of Relevance Theory but to focus on a few of its fundamental concepts.

In the 1970s, Grice challenged the classical code model of communication and laid the foundation for an inferential model. The code model describes communication as a process during which the communicator encodes a message for the receptor to decode. Grice posits that humans communicate by recognising intentions, not by decoding alone. He states that utterances automatically create expectations which guide a rational addressee towards the speaker's meaning. These expectations are described as a Cooperative Principle and maxims of Quality (truthfulness), Quantity (informativeness), Relation (relevance) and Manner (clarity) (Grice, 1975).

Sperber and Deirdre share Grice's intuition that utterances raise expectations, but they argue that the expectations of relevance alone are precise and predictable enough to guide the addressee's interpretation and that there is no need for a Co-operative Principle or the maxims. They express this argument as the 'Principle of Relevance': "Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Sperber & Wilson, 1986: 158). The Principle of Relevance forms the cornerstone of Relevance Theory and contains two sub-principles: the Cognitive Principle of Relevance and the Communicative Principle of Relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1995: 260). Relevance Theory posits that the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition. Relevance is a matter of degree rather than an all-or-none matter. The Cognitive Principle claims that humans have an automatic and universal tendency to maximise relevance. The Communicative Principle claims that the information communicated comes with a guarantee of relevance because to communicate is to claim the attention of the addressee. Therefore, in relevance-theoretic

terms, inferential communication is called ostensive-inferential communication. What does ‘optimal relevance’ as stated in the Principle of Relevance refer to? Sperber and Wilson answer this question by defining relevance in terms of ‘contextual effects’ and ‘processing effort’.

Since relevance is understood as an innate focusing mechanism of the human cognitive system, any input brought by an external stimulus or internal representation to an individual’s cognitive process may be relevant to this individual at some time. When an input is processed by an addressee, cognitive effects are generated and are of three basic kinds: contradicting assumptions, modifying the strength of assumptions and deriving new implications from existing assumptions. In relevance-theoretic terms, “other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time” (Wilson & Sperber, 2004: 609). ‘Positive cognitive effects’ bring worthwhile differences to the addressee’s representation of the world and are referred to as ‘contextual effects’. How the notion of context is understood in Relevance Theory will be discussed soon in this section. In different circumstances, the same contextual effects may require different degree of efforts. In relevance-theoretic terms, “other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time” (ibid). The most relevant input for an addressee is the one that yields the greatest effects and demands the smallest processing effort. The two conditions for an utterance (or other ostensive stimuli) to be of optimal relevance are described as follows:

An utterance, on a given interpretation, is optimally relevant iff:

- (a) It is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee’s effort to process it;
- (b) It is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator’s abilities and preferences.

(Sperber & Wilson, 1995: 260-78)

The Principle of Relevance, which consists of the Cognitive Principle and the Communicative Principle, is the key to relevance-theoretic pragmatics and provides an explanation of comprehension procedure: the addressee follows a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects by testing interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicate assumptions, etc) in order of accessibility and stops



when his/her expectations of relevance are satisfied (Wilson & Sperber, 2004: 613). Due to the inferential nature of human communication, interpretation of an utterance and the consequent comprehension are highly context-dependent because meaning depends not only on its semantic content but crucially on the contextual information with which it is inferentially combined. However, as discussed in Section 3.4, context is a very vast notion. It can include virtually “any phenomenon entertainable by the human mind” (Gutt, 1998: 42). How does the addressee determine the communicator-intended context and use it to infer the communicator-intended meaning? The Principle of Relevance believes that the goal of obtaining optimal relevance of the information being processed simultaneously guides the choice of context. In more complex cases, the context may be guided to extend simultaneously or sequentially in a variety of different directions (Wilson & Sperber, 1986: 253).

In Relevance Theory, context is recognised as “a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world” (Sperber & Wilson, 1986: 15), not a given. It specifically refers to “the set of premises used in interpreting utterance”. The notion of context also includes cotext, i.e. the text surrounding an utterance (see Section 3.4.1 for discussion about cotext). More importantly, in Relevance Theory, context is assumed to be “organised” and “this organisation affects the accessibility of a particular piece of contextual information on a particular occasion” (Gutt, 1998: 43). This is to say that there is a correlation between the accessibility of information stored in the human mind and the effort to recall it. The multilayered cognitive context is illustrated by the onion metaphor (Sperber & Wilson, 1986): context with its constitutive layers is represented as an onion. The notion of context is approached in different theories and this has been discussed in Section 3.4.

Sperber and Wilson have proposed a notion of “cognitive environment” (1986: 38-46) and differentiate it from ‘context’. To appreciate this notion, one should first understand another notion also proposed by Sperber and Wilson – “mutual manifestness” (ibid). In theories concerning human communication (e.g. Text World Theory, see Section 3.4), terms such as ‘mutual knowledge’ and ‘shared information’ are used to refer to what all the people involved in a specific case of communication are aware of before or after the communication. However, Sperber and Wilson argue that the notion of mutual knowledge is “a philosopher’s construct with no close counterpart in reality” and

“empirically inadequate”, and that the notion of shared knowledge is “conceptually vague” (1986: 38). They propose to replace the two terms with ‘mutual manifestness’. On their account, manifestness does not imply certainty and only refers to what individuals are capable of representing: information is ‘manifest’ if and only if an individual is capable of representing it mentally (through perception or inference) and accepting its representation as true or probably true (ibid: 39). Therefore, manifestness evokes a much weaker sense than when individuals ‘assume’ or ‘know’ something: a fact can be manifest without being known; many assumptions that an individual has not made can be manifest to him/her just as the ones that s/he has actually made. Sperber and Wilson suggest that this relative weakness is what makes the notion of mutual manifestness more cognitively practical and psychologically realistic than ‘mutual knowledge’ and ‘share information’.

Accordingly, Sperber and Wilson define ‘Cognitive environment’ as a set of facts that are manifest to an individual (1986: 39), which is a different concept from ‘context’ because ‘context’ refers to a set of premises rather than facts, and premises are true or possibly true mental representations. An individual’s total cognitive environment is a combined function of his/her physical environment and cognitive abilities, which consists of “not only all the facts that he is aware of, but also all the facts that he is capable of becoming aware of, in his physical environment” (ibid). Since people’s physical environments are never strictly identical and their cognitive abilities differ in many respects, it is not possible for any two people to share their total cognitive environments. The part of cognitive environment that people do share is called ‘mutual cognitive environment’ in relevance-theoretic terms.

People are able to communicate with each other because the mutual cognitive environment they share enables them to construct similar contexts to process stimuli. Since human cognition is relevance-oriented and geared to achieving the greatest possible contextual effect for the smallest possible processing effort, the communicator who is familiar with his/her addressee’s cognitive environment can infer to a certain extent about the contexts the addressee is likely to use and what assumptions are likely to entertain. The result of any communication is the alteration of the mutual cognitive environment of the addressee and the communicator. Hence Sperber and Wilson’s

understanding about the aim of communication: “to increase the mutuality of cognitive environments rather than guarantee and impossible duplication of thoughts” (1986: 200).

On the basis of the above discussed notions and principles, Sperber and Wilson make another important claim that there are two psychologically distinct modes of using language: the descriptive use and the interpretive use. In the case of descriptive use of language, an utterance is intended to be true of a state of affairs in some possible world, while in the case of interpretive use of language, an utterance is intended to represent someone else’s thought or utterance (1986: 224-31). Both modes of language use can be types of ostensive-inferential communication governed by the Principle of Relevance. This distinction has inspired the first extended application of Relevance Theory to Translation Studies: *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* (Gutt, 1991). In the next section, discussions will be focused on some of the key notions developed in Gutt’s application.

### ***3.5.2 Translation as ostensive-inferential communication***

Gutt’s sees translation as a type of ostensive-inferential communication. His theoretical exploration to understand translation from this perspective has gone through three stages of development. First, on the basis of Sperber and Wilson’s distinction of descriptive and interpretive use of language, he characterises translation as an instance of “interlingual interpretive use” (Gutt, 1991: 100-122). Linking his subsequent works closely with the developments of Relevance Theory, he then views translation as “metarepresentational use” (e.g. Gutt, 2004b) and after that as “higher-order act of communication” (e.g. Gutt, 2005). All the three perspectives to view translation can shed light on the investigation of the translator’s communicative assumptions in subtitling and will be discussed below in detail.

Translation is a communicative act intended to restate in one language what someone else said or wrote in another language. Gutt sees a translation product as “a receptor language text that interpretively resembles the original” (ibid: 100). What is it meant by ‘interpretive resemblance’?

‘Interpretive resemblance’ is a crucial factor in interpretive language use (Sperber & Wilson, 1986: 233-4), referring to the relationship between the original utterance and

that used to represent it. Interpretive resemblance between utterances consists in the sharing of explicatures and implicatures. Explicatures are explicit assumptions, a development of the logical form encoded in the utterance; all others are implicit assumptions, or implicatures. The more explicatures and implicatures two utterances share, the more they interpretively resemble each other. Therefore, interpretive resemblance is a matter of degree and forms a continuum, ranging from no resemblance (no thoughts shared) at one end to full propositional identity (all thoughts shared) at the other. Direct quotation is the type of interpretive use that can be placed at the maximal end of the continuum because it in principle allows all the thoughts contained in the original utterance to be shared by the addressee provided the direct quotation is processed in the originally intended context. The condition about the use of the originally intended context is essential because stimulus (e.g. utterance), intended interpretation and context form an interdependent relationship conditioned by the inferential nature of communication (see Section 3.5.1). Other types of interpretive use, such as excerpts, paraphrases, summaries etc, can vary a great deal as to the degree and kind of resemblance they show and can all fit along the continuum. Decisions as to which specific type of interpretive use the communicator chooses are guided and constrained by the Principle of Relevance: s/he will aim to satisfy what s/he believes to be the expectations of adequate relevance.

Gutt makes use of the interpretive resemblance continuum to define notions concerning translation. First of all, he draws a distinction between translation proper and non-translation. This is to recognise that translation has its justification in the existence of a source text: translation amounts to reporting through the realisation of interpretive resemblance what is said (and if necessary, how it is expressed) in a text written in a different language. In contrast, non-translation describes a state of affairs or an entity and is parallel with or irrespective of other texts about the same state of affairs or entity, i.e. the resemblance between them is not built upon the interpretation of thoughts. Therefore, the very reason for the existence of the translation proper comes from a need for communication: there is the necessity of interpreting an existing source text for an audience that does not know the language.

Within translation proper, Gutt makes a further important distinction: between direct translation and indirect translation. Similar to direct quotation in intralingual

communication, direct translation can be placed at the maximal end of the interpretive resemblance continuum presuming that the intended interpretation of the receptor text will completely resemble the intended interpretation of the original if the receptor text is processed in the original context (Gutt, 1991: 128-9). Any other translation activities fall under the mode of indirect translation because they aim at lower degrees of interpretive resemblance. In reality, it is hardly possible for a translation to be received in the original context simply due to the fact that the target readers do not understand the source language and are not able to construct the same context as the readers of the source text. For this reason, a translation produced with the aim to be a direct translation may not even be desirable for the target readers as it may not generate adequate relevance when the target readers are not able to process the translation in the originally intended context due to the limitations of their cognitive environment. In contrast, indirect translation typically uses the current receptor context, which, as Gutt points out, “gives indirect translation the advantage of good spontaneous comprehensibility” and “determines the degree of interpretive resemblance achievable in any particular case” (2004a). Therefore, when looking at a translation product as a whole, direct translation products are rare in reality, and most translation products are the results of practising indirect translation.

Comparing Gutt’s concepts of direct translation and indirect translation to Vinay Darbelnet’s direct translation and oblique translation (1958/2004, discussed in Section 3.2.3), one can see that they are similar concepts with different approaches. Gutt is more interested in the communicative efficiency of a translation while Vinay and Darbelnet focus on the actual procedures that lead to the two types of translations.

Gutt has also discussed what the translator should do to achieve desirable interpretive resemblance between the source and target texts. He suggests that what matters is not so much the sharing of the concrete linguistic features as the possibility of replicating in the receptor language the more abstract communicative clues provided by the original (Gutt, 1991: ch. 6). Communicative clues are linguistic options one selects to use when communicating something that is not necessarily encoded in the utterance. In other words, communicative clues “are not inherent in utterances, but arise from the interaction with particular cognitive environments in particular acts of communication” (Gutt, 2008: slide 55). They are stimuli the addressee has to perceive in order to wholly

comprehend the communicative and informative intentions of the communicator. This means that, from the perspective of the translator, successful replication of communicative clues in the receptor language can guide the reader to access optimal relevance. Gutt (1991: ch. 6) demonstrates that communicative clues may arise from various linguistic options: type of words, syntactic structures, semantic representations, syntactic properties, semantic constraints on relevance, formulaic expressions, phonetic properties, onomatopoeia, stylistic value of words, and sound-based poetic properties. It should be noted that this list is not necessarily complete and new features may be taken into accounts.

Gutt (2008: slide 55) clarifies that the notion of communicative clues can only be supplementary to the intuitions of the human mind and that they are purely derivative and does not have a theoretical status of its own. However, he also believes that this notion can be helpful for both translators and translation researchers alike. Firstly, this notion is of practical heuristic value for the translator. It enables the translator to understand more explicitly the complex relations between text properties of the source text and the originally intended interpretations. It also enables the translator to establish more successfully the as complex relations between text properties of the target text and the achievable interpretations by the receptors. Secondly, this notion is of explanatory power for translation researchers to study translation products. The degree of resemblance between the interpretation derived by the receptors and the originally intended interpretations does not necessarily guarantee the success of a translation because, in certain cases, the receptors may prefer a lower degree of resemblance, especially if it saves them effort in understanding. Therefore the notion of communicative clues can serve as criteria for a researcher to evaluate whether a translation enables the receptors to arrive at an interpretation that resembles the original interpretation in the expected ways.

In reality, translations are usually received in a different context from the one in which the source texts were received. Gutt proposes to use the notion of “secondary communication situations” to refer to all instances where a text is presented to an audience with a context different from the one originally envisaged (1991: 72ff). In such situations, the communicator in the original communicative act (e.g. author of a source text) and the addressee of the secondary communicative act (e.g. reader of the

translation) do not share a mutual cognitive environment to a sufficient extent. The translator shares a mutual cognitive environment with the ST author and also with the TT reader to a sufficient extent; therefore, s/he is in the position to communicate to the TT reader (what s/he believes to be) the intended meaning in the ST.

Gutt (2005) suggests that, in the cases of secondary communication, the capacity of human beings to metarepresent what has been communicated to them is a cognitive prerequisite for secondary communication to succeed. This suggestion is closely linked with the introduction of 'metarepresentation' as a later development in Relevance Theory to complement the notion of interpretive use (e.g. Sperber, 2000).

Metarepresentation is defined as "a representation of a representation: a higher-order representation with a lower-order representation embedded within it" (Wilson, 2000: 411). Gutt (2004a) summarises the similarity and difference between metarepresentation and interpretive use: both notions are characterised by two elements: a) the reliance on a relationship of resemblance between two representations, and b) the embedding of one representation in another; however, in interpretive use, the resemblance is only between the intended interpretations, but in metarepresentation, the resemblance can also lie in the sharing of linguistic properties. Therefore, 'metarepresentation' captures all instances of representation by resemblance and is a wider concept than 'interpretive use' (Wilson, 2000: 425). Inspired by the theoretical potential of metarepresentation, Gutt (2000) claims that Translation Studies could benefit enormously from a competence-oriented research of translation.

However, in his consequent research, Gutt reflects that the notion of metarepresentation is of its weakness because it "obscures the differences between mental representations and stimuli that form the core of human communication" (Gutt, 2004a). Mental representations are private representations of states of affairs and cannot be shared with others by perception; while stimuli are perceivable phenomena and require a process of inferential interpretation. Therefore, Gutt refines his view and states that any act of communication concerned with another act of communication should be seen as "a higher-order act of communication" (ibid). Accordingly, translation is accounted for as an "interlingual act of higher-order communication" (ibid). A higher-order communicative act can aim at providing information about either of its two key elements: the stimulus used or the interpretation intended in the original act. If the focus is on the stimulus used, the act is understood to be in a stimulus-oriented mode, or s-

mode for short, with the aim to inform the addressee of ‘what was said’ in the original. Otherwise, if the focus is on the intended interpretation, the act is in an interpretation-oriented mode, or i-mode for short, aiming to inform the audience of ‘what was meant’ in the original. Accounting for translation as a higher-order act of communication can bring more theoretically profound understanding of the mental faculties that enable human beings to express in one language what has been said in another. This notion is also of a heuristic value in translation practice because it makes the translator aware of two options in problem solving and decision making.

### ***3.5.3 Translator in the framework of Relevance Theory***

Relevance Theory has been applied to study various issues associated with subtitling: reductions (e.g. Kovačič, 1994), constraints (e.g. Bogucki, 2004), strategies and techniques (e.g. Tian, 2013), humour (e.g. Panek, 2009), discourse particles (e.g. Mattsson, 2010), to name just a few. The Principle of Relevance, especially its efficiency-based approach to communication, has been used most frequently as an evaluation criterion to assess specific translation solutions or to inform translator training. Due to the characteristic constraints that subtitling is subject to, the translator has to frequently take into consideration the costs and effects of his/her linguistic decisions. This has naturally made Relevance Theory a desirable source for theoretical explanations of subtitling-related translation phenomena. The current study focuses on the translator engaged in subtitling. It aims to integrate the explanatory power of Relevance Theory with that of Text World Theory to form the theoretical framework of a descriptive model in order to achieve more profound understanding of the translator.

Translation has been widely viewed as an act of communication, and so is subtitling. However, it is important to have a closer look at the participants of the act and the communicative roles that they play, rather than just to take the word ‘communication’ for granted. As discussed in Section 3.4.4, in the case of translation, different discourse-world participants join the scene of communication at different stages: when the translator is composing subtitles, participants only include the director of the original film and the translator because the target viewers have not joined the communication and the intended viewers are a mentally created figure; when the subtitled film is received by an actual audience, the participants consist of the director of the original



film, the translator and the target viewers. This current study is interested in the first scenario which involves the director, the translator and the intended viewers.

The director (representing the whole filmmaking crew) of the original film sends messages through the four meaning-making channels of the filmic text for viewers to receive and comprehend. However, the director did not intend to communicate with the target viewers of the later subtitled version of his/her film; therefore s/he did not initiate an ostensive communication act for the target viewers. In other words, the director did not take into consideration the target viewers' cognitive environment when making the film and did not intend to realise any degree of relevance with the target viewers. In this case, the director and the target viewers of the subtitled film do not share a mutual cognitive environment, at least not to a sufficient extent. Similarly, the director did not intend to have an ostensive communication with the translator either, although latter the translator resorts to his/her own encyclopaedic knowledge and inferential mechanism to try to comprehend messages conveyed in the film for translating purposes.

In this situation, the only act of ostensive-inferential communication takes place between the translator and the target reviewers. 'Mediator' is the most frequently used label to describe the role of a translator. This label is vivid and useful because it highlights the 'bridging' function of the translator and his/her work. However, from the perspective of ostensive-inferential communication, the translator plays the more dominant role of the 'communicator' and this is why there is the translator's 'voice' in the translation. The patterns of the translator's linguistic behaviour, which can be traced in the translations, reflect the role the translator plays in the communicative act.

It has been stated before that due to the fact that the translator and the target viewers are situated in a split discourse-world, when the translator composes his/her communicative stimuli, his/her addressee, namely the intended viewers, is an imagined figure.

Therefore, the translator does not possibly receive feedback from the imagined addressee during the entire duration of the communicative act. This means that the translator cannot immediately assess the addressee's understanding or make any adjustment accordingly for the latter part of the communicative act in the same way as in face-to-face conversation. Therefore, the communication between the translator and the target viewers is single directed. When deciding the form and content of the

linguistic stimuli s/he sends, the translator has to entirely rely on his/her knowledge and understanding of the original film and assumptions about the target viewers' mutual cognitive environment.

In the communication between the translator and the target viewers, what the translator directly communicates to the viewers is the information in the subtitles. However, the subtitles only form part of the whole subtitled film. All the information in the original film, together with the subtitles, work collectively on the target viewers as stimuli. When the target viewers watch a subtitled film, their inferential mechanism would process the stimuli as if all were intended for them in the first place. The target viewers' cognitive environment would affect the degree of relevance various stimuli could achieve.

From the aspect of the translator, since his/her addressee is an imagined figure in the actual process of translation, all the decisions that s/he makes to achieve relevance are based on assumptions. An objective account for the assumptions can be achieved through studying subtitled films. At this stage, it is reasonable to deduce that the translator's assumptions may be about 1) the general situation of the target viewers' cognitive environment, 2) achievable relevance of the linguistic choices made in the subtitles for the target viewers, 3) relevance of the information carried in the four meaning-making channels for the target viewers, and 4) the relationship between the information carried in the original film and that in the subtitles.

In relevance-theoretic terms, the subtitles of a film are a metarepresentation of the filmic dialogue in the original film. The translator is the communicator who realises the metarepresentation by establishing interpretive resemblances between the subtitles and the original filmic dialogue. The establishment of such resemblances may be based on sufficient restoration of the original communicative clues in the subtitles. The subtitling practice can be seen as an act of higher-order communication. The analysis of how the original information, especially communicative clues, are conveyed in the subtitles – through the s-mode and/or the i-mode – could provide information about the translator's communicative assumptions.

### **3.6 A Comparative-Analysis Model to Study Translators' Communicative Assumptions in Subtitling**

Subtitled feature films, like other forms of translation products, contain the translator's voice. The current study wishes to propose a notion of 'the translator's communicative assumptions' and argues that such assumptions form part of the translator's voice. To vocalise the voice can further the knowledge about the translator and contribute to the study of subtitling. The translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling is first tentatively defined as the subjective beliefs that the translator holds concerning what s/he should do to meet the target viewers' needs for information in their cinematic experience. This chapter argues that a descriptive-analysis model of an interdisciplinary nature can contribute to an objective view of the assumptions.

This is a bottom-up model of two phases. At the first (descriptive) phase, micro-structural translation shifts in film subtitles are identified and categorised. Van Leuven-Zwart's study (1989) provides an efficient method to identify and categorise shifts, but the method needs to be adapted to accommodate syntactic features of Chinese and general linguistic features of spoken language. Shifts are seen as the manifestations of the translator's assumptions and voice. Since translation is a normative activity, translation shifts are not all arbitrary but would show certain patterns. At the second (analysis) phase, the patterns discovered in the first phase are interpreted to reveal the translator's communicative assumptions. The interpretation is carried out in an integrated framework based on notions concerning filmic perception and cognition, human cognition and communication.

Firstly, it is established that the comprehension of film narratives is realised through the viewer's active perception and cognition by applying various schemata derived from everyday world. This understanding is essential to explaining the translator's comprehension of the original film and the target viewers' comprehension of the subtitled version. Film can be seen as a phenomenal process consisting of fabula, syuzhet and style. Fabula refers to the more or less coherent story mentally constructed by individual viewers. Comprehension of film narratives is achieved through the establishment of fabula. Syuzhet is the dramaturgy of a film, and style refers to the systematic and significant use of techniques of the medium. Both syuzhet and style, especially syuzhet, provide information for the viewers to establish fabula.

Filmic dialogue forms an important part of syuzhet and they are the only part of the original film that can be modified by the translator. In a subtitled film, subtitles also form an important part of the syuzhet. Therefore, the translator's linguistic behaviour in the subtitles has a direct impact on the target viewers' cinematic experience. The translation shifts identified in the subtitles are believed to reflect the translator's communicative assumptions. The assumptions can be revealed by analysing the possible relations between the subtitles and other syuzhet information, especially the original dialogue.

Secondly, since the translator's communicative assumptions fall in the area of human cognition, the model that aims to account for the assumptions should naturally be based on cognitive theories. Text World Theory can provide part of the theoretical foundation for the model. Like other cognitive theories, Text World Theory holds that humans achieve cognition by creating and processing 'text-worlds', i.e. mental representations. Any given discourse, such as a cinematic discourse, can be separated into three interconnecting levels: the discourse-world, the text-world and the sub-worlds. The discourse-world concerns the immediate situation surrounding a communicative act, containing participants, the participants' entire store of knowledge and the text (if there is any) through which the communication takes place. Text-worlds and sub-worlds are the participants' mental representations. Information that the participants draw from the discourse-world is used as world-building elements and/or function-advancing propositions in constructing and developing various types of text-worlds and sub-worlds. The progress of the text-worlds and sub-worlds, which drives cognition and comprehension, is dependent on the context. The search for context in the human mind is driven by the text through which the participants carry out communication.

In the case of subtitling, the participants consist of the director of the original film, the translator and the target viewers. They are situated in a split discourse-world and the only point of contact between them is the film. How the translator arranges information in the subtitles directly affects how the target viewers construct and advance their text-worlds and sub-worlds. To analyse the patterns of the translation shifts in subtitles can make it clear what information related to world building and function advancing is

altered by the translator. The interpretation of the alterations can contribute to the investigation of the translator's communicative assumptions.

Thirdly, Relevance Theory, an efficiency-based cognitive approach to communication, has explanatory power in interpreting the alterations to information related to text-world building and function advancing. Relevance Theory concerns ostensive-inferential communication. It has been clarified in this chapter that, although subtitling can be seen as communication in general, it is specifically the communication between the translator and the target viewers that has an ostensive-inferential nature.

Relevance Theory posits that the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition. Relevance is defined in terms of contextual effect and processing effort. Optimal relevance is achieved when a stimulus enables the addressee to gain the greatest positive cognitive effect at the smallest processing effort. The cornerstone of the Relevance Theory is the Principle of Relevance, which posits that every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance. Great importance is attached to context in Relevance Theory as well. The degree of relevance that the addressee may be able to gain depends on how close the context the addressee actually uses is to the one intended by the communicator. Context is understood as the addressee's mental construct and is differentiated from the notion of 'cognitive environment' which includes an individual's physical environment and cognitive abilities. The translator's linguistic behaviour in composing the subtitles directly affects the contextual effects the target viewers can achieve and the processing efforts they have to make. An important part of the translator's communicative assumptions is how and to what degree the translator can help the target viewers obtain the relevance of the filmic text. The translator's alterations to information that can be used by the target viewers to build and advance text-worlds and sub-worlds can, therefore, be accounted for from this perspective.

This chapter has so far delineated a comparative-analysis model to investigate the translator's communicative assumptions. This model is situated in Descriptive Translation Studies methodologically and rooted in the field of human cognition and comprehension theoretically. In the next chapter, this model is going to be applied to investigate the translator's communicative assumptions when subtitling Chinese feature

films into English. It is hoped that the application can: 1) demonstrate the feasibility of the model, 2) reveal the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling Chinese feature films into English, and 3) further develop the notion of the translator's communicative assumptions.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Mapping Translation Shifts in the English Subtitles of Chinese Films: the Comparative Phase**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The current study has so far proposed the concept of ‘the translator’s communicative assumptions’ and designed a comparative-analysis model to investigate the assumptions in subtitling. The following understanding and arguments have been achieved through theoretical explorations in Chapter 3: the revealing of the translator’s communicative assumptions can be seen as a step further from the study of the medium-bound features and translation strategies as two central issues in subtitling. The investigation of the translator’s communicative assumptions can reveal the otherwise hidden voice of the translator. Translation shifts are manifestations of the translator’s communicative assumptions. The shifts would show certain patterns and tendencies because the translator’s linguistic behaviour is governed by translation norms. Translation shifts can be identified through a detailed comparison between the original filmic dialogue and the subtitles. Van Leuven-Zwart’s (1989) method is so far the most established to identify and categorise micro-structural translation shifts. However, amendments to this model are necessary for the current study in order to overcome some shortcomings of this model and to accommodate the distinct syntactic features of Chinese and the general linguistic feature of spoken language. The analysis and interpretation of the patterns and tendencies in the translation shifts can eventually lead to the revelation of the translator’s communicative assumptions in subtitling. The analysis and interpretation can be carried out in a framework informed by filmic perception and cognition (e.g. Bordwell, 1997a), Text World Theory (e.g. Gavins, 2007; Werth, 1999) and Relevance Theory (e.g. Gutt, 1991; Sperber & Wilson, 1986).

Chapter 4 will explain in detail van Leuven-Zwart’s (1989) method is adapted for the comparative phase of the model established in the current study. Details of three Chinese films selected as case studies will be presented in Section 4.2, including the selecting criteria and method of obtaining transcripts of filmic dialogue and subtitles. Sections 4.3 and 4.4 will discuss the main syntactic differences between Chinese and

English and then present a detailed report of the adaptation of van Leuven-Zwart's (1989) method and categories of shifts for the purpose of the current study.

#### 4.2 Three Chinese Feature Films as Case Studies

The following three Chinese feature films have been selected as case studies in the current study. They are all subtitled and presented in DVD format released for the UK market.

Name	Genre	Director	Year	Running Time
<i>Farewell my Concubine</i>	epic drama	Chen Kaige	1993	171 minutes
<i>The Road Home</i>	romantic drama	Zhang Yimou	1999	89 minutes
<i>Hero</i>	martial arts	Zhang Yimou	2002	99 minutes

*Table 4-1 Three Chinese feature films as case studies in this study*

*Farewell My Concubine Farewell* is set in Beijing and spans more than 50 years, from mid-1920s to the late 1970s, presenting lives against the historical backdrop of China in upheaval. It is a story of two Beijing opera singers and a woman who comes into their life and how their lives are affected by the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and the victory of the Communists over the Nationalists in 1949. Dialogue in this film imitates spontaneous conversations and contains regional and temporal features.

*The Road Home* is set in a small village in northern China. It is a love story of a local young woman and a young man who comes to teach in the local school. This story spans from the 1958 Anti-Rightist Movement to the teacher's death many years later (in the 1990s) that brings their son who lives in the city back to the village for the funeral. The utterances of the characters in this film are very verbose and fragmented in structure.

*Hero* is set in the Warring States period in Chinese history (the third century BC). At the time, the King of Qin attempts to unify 'all under heaven' by conquering the six other states and made him a prime target for assassins. *Hero* is a story about an assassination attempt by four warriors. Dialogue in this film is the least dense among the three films. They are deliberately concise and contain temporal features.



Five factors were taken into account in order to select films that potentially call for a wide range of translation strategies and at the same time to efficiently control variables. The five factors are production year, film genre, grouping of the filmmaker, language variety and the popularity of the film in both domestic and international markets.

The three selected films were made over the 10 years between 1993 and 2002. As stated in Chapter Three, translation norms do not always remain the same; they may change with the time, although this change is slow and gradual. Norms are likely to be relatively static within a short period of time, hence the decision on the 10-year time span.

There are currently four major groups of filmmakers in the film market in China: Fifth Generation filmmakers<sup>9</sup>, Sixth Generation filmmakers<sup>10</sup>, “young commercial filmmakers”<sup>11</sup> (e.g. S. Sun, 2000) and the so-called main-melody filmmakers<sup>12</sup>. Both

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<sup>9</sup> The Fifth Generation filmmakers rose to fame in the mid-1980s. Most of them were the fifth intake of the Beijing Film Academy (BFA), the first class that graduated in 1982 in the post-Mao era, hence the name ‘the Fifth Generation’. Their works were inspired by the traumatic experiences of the Cultural Revolution, increasing exposure to Western films, and the specific social background in the mid-1980s. Combining the symbolic use of colour, landscape and objects, they questioned the fundamentals of historical and contemporary Chinese culture and gradually created a new wave of Chinese cinema. The Fifth Generation film era ended in 1991.

<sup>10</sup> The Sixth Generation is a convenient name given to a group of relatively young Chinese directors in the shadow of commercialisation despite their lack of a collective identity as strong and integrated as that of the Fifth Generation. These directors were mostly born in the 1960s and received formal training at BFA in the 1980s. Unlike the Fifth Generation, they show little interest in the grand notion of history or in current issues of morality, politics and society (Zhang & Xiao, 1998: 307). Instead, they intentionally detach their works from contemporary politics and are intent on documenting the society they lived in (Cornelius & Smith, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> In China’s film market, there is another group of young filmmakers who neither follow the path of the Fifth Generation, nor entirely buy the government version of filmmaking, nor produce controversial films. They always cater their products for the changing taste of the domestic audience and do not shy away from the allegation that their major concern is only the box office value.

Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou are leading figures of the Fifth Generation filmmakers. They both continued to make new and more commercial films after 1991, when the Fifth Generation film era ended as an artistic movement of a defined period under specific circumstances. The selected three films are works of the two directors after the end of the Fifth Generation film era. The three films all (partially) depended on overseas funding and obtained internationally renowned film awards.

Film genre is also a factor taken into account in the selection process. Genre, usually defined by a set of codes and conventions, is a problematic term in film studies, as a film is “rarely generically pure” (Hayward, 2000: 166) and constantly refers to itself as a “cross-media generic formation” (Neale, 1990: 62). Moreover, genres are not static; they may transform or even disappear with time for economic, technological and consumption reasons, and produce sub-genres (Hayward, 2000: 167). Although the definition and classification of film genre are fluid and complicated, Tudor (2003) believes that genre terms can be best employed “in the analysis of the relation between groups of films, the cultures in which they are made, and the cultures in which they are exhibited”.

The films studied in this thesis belong to three genre categories that are commonly seen as popular among international audiences of Chinese feature films: epic, romantic drama and martial arts. There are mainly two reasons for selecting different genres of films to be studied in this thesis. Firstly, the dialogues in films of different genres show distinct linguistic features, which may impose different difficulties on the translator and also the audience. Secondly, the cinematographic language in films of different genres is also distinct, which may impose different difficulties on or supply different assistance to the translator and audience. It is hoped that the selection of different genres of films can open a wider window into the understanding of the translator’s communicative assumptions. To limit the number of films to three is of a practical reason. This study intends to compare the dialogues in an entire film, rather than selected fragments, with their subtitles to account for all micro-structural shifts in order to depict a relatively

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<sup>12</sup> Another major group of filmmakers in China is the so-called “main melody” (主旋律, *zhǔ xuánlǜ*) directors. They receive government subsidies to make films with patriotic and other themes in line with government’s propaganda. These films are mainly made for the domestic market although some of them have been sent by the government to international film festivals or displays.

comprehensive picture of the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling. The dialogues and their subtitles are divided into "transemes" (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 155, see Section 3.2.3 and Section 4.3.1) for detailed comparison and the dialogues of a single film can easily contain hundreds of transemes. It would become unmanageable to try to examine more than three films in this study given the limited amount of time.

Dialogue in the selected three films was manually transcribed and their translations in the form of subtitles were manually copied from the screen by the researcher of this study. The original films and their subtitled versions are studied as the STs and TTs respectively in this study. The transcripts of STs and TTs were independently verified by a colleague of the researcher in order to ensure that all dialogue in the original films and subtitles had been transcribed or copied completely and correctly. The three films, including the subtitles, are studied in their entirety in the current study.

### **4.3 An Adaptation of van Leuven-Zwart's Model**

In this study, a comparative-analysis model is applied to examine three English-subtitled Chinese feature films in their entirety (*Farewell my Concubine*, *The Road Home* and *Hero*), aiming to reveal the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling. The comparative phase is to lay a foundation for the analysis phase.

The comparative component of van Leuven-Zwart's (1989) comparative-descriptive model is adapted and employed in the comparative phase of the current study. The original film dialogues and their corresponding subtitles are divided into what van Leuven-Zwart (ibid: 155-6) calls "state of affairs transemes" and "satellite transemes" as the unit of comparison (details to follow in Section 4.3.1). In the current study, van Leuven-Zwart's definition of satellite transeme is retained but the scope of state of affairs transeme is expanded to accommodate spoken language features. The comparison of the ST transemes with the corresponding TT transemes follows the procedures established in van Leuven-Zwart's model. The categories, sub-categories and sub-divisions of shifts identified in this study are largely based on but not identical to those in van Leuven-Zwart's research.

Compared to van Leuven-Zwart's model, the biggest difference in the comparative phase of the current study is how shifts are identified. Van Leuven-Zwart's research does not distinguish word-level shifts from transeme-level shifts; furthermore it does not state whether one shift could fit in more than one sub-category or whether one transeme can contain more than one shift. In the current study, although all comparison takes place on the transeme level, shifts as the result of the comparison are grouped into word-level shifts and transeme-level shifts. Furthermore, in the current study, a shift may fall under more than one sub-division so as to describe changes associated with the shift in a more comprehensive way. For example, a shift may at the same time involve changes concerning register, temporal element and culture-bound element. Likewise, one transeme can contain more than one shift, and it is possible that one transeme contains both word-level and transeme level shifts.

#### ***4.3.1 Transeme: the unit of comparison***

The search of translational shifts begins with a comparison of the original filmic dialogue and the corresponding subtitles on the transeme level. There are two types of transemes: the 'state of affairs transeme' and 'satellite transeme'.

In van Leuven-Zwart's (1989) study, a state of affair transeme consists of a predicate – a lexical verb or a copula – and its arguments, while a satellite transeme is an adverbial specification or amplification of the state of affairs transeme. Van Leuven-Zwart gives the following example as an illustration of the two types, using /.../ to indicate the boundaries of a state of affairs and (...) for a satellite transeme:

/Linda frowned;//she sat up quickly (in her steamer chair) // and clasped her ankles./  
(1989: 156)

In the current study, in order to accommodate features of spoken language, the concept of state of affairs transeme is expanded to include some expressions that lack a predicate and are typical spoken structures, such as greetings (e.g. 'Good morning!'), vocatives (e.g. 'Your Majesty'), responsive expressions (e.g. 'OK', 'Yes') and exclamations (e.g. 'Wow'). These expressions can be sentences themselves or form a relatively independent part of a sentence. Such expressions are classed as state of affairs transemes because they are relatively independent and do not serve as adverbial

specifications or amplifications of other transemes. The following are examples. The underlined parts are expressions classed as state of affairs transemes although they lack a predicate.

- /What dimension of scroll/? - /Eight feet/. (subtitles from *Hero*)
- /Mother/, /don't weave it/. /I'll buy one instead/. (subtitles from *The Road Home*)
- /Hey/, /Yanhong/, /is that you/? (subtitles from *Farewell my Concubine*)

The description of satellite transemes in van Leuven-Zwart's research is retained in the current study. They are adverbial specification or amplification of state of affairs transemes, and are in the form of a prepositional structure, such as 'on the street', 'within two weeks', or words/phrases indicating time or place, such as 'tomorrow', 'next week', 'over there' etc. The following are examples:

- /But how are we going to get through the days/ /and make it/ (in the real world) (among ordinary people)? (subtitles from *Farewell my Concubine*)
- (Three years ago), /Snow and Broken Sword stormed our palace together/. (subtitles from *Hero*)
- (Tomorrow) /it's our turn to have you over/. (subtitles from *The Road Home*)

#### **4.3.2 Segmenting Chinese sentences into transemes**

Van Leuven-Zwart's model was originally designed to investigate shifts that occur in an integral Dutch translation of a Spanish narrative text. She reports that this model has also been applied by some seventy postgraduate students to one or more translations of mainly fictional prose texts between European languages (van Leuven-Zwart, 1990). This current study seeks to investigate shifts emerging in English written translations (subtitles) of Chinese spoken texts (filmic dialogue). One question needs to be answered first before van Leuven-Zwart's model can be applied: can Chinese sentences be segmented into transemes? Van Leuven-Zwart has shown that transeme is an applicable unit in segmenting sentences in European languages, including English, but there are distinct syntactic differences between Chinese and English mainly in four aspects.

Firstly, the most outstanding difference between Chinese and English may be that

English is an inflectional language while Chinese is not. In contrast to English, Chinese “stands out as a language without a great number of affixational morphological processes” (Lin, 2001: 122). There are few overt syntactic expressions of tense, subject-verb agreement, case, mood, gender or number marking in Chinese when compared with inflectional languages such as English.

From the aspect of language typology, Xing (1997) comments that Chinese is a language that is among the most economical and least redundant in the use of overt grammatical devices but no more ambiguous than any other language. The explanation lies in the fact that “language is almost never used without a context, which provides a great deal of information for the precise interpretation of a linguistic utterance and that Chinese language “takes greater advantage of such information than languages that have more linguistic redundancy” (Lin, 2001: 125). In Chinese, much information is provided lexically or by word order rather than grammatically, or it may not be expressed linguistically at all but simply be derived from common knowledge or context.

This difference between the two languages is not a detrimental element in segmenting Chinese sentences into transems. When comparing English TT transems with Chinese ST transems to identify shifts, linguistic structures concerning tense, person and number are less relevant than when two inflectional languages are concerned. Consequently, ‘tense’, ‘person’ and ‘number’, which are three subdivisions under Syntactic-Semantic Modification in van Leuven-Zwart’s model are removed<sup>13</sup> (see Section 4.3.4).

Secondly, there are significant differences between Chinese and English in terms of word order. Languages can fall into three main groups with respect to the order of the verb and the nouns in a simple sentence: VSO, SVO and SOV<sup>14</sup> (Greenberg, 1963). English is a typical SVO language. However, Chinese is not an easy language to classify in terms of word order for three reasons (Li & Thompson, 1981: 19): 1) the notion of subject is not a structurally well-defined one in the grammar of Chinese; 2) the

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<sup>13</sup> The sub-categories in van Leuven-Zwart’s study are subdivisions in this study where ‘Modulation’, ‘Modification’ and ‘Mutation’ are clearly marked as Categories.

<sup>14</sup> S = subject; V = verb; O = object

order in which basic words and phrases occur is governed to a large extent by considerations of meaning rather than of grammatical functions; and 3) Chinese is inconsistent with respect to the features that correlate with VO or OV whether it is taken to be verb medial or verb final. For example, there is a greater number of VO than OV sentences in Chinese, yet modifiers must precede their heads, which is an OV feature. Sun and Givón (1985) conclude that Chinese is a rather typical SVO language in a quantified study on SOV word order in Chinese. However, they also point out that this basic word order can change in certain constructions and interact with pragmatics and discourse. For example, in a 把 (*bǎ*) construction, the logical object of a verb is brought immediately before the verb. Another important rule of word order in Chinese, as stated above, is that the modifier always precedes the element being modified (the head), for which Chinese is also referred to as a ‘head-final’ language.

This second difference between Chinese and English does not make it difficult to segment Chinese sentences into transeemes. However, in practice the location of some transeemes in a Chinese sentence can be different from that in their counterparts in the English subtitles. If the difference occurs purely due to the linguistic rule of where the modifier is positioned in different languages, it is not classed as a shift in the current study.

As stated above, the notion of subject is not a structurally well-defined one in the grammar of Chinese, which is different from that of English. Here lies the third major difference between the two languages. Chinese is typologically classified as a ‘topic prominent’ language which is opposed to English as a ‘subject prominent’ language (Chao, 1968: 69; Ramsey, 1987: 66; H. C. Sun, 1998: 215).

Nearly all English sentences must have a subject. The subject of an English sentence is easy to identify as it typically occurs right before the verb and the verb agrees with it in number. English sentences can be summed up in seven basic patterns: SV, SVO, SVC, SVA, SVOO, SVOC and SVOA (Quirk et al., 1985: 53)<sup>15</sup>. “SV kernel” is what all the seven patterns have in common (Pan, 1997: 199).

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<sup>15</sup> C = complement; A = adverbial

In Chinese, on the other hand, the concept of subject is not as significant as that in English and “the primary syntactic division of a Chinese sentence is between the topic and the rest of the sentence (which is often called the comment)” (Ramsey, 1987: 66). This is to say that a typical Chinese sentence is of two parts - a ‘topic’ and a ‘comment’. The topic always appears at the beginning of a sentence and it is ‘what a sentence is about ... [It] sets a spatial, temporal or individual framework within which the main predication holds’ (Li & Thompson, 1981: 86). The topic can be, but does not have to be, the subject of the sentence. A sentence can have both a topic and a subject, and a topic can be the object or something entirely different. In addition, “the topic is either definite, the quality normally marked by the use of *the* in English, or the focal point of the sentence” (Lin, 2001: 124).

However, the identification of a state of affairs transeme is according to the predicate; therefore, the fact of Chinese being a ‘topic prominent’ language does not prevent Chinese sentences from being divided into transemes. In practice, when a sentence has both a topic and a subject, the topic is usually classed into the same transeme where the subject is. However, if the topic itself is a clause with a ‘predicate + argument’ structure, it is classed to be a state of affairs transeme itself. It should be noted that all clauses that are of a ‘predicate + argument’ structure are classed as transemes themselves in this study.

Predicates in Chinese sentences can be different from those in English. According to Chao (1968: 87-94), there are three types of predicates in Chinese: 1) verbal predicates. This is the most common type of predicate with a verb as the centre; 2) adjectival predicates. In Chinese, adjectives are a species of verbs and can be used as full predicates. They do not need any copula to make them predicates; and 3) nominal predicates. In Chinese, nouns can be used as predicates to represent a class to which the subject is subsumed, to call attention to existence or extent of something, or to express a process or event. In the English subtitles, if changes are made to add a copula to the original Chinese adjectival predicates or nominal predicates, they are not classed as shifts in this study.

Fourthly and finally, another salient difference between Chinese and English is that noun phrases understood from context do not need to be specified, while in English the



use of pronouns is much more common. Linguists call these omitted pronouns in Chinese ‘zero pronouns’. Zero pronouns are used in Chinese when the referents are understood from having been mentioned in the discourse, or when they are ‘general’ or non-specific (English can use *you* or *they*, or more formally *one* in this function).

This difference between the two languages should not pose any difficulty when segmenting Chinese sentences into transemes. However, in order to reflect this difference, a sub-division *pro-drop* (from ‘pronoun-dropping’) is added under the sub-category of Syntactic-Semantic Modification in the table of shift categories (see Section 4.3.4).

### ***4.3.3 The process of comparison***

The process of comparison involves three steps. The basic principle guiding the comparison is the concept of relationship defined by structural semanticists (e.g. Lyons, 1997). According to them, two entities are related when they show aspects of both conjunction (similarity) and disjunction (dissimilarity). The existence of a similarity is a precondition for the existence of dissimilarity. Therefore, the features in common are the basis for discovering the differences; hence the following steps for comparison designed by van Leuven-Zwart.

The first step is to establish the common denominator between a source-text transeme (STT) and its counterpart in the target text (target-text transeme, or TTT). The common denominator is named “architranseme” or “ATR” by van Leuven-Zwart (1989: 157). The aspects of conjunction between the two transemes, i.e. their shared semantic or pragmatic common features, are expressed in the ATR by content words (nouns, verb, adjectives and adverbs) or by paraphrases. Function words, such as prepositions, conjunctions and pronouns, do not appear in the ATR. Here are some examples given by van Leuven-Zwart (1989). The subscript numbers correspond with the superscript number indicating a specific transeme.

ST: /she sat up<sup>1</sup> quickly (in her steamer<sup>2</sup> chair)/

TT: /se<sup>1</sup> enderezó (sobre<sup>2</sup> su chaise longue)/

ATR<sub>1</sub>: to sit up

ATR<sub>2</sub>: satellite of location: a lightweight, portable folding chair

The second step is to compare each transeme separately with the ATR aiming to establish the relationship between the respective unit and the ATR. There are only two possibilities: the comparative unit and the ATR either correspond or differ. If there is no difference between a comparative unit and the ATR, it means that their relationship is based exclusively on aspects of conjunction. This relationship is, therefore, synonymic. Alternatively, if a unit differs from the ATR and their relationship is based on an aspect of conjunction as well as an aspect of disjunction, the relationship is hyponymic. Here is one of the examples given by van Leuven-Zwart (1989):

ST: /she sat up quickly .../

TT: /se enderezó/

ATR: to sit up

In this example, no difference is found between the TTT and the ATR because there are only aspects of conjunction between them. However, there is difference between the STT and the ATR as ‘she sat up quickly’ is not the same as ‘to sit up’ but a hyponym of the ATR describing a certain way of sitting up. Therefore, the relationship between the ST transeme and the ATR is hyponymic.

The third and last step is to establish relationship between the ST and TT transemes so as to identify and categorise translation shifts on a micro-structural level. Van Leuven-Zwart (1989) summarises four possibilities:

- 1) Synonymic relationship where no shift occurs in translation: both the ST comparative unit and the TT unit show a synonymic relationship with the ATR.
- 2) Hyponymic relationship where a shift exists: one of the comparative units shows a synonymic relationship with the ATR, while the other a hyponymic relationship.
- 3) Contrast relationship where a shift occurs: both comparative units show a hyponymic relationship with the ATR.
- 4) No relationship where a shift occurs: the two comparative units possess no aspect of conjunction and it is impossible to establish an ATR.

On the basis of these relationships, van Leuven-Zwart (1989: 170) sets up three main categories of micro-structural shifts: modulation (Hyponymic relationship),

modification (Contrast relationship) and mutation (no relationship). Each of these categories spawns more finely meshed sub-categories and subdivisions according to the aspects of the difference between the two comparative units (see Section 3.2.3 for van Leuven-Zwart's original categories).

Most of the categories, sub-categories and subdivisions established by van Leuven-Zwart are retained in the current study with adaptations made to some subdivisions under the categories of modulation and modification. The adaptations were informed by a pilot study where van Leuven-Zwart's categories were applied to identify shifts that emerge in the comparison of extracts from the three case-study Chinese films with their corresponding subtitles.

In the pilot study, two 5-minute segments were randomly taken from each of the three films. The result of the pilot study suggests: 1) some subdivisions are vaguely named and not defined clearly in van Leuven-Zwart's study and are difficult to apply in the current study; 2) some subdivisions based on the linguistic features of European languages are not relevant to Chinese; 3) revisions on subdivisions are needed to fully describe shifts caused by linguistic differences between Chinese and English; 4) shifts take place on both word/phrase level and transeme level although the comparison of the ST and TT are carried out at the transeme level. As a result, revisions have been made to subdivisions in order to resolve the issues identified in the pilot study.

Two tables are used to categorise shifts at the word/phrase level and transeme level separately (see Table 4-3 and Table 4-4). In Section 4.3.4, each category, sub-category and subdivision will be defined and explained. Examples will be provided to demonstrate how to apply them. More details will also be given to explain why some of van Leuven-Zwart's original subdivisions need to be amended for this study.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>SUB-CATEGORY</b>	<b>SUB-DIVISIONS</b>
MODULATION	00 SEMANTIC MODULATION G: generalisation S: specification	01G – intensive element/generalisation 01S – intensive element/specification 02G – descriptive element/generalisation 02S – descriptive element/specification 03G – subjective element/generalisation 03S – subjective element/specification 04G – specific element/generalisation 04S – specific element/specification
	10 STYLISTIC MODULATION G: generalisation S: specification	11G – register element/generalisation 11S – register element/specification 12G – temporal element/generalisation 12S – temporal element/specification 13G – culture-bound element/generalisation 13S – culture-bound element/specification 14G – syntagmatic element/generalisation 14S – syntagmatic element/specification 15G – paradigmatic element/generalisation 15S – paradigmatic element/specification
MODIFICATION	20 SEMANTIC MODIFICATION	21 – intensive element 22 – descriptive element 23 – subjective element 24 – specific element
	30 STYLISTIC MODIFICATION	31 – register element 32 – temporal element 33 – culture-bound element 34 – syntagmatic element 35 – paradigmatic element

*Table 4-2 Micro-structural translation shifts on the word/phrase level, adapted from van Leuven-Zwart (1989: 170)*

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	SUB-DIVISIONS
MODIFICATION	40 SYNTACTIC-SEMANTIC MODIFICATION	41 – grammatical class/ function 42 – function word 43 – pro-drop
	50 SYNTACTIC-STYLISTIC MODIFICATION	51 – explicitation 52 – implicitation
	60 SYNTACTIC- PRAGMATIC MODIFICATION	61 – speech act 62 – thematic meaning
MUTATION		71 – deletion 72 – addition 73 – radical change of meaning

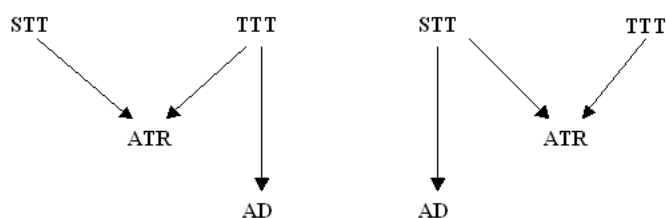
*Table 4-3 Micro-structural translation shifts on the transeme level, adapted from van Leuven-Zwart (1989: 170)*

#### **4.4 Categorising translation shifts**

As shown in Tables 4-3 and 4-4, translation shifts identified in the process of comparing the ST and TT can be grouped under three categories: Modulation, Modification and Mutation. There are further divisions within each category. The category of Modulation contains only word/phrase-level shifts; Modification contains shifts on both word/phrase level and transeme level; Mutation contains only transeme-level shifts. It is possible that more than one shift are identified within one transeme. It is also possible that, among the shifts in the same transeme, some are on the word/phrase level and some are on the transeme level. Examples will be given in the following sections to demonstrate how multiple shifts may emerge in a single transeme.

##### **4.4.1 Modulation**

Modulation occurs when a hyponymic relation is found between words or phrases in a pair of corresponding transemes: one is in conjunction with the ATR, the other in disjunction (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989) (Diagram 4-1).



STT = source-text transeme; TTT = target-text transeme; ATR = architranseme;

AD = aspect of disjunction

*Figure 4-1 Modulation*

If the aspect of disjunction occurs in the TT transeme, the shift is modulation/*specification*; if the aspect of disjunction exists in the ST transeme, the shift is modulation/*generalisation*. Both specification and generalisation can be either semantic or stylistic, hence four sub-categories of modulation: semantic modulation/*specification*, semantic modulation/*generalisation*, stylistic modulation/*specification* and stylistic modulation/*generalisation*. Each sub-category is further subdivided into subdivisions.

### Semantic Modulation

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	SUB-DIVISIONS
MODULATION	00 SEMANTIC MODULATION  G: generalisation S: specification	01G – intensive element/generalisation 01S – intensive element/specification 02G – descriptive element/generalisation 02S – descriptive element/specification 03G – subjective element/generalisation 03S – subjective element/specification 04G – specific element/generalisation 04S – specific element/specification

*Table 4-4 Shifts under the sub-category of Semantic Modulation*

In the sub-category of Semantic Modulation, there are 8 subdivisions as a result of 4 semantic aspects of disjunction: ‘intensive element’, ‘descriptive element’, ‘subjective element’ and ‘specific element’. Shifts caused by each of the aspects could be of a ‘specification’ or ‘generalisation’ feature depending whether the aspects of disjunction manifest themselves in the STT or TTT.

In this study, some revisions are made to van Leuven-Zwart's subdivisions (see Table 3-1 for van Leuven-Zwart's original and Tables 4-3 and 4-4 for the adapted subdivisions in this current study): 'form/class/mode' is deleted; 'aspectual element' is replaced by 'descriptive element' and 'concrete element' is replaced by 'specific element'.

Van Leuven-Zwart (1989: 161) believes that "semantic aspects of disjunction can always be established on the basis of the form/class/mode formula", which is what her subdivision of 'f/c/m' refers to. However, she also believes that "in some cases the form/class/mode formula can be further elaborated, as in 'X is a subjective f/c/m of Y' or 'X is an aspectual f/c/m of Y'" (ibid). Together with 'f/c/m' in her category, there are four more subdivisions under the names of 'aspectual element', 'subjective element', 'concrete element' and 'intensive element'. This is problematic because these four subdivisions can be in fact subsumed under 'f/c/m' rather than being its equal. Therefore, in the current study, the subdivision of 'f/c/m' is removed.

The reason to replace 'aspectual element' is because there is no clear definition of this element in van Leuven-Zwart's original writing and the name of this element is not self-explanatory; therefore, there is a need to rename and define this subdivision.

Furthermore, the pilot study shows that there are a large number of shifts concerning the description of notional words, hence the name 'descriptive element'. It should be noted that the subdivision of 'descriptive element' in this study does not aim to refer to the same shifts under van Leuven-Zwart's 'aspectual element'. The following are two examples of shifts under semantic modulation/descriptive element:

#### Example 4-1

ST: /教室门开着<sup>1</sup>/, /被村长看见了<sup>2</sup>/。 (*The Road Home*: 59.52)

LT: /The classroom door was<sup>1</sup> open/. /She was seen<sup>2</sup> by the village mayor/.

TT: /The door was<sup>1</sup> open/, /and the mayor saw<sup>2</sup> her there/.

ATR<sub>1</sub>: door + in the state of being open

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: descriptive element describing door: classroom door

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: 0

Semantic modulation/generalisation, descriptive element ('教室门' [classroom door] is translated into 'door' in the subtitle.)

Example 4-2

ST: /我怕! (*Farewell my Concubine*: 02.28.34)

LT: /I am afraid/.

TT: /I'm so afraid/!

ATR: subject (first person) + to be + afraid

ADstt: 0

ADttt: descriptive element describing 'afraid': so afraid

Semantic modulation/specification, descriptive element (Adverb 'so' is used in the subtitle to describe how afraid the person is, but the degree was not described in the original.)

The reason to replace 'concrete element' is also because there is no clear definition of this element in van Leven-Zwart's original writing. The word 'concrete' may imply that between a pair of STT and TTT, one is more material (in a form that can be seen or felt), while the other is more abstract (existing as an idea, feeling or quality, not as a material object). However, the pilot study of this research shows that a large number of shifts emerge because some transems are either more material or more accurate than their counterparts. Therefore, it is decided to replace 'concrete element' with 'specific element' as being 'more specific' includes being 'more concrete' and 'more accurate'.

Example 4-3

ST: /此地归我辖管/。 (*Hero*: 10.16)

LT: /This place is for me to have jurisdiction over/.

TT: /This region is under my control/.

ATR: place + to control

ADstt: specific element describing 'to control': to govern

ADttt: specific element describing 'place': a large area of land

Two shifts are identified:

Semantic modulation/generalisation, specific element ('辖管' [to have jurisdiction over] is translated into 'under one's control' in the subtitle.)

Semantic modulation/specification, specific element ('地' [place] is translated into 'region' in the subtitle.)



Van Leuven-Zwart's subdivisions of 'subjective element' and 'intensive element' are retained in this study (see Table 3-1 for van Leuven-Zwart's original and Tables 4-3 and 4-4 for the adapted subdivisions in this current study). There is no clear definition of these two subdivisions in van Leuven-Zwart's writing. The scopes of the two subdivisions in this study are described as follows:

“Subjective element” refers to the disjunction caused by the deletion or addition of a modal verb before the predicate verb in a TTT.

#### Example 4-4

ST: /答应<sup>1</sup>我/, /你得(给<sup>3</sup>我)立<sup>2</sup>字据/. (*Farewell my Concubine*: 01.47.56)

LT: /Promise<sup>1</sup> me/. /You must (for<sup>3</sup> me) put<sup>2</sup> in writing/.

TT: /Promise<sup>1</sup> me this/. /Put<sup>2</sup> it in writing/.

ATR<sub>2</sub>: to write

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: subjective element concerning 'to write': + modal auxiliary

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: 0

Semantic modulation/generalisation, subjective element (A modal verb '得', with a close meaning to 'must', was used in the original but is not translated in the subtitle.)

#### Example 4-5

ST: /好快的剑/! (*Hero*: 15.35)

LT: /How fast a sword/!

TT: /How swift your sword must be/!

ATR: fast + sword

ADstt: 0

ADttt: subjective element concerning 'fast': + modal auxiliary; descriptive element describing 'sword': + pronoun

Two shifts are identified:

Semantic modulation/specification, subjective element (A modal verb 'must' is added before the verb in the subtitle.)

Semantic modulation/specification, descriptive element (A pronoun 'your' is added in the subtitle to specify whose sword it is.)

“Intensive element” refers to the disjunction caused by changes in semantic strength of

a word/phrase in a TTT compared to its corresponding STT.

#### Example 4-6

ST: /我(现在<sup>1</sup>)最担心<sup>2</sup>母亲/。 (*The Road Home*: 01.22)

LT: /I am (now<sup>1</sup>) most worried<sup>2</sup> about Mother/.

TT: /I am very worried about<sup>2</sup> my mother/.

ATR<sub>2</sub>: subject (first-person pronoun) + to worry about to a great extent + mother

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: intensive element concerning ‘to worry about to a great extent’: most worried

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: descriptive element describing ‘mother’: + pronoun

Two shifts are identified concerning the second transeme:

Semantic modulation/generalisation, intensive element (The person is described in the subtitle as ‘very’ worried, in the original he was described as ‘most’ worried.)

Semantic modulation/specification, descriptive element (A pronoun ‘my’ is added in the subtitles before ‘mother’, but in the original there is no pronoun used before ‘母亲’ [mother].)

#### Example 4-7

ST: /好剑法/! (*Hero*: 28.58)

LT: /Good swordplay/.

TT: /Beautiful swordplay/!

ATR: good + swordplay

ADstt: 0

ADttt: intensive and specific element concerning ‘good’: pleasing to the senses or mind

Two shifts are identified:

Semantic modulation/specification, intensive element

Semantic modulation/specification, specific element (‘好剑法’ [good swordplay] is translated into ‘beautiful swordplay’ in the subtitles. The translation is more specific about to what extent the swordplay is good, and the translation also carries a more intensified positive tone than the original; hence the two shifts.)

## Stylistic Modulation

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	SUB-DIVISIONS
MODULATION	10 STYLISTIC MODULATION  G: generalisation S: specification	11G – register element/generalisation 11S – register element/specification 12G – temporal element/generalisation 12S – temporal element/specification 13G – culture-bound element/generalisation 13S – culture-bound element/specification 14G – syntagmatic element/generalisation 14S – syntagmatic element/specification 15G – paradigmatic element/generalisation 15S – paradigmatic element/specification

*Table 4-5 Shifts under the sub-category of Stylistic Modulation*

In the sub-category of Stylistic Modulation, there are 10 subdivisions as a result of 5 stylistic aspects of disjunction: ‘register element’, ‘temporal element’, ‘culture-bound element’, ‘syntagmatic element’ and ‘paradigmatic element’. Shifts caused by each of the aspects could be of a ‘specification’ or ‘generalisation’ feature depending on whether the aspects of disjunction manifest themselves in the TTT or STT.

In the current study, revisions to van Leuven-Zwart’s subdivisions have also been made under this sub-category (see Table 3-1 for van Leuven-Zwart’s original and Tables 4-3 and 4-4 for the adapted subdivisions in this current study): her subdivisions of ‘register element’, ‘professional element’ and ‘text-specific element’ are merged into one – ‘register element’. Van Leuven-Zwart uses ‘professional element’ to refer to information about “the kind of occupational or professional activity being engaged in” (Crystal & Davy, 1979 cited in van Leuven-Zwart 1989:163) and ‘text-specific element’ to refer to information about the text-type, such as letters, jokes, fairy tales. It is believed in this study that information under these two subdivisions can be subsumed under ‘register element’. The subdivision of ‘register element’ in this study refer to shifts caused by the element that provides information on the social relationship which exists between the participants in the language situation, such as formal/informal, official/colloquial, polite/impolite, distant/familiar, humble/overbearing, professional/amateur, etc.

Example 4-8

ST: /小楼<sup>1</sup>/, /虞姬都上<sup>2</sup>了/, /你该盯场<sup>3</sup>了/。 (*Farewell my Concubine*: 02.19.12)

LT: /Xiaolou<sup>1</sup>/, /Concubine Yu is<sup>2</sup> on already/. /You should get on<sup>3</sup> the stage/.

TT: /Xiaolou<sup>1</sup>/, /the concubine is<sup>2</sup> on stage/. /You'd better hurry<sup>3</sup>/.

ATR<sub>3</sub>: second-person pronoun + modal auxiliary + to hurry

ADstt<sub>3</sub>: stylistic variant of 'hurry': professional language in the field of Beijing opera

ADttt<sub>3</sub>: 0

Stylistic Modulation/generalisation, register element ('盯场' is a verb used to say that it will soon be an opera actor's turn to perform on the stage. This word is translated into 'hurry' in the subtitle. The profession-associated meaning of the original word is not reflected in the translation.)

Example 4-9

ST: /弟子来<sup>1</sup>//借<sup>2</sup>朱砂/。 (*Hero*: 19.22)

LT: /Your student comes<sup>1</sup>/ /to borrow<sup>2</sup> cinnabar/.

TT: /Your student respectfully requests<sup>2</sup> some red ink/.

ATR<sub>2</sub>: student + to ask for + red ink

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: 0

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: stylistic variant of 'to ask for': + description; more polite

Two shifts are identified:

Semantic Modulation/specification, descriptive element

Stylistic Modulation/ specification, register element ('借' [to borrow] is translated into 'respectfully requests' in the subtitle. The translation has a description before the verb and is also more polite, hence the two shifts.)

The definition of the other four subdivisions is in line with that in van Leuven-Zwart's writing (see Table 3-1 for van Leuven-Zwart's original and Tables 4-3 and 4-4 for the adapted subdivisions in this current study):

'Temporal element' refers to disjunctions caused by a time element, i.e. the element "provides information about the temporal dimension in which the utterance takes place: archaisms and neologisms" (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 163).

Example 4-10

ST: (子夜<sup>1</sup>), (藏书阁<sup>2</sup>)。 (*Hero*: 28.46)

LT: (Midnight<sup>1</sup>), (library<sup>2</sup>).

TT: /Please meet me/ (at<sup>1</sup> the library) (at<sup>2</sup> midnight).

ATR<sub>2</sub>: library

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: form of ‘library’: old-fashion word

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: 0

Stylistic Modulation/generalisation, temporal element (‘藏书阁’ means ‘library’ but is more old-fashioned.)

‘Culture-bound element’ refers to disjunctions caused by a culture-specific element, i.e. the element “provides information about the country, the culture and the social characteristics of the original text (exotization) or the translation (naturalization)” (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 163).

Example 4-11

ST: /寡人猜测<sup>1</sup>//你与长空早就相识<sup>2</sup>/。 (*Hero*: 45.28)

LT: /I suspect<sup>1</sup>//you have long known<sup>2</sup> Sky/.

TT: /I suspect<sup>1</sup>//you and Sky were<sup>2</sup> allies/.

ATR<sub>1</sub>: first person pronoun + to guess

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: stylistic form and variant of ‘first person pronoun’: humble form of self-appellation by an emperor in ancient China

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: 0

Three shifts occur in the translation of the word ‘寡人(I)’:

Stylistic Modulation/generalisation, register element, temporal element, culture-bound element (‘寡人’ literally means ‘I’ but was only used by a Chinese king or emperor to refer to himself. Therefore, compared to ‘I’, ‘寡人’ is Chinese culture specific, old-fashioned and associated with persons in a specific position.)

Both ‘syntagmatic element’ and ‘paradigmatic element’ refer to an expressive aspect of disjunction. The former contains shifts caused by elements based on the phenomenon of repetition and underlying such figures of speech as alliteration, rhyme, assonance,

anaphora and parallelism (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 163); the latter contains shifts as the result of such figures of speech as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox, hyperbole and litotes.

#### Example 4-12

ST: /君王意气尽<sup>1</sup>/, /贱妾何聊生<sup>2</sup>/? (*Farewell my Concubine*: 01.13.12)

LT: /The king has lost<sup>1</sup> his spirit/. /How would his humble concubine live<sup>2</sup>/?

TT: /Since the good king has lost<sup>1</sup> his fighting spirit/, /why should his humble concubine value<sup>2</sup> her life/?

ATR<sub>1+2</sub>: king + to lose spirit + concubine + to live

ADstt<sub>1+2</sub>: stylistic form/variant: antithesis construction

ADttt<sub>1+2</sub>: 0

Stylistic Modulation/generalisation, syntagmatic element (There is an antithesis construction in the original but not in the translation.)

#### Example 4-13

ST: /读书识字多长见识/。 (*The Road Home*: 24.12)

LT: /Reading books and writing characters increase one's knowledge/.

TT: /Reading and writing open's one's eyes/.

ATR: reading + writing + to increase knowledge

ADstt: 0

ADttt: stylistic form/variant of 'to increase knowledge': figurative language

Stylistic Modulation/specification, paradigmatic element ('长见识' [to increase knowledge] is expressed in more figurative language in the TT.)

#### 4.4.2 Modification

Modification occurs when both the STT and the TTT stand in a hyponymous relation with the ATR (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989) (Diagram 4-2).

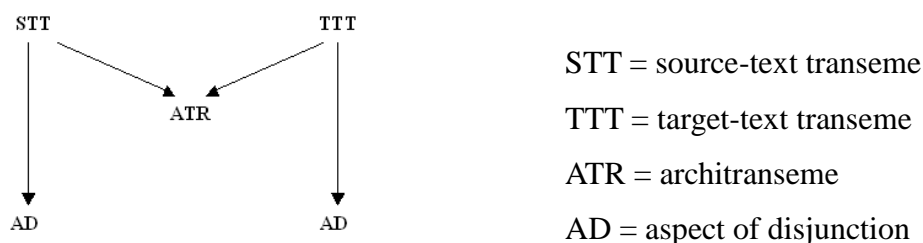


Figure 4-2 Modification

There are 5 sub-categories under Modification: Semantic Modification, Stylistic Modification, Syntactic-Semantic Modification, Syntactic-Stylistic Modification and Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification. Among the 5 sub-categories, the first 2 contain shifts on the word/phrase level and the other 3 contain shifts on the transeme level.

#### Semantic Modification and Stylistic Modification

MODIFICATION	20 SEMANTIC MODIFICATION	21 – intensive element 22 – descriptive element 23 – subjective element 24 – specific element
	30 STYLISTIC MODIFICATION	31 – register element 32 – temporal element 33 – culture-bound element 34 – syntagmatic element 35 – paradigmatic element

Table 4-6 Word/phrase level shifts under the sub-category of Semantic Modification and Stylistic Modification

The aspects of disjunction informing subdivisions under Semantic Modification and Stylistic Modification are the same as those informing Semantic Modulation and Stylistic Modulation (see Table 3-1 for van Leuven-Zwart’s original and Tables 4-3 and

4-4 for the adapted subdivisions in this current study). The following are 6 examples for the subdivisions under the two sub-categories<sup>16</sup>.

Example 4-14

ST: /有<sup>1</sup>何本事//能破<sup>2</sup>赵国的三大刺客/? (*Hero*: 06.40)

LT: /What skill do you have<sup>1</sup>/ /to overcome<sup>2</sup> the three major assassins from Zhao/?

TT: /What enables<sup>1</sup> you// to overcome<sup>2</sup> the three deadly assassins from Zhao/?

ART<sub>2</sub>: to overcome + Zhao Kingdom + three + assassin

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: description of ‘assassin’: major

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: description of ‘assassin’: deadly

Semantic Modification/descriptive element (The assassins are described as ‘deadly’ in the subtitles but are described as ‘大’ [major] in the ST.)

Example 4-15

ST: (当时<sup>1</sup>)/我真不敢<sup>2</sup>相信/。 (*The Road Home*: 00:54)

LT: (At that time<sup>1</sup>), /I dared not believe<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: /I couldn’t<sup>2</sup> believe it/.

ART<sub>2</sub>: first-person pronoun + negation + to believe

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: modal auxiliary in negation: dare not

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: modal auxiliary in negation: could not

Semantic Modification/subjective element (Modal auxiliary ‘couldn’t’ is used in the subtitles, but ‘不敢’ [dare not] is used in the original.)

Example 4-16

ST: /是<sup>1</sup>人吗/? /畜生<sup>2</sup>!/ (*Farewell my Concubine*: 12.10)

LT: /Are<sup>1</sup> they human being/? /Domestic animals<sup>2</sup>!/

TT: /Are<sup>1</sup> they human being/? /They’re<sup>2</sup> beasts!/

ART<sub>2</sub>: animal

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: specific element concerning ‘animal’: domestic animal

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: specific element concerning ‘animal’: large, dangerous or unusual animal

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<sup>16</sup> No shift under the following three subdivisions was identified in the holistic analysis of the three films: Semantic Modification/intensive element, Stylistic Modification/temporal element and Stylistic Modification/syntagmatic element. Therefore no example is provided here for the three types of shift.



Semantic Modification/specific element (‘畜生’ [domestic animal] is used in the ST as a word of abuse and is translated into ‘beasts’ in the subtitle.)

Example 4-17

ST: /所以长空是你的第一位捐助者/。 (*Hero*: 46.10)

LT: /Therefore Sky was your first donator/.

TT: /So Sky became your first accomplice/.

ART: link word + proper name + to be + contributor

ADstt: emotional colouring of ‘contributor’: positive

ADttt: emotional colouring of ‘contributor’: negative

Stylistic Modification/register (‘捐助者’ is a complimentary term, while ‘accomplice’ is a derogatory term.)

Example 4-18

ST: - /几尺<sup>1</sup>? - /八尺<sup>2</sup>/。 (*Hero*: 18.31)

LT: - /How many *chi*<sup>1</sup>? - /Eight *chi*<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: - /What dimension<sup>1</sup> of scroll/? - /Eight feet<sup>2</sup>/.

ART<sub>2</sub>: eight + dimension unit

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: culture-bound element concerning ‘dimension unit’: Chinese measure

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: culture-bound element concerning ‘dimension unit’: British measure

Stylistic Modification/culture-bound element (‘尺’ (*chi*) is a Chinese unit of length, which equals 1/3 metre. It is translated into ‘feet’, a UK unit of length in the subtitle.)

Example 4-19

ST: /他要想<sup>1</sup>//把大烟戒<sup>2</sup>了/, /还得脱<sup>3</sup>几层皮呢/!

(*Farewell my Concubine*: 02.09.32)

LT: /If he wants<sup>1</sup> to/ /give up<sup>2</sup> opium/, /he is going to have<sup>3</sup> several layers of skin torn off/!

TT: /If he really wants<sup>1</sup>/ /to overcome<sup>2</sup> his addiction/, /he’s going to have to go<sup>3</sup> through hell/!

ART<sub>3</sub>: to suffer tremendously

ADstt<sub>3</sub>: stylistic form/variant of ‘to suffer’: Chinese figurative language – to lose several layers of skin

ADttt<sub>3</sub>: stylistic form/variant of ‘to suffer’: English figurative language – to go through hell

Stylistic Modification/paradigmatic element (‘脱几层皮’ [to have several layers of skin torn off] is a figurative expression used to describe how frightening some difficult task can be. This is translated into ‘to go through hell’ in the subtitle, which is a figurative expression in English.)

### Syntactic-Semantic Modification

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	SUB-DIVISIONS
MODIFICATION	40 SYNTACTIC-SEMANTIC	41 – grammatical class/ function
	MODIFICATION	42 – function word
		43 – pro-drop

*Table 4-7 Transeme level shifts under the sub-category of Syntactic-Semantic Modification*

In the sub-category of Syntactic-Semantic Modification, there are 3 subdivisions: ‘grammatical class/ function’, ‘function word’ and ‘pro-drop’ (see Table 3-1 for van Leuven-Zwart’s original and Tables 4-3 and 4-4 for the adapted subdivisions in this current study). Shifts fall under this sub-category are all transeme level shifts. Three original subdivisions – ‘tense’, ‘person’ and ‘number’ – in van Leuven-Zwart’s writing have been removed in this study. This is because Chinese is not an inflectional language and there are few overt syntactic expressions of tenses, subject-verb agreement or number (see Section 4.3.2 for discussions on the differences between Chinese and English).

‘Pro-drop’ is a subdivision that does not exist in van Leuven Zwart’s original category. The addition of this subdivision is due to one of the salient differences between Chinese and English – zero pronouns are used in Chinese but rarely happen in English (see Section 4.3.2). Shifts under the subdivision of ‘pro-drop’ can be caused by the deletion or addition of a pronoun in the translation to occupy the position of subject or object.

Example 4-20

ST: /就是<sup>1</sup>年纪大了/, /再赶上<sup>2</sup>那个风雪/. (*The Road Home*: 04.21)

LT: /Just the old ago<sup>1</sup>/ /and also the storm<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: /He had gotten<sup>1</sup> older/, /plus<sup>2</sup> the bad storm/.

ATR<sub>1</sub>: to be + old

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: syntactic form: zero subject

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: syntactic form: + third-person subject

Syntactic-Semantic Modification/pro-drop (The subject is added in the subtitle.)

Both ‘grammatical class/function’ and ‘function word’ are retained from van Leuven Zwart’s original writing. The former refers to the phenomenon that one item in the ATR of a pair of STT and TTT is expressed with words/expressions belonging to different grammatical class. The latter refers to the fact that functions words could be deleted from the STT or added in the TTT.

Example 4-21

ST: /这是什么话/? (*Farewell my Concubine*: 59.49)

LT: /What remark is this/?

TT: /What are you saying/?

ATR: question word + remark

ADstt: syntactic form of ‘remark’: noun

ADttt: syntactic form of ‘remark’: verb

Syntactic-Semantic Modification/grammatical class (‘话’ [remark] is a noun in the ST and is translated into a verb in the subtitle.)

Example 4-22

ST: (六月十五<sup>1</sup>), /长空(在一家棋馆内<sup>2</sup>)现身<sup>3</sup>/. (*Hero*: 09.38)

LT: (The fifth day of the sixth month<sup>1</sup>). /Sky appeared<sup>3</sup>/ (in<sup>2</sup> a chess house).

TT: (On the fifth day of the sixth month<sup>1</sup>), /Sky appeared<sup>3</sup>/ (in<sup>2</sup> a chess house).

ATR<sub>1</sub>: sixth month + fifth day

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: syntactic form: no preposition

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: syntactic form: addition of preposition

Syntactic-Semantic Modification/function word (A preposition ‘on’ is used in the subtitle but no preposition is used in the original.)

Example 4-23

ST: /按<sup>1</sup>老规矩//是<sup>2</sup>定然七步/, /而您只走<sup>3</sup>了五步/。 (*Farewell my Concubine*: 51.42)

LT: /Obeying<sup>1</sup> the custom/, /it is<sup>2</sup> definitely seven steps/, /but you only walked<sup>3</sup> five steps/.

TT: /Custom has<sup>1</sup> it/ /he takes<sup>2</sup> seven steps/. /You take<sup>3</sup> but five/.

ATR<sub>3</sub>: second-person pronoun + to do + five

ADstt<sub>3</sub>: syntactic form: link word before the subject

ADttt<sub>3</sub>: syntactic form: no link word before the subject

Syntactic-Semantic Modification/function word (Preposition ‘而’ is used in the original but no preposition is used in the subtitle.)

#### Syntactic-Stylistic Modification

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	SUB-DIVISIONS
MODIFICATION	50 SYNTACTIC-STYLISTIC	51 – explicitation
	MODIFICATION	52 – implicitation

*Table 4-8 Transeme level shifts under the sub-category of Syntactic-Stylistic Modification*

The sub-category of Syntactic-Stylistic Modification concerns shifts caused by differences in “the quantity of elements conveying information” (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 167). There are two subdivisions under this sub-category: ‘explicitation’ when the TTT contains more elements than the ATR and ‘implicitation’ when the opposite occurs. The ‘extra’ elements in the STT or TTT do not form an extra transeme themselves but carry more information.

Example 4-24:

ST: /变<sup>1</sup>成//没法动<sup>2</sup>了/。 (*The Road Home*: 03.42)

LT: /He became<sup>1</sup>/ /to be not able to move<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: /He was<sup>1</sup> too sick //to be moved<sup>2</sup>/.

ATR<sub>1</sub>: to be + negation

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: syntactic form: a single verb

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: syntactic form: more complex structure providing reason

Syntactic-Stylistic Modification/explicitation (‘变成’ [to become] is rendered in a more informative way in the TT giving a reason why he cannot move.)

Example 4-25

ST: /她是<sup>1</sup>花满楼的头牌妓女!/ /潘金莲<sup>2</sup>!/ (*Farewell my Concubine*: 02.40.32)

LT: /She is<sup>1</sup> the top whore at the House of Blossoms!/ /Pan Jinlian<sup>2</sup>!/

TT: /Top whore at the House of Blossoms<sup>1</sup>!/ /Pan Jinlian<sup>2</sup>!/

ATR<sub>1</sub>: whore + proper name of place

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: syntactic form of ‘whore’: SVO

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: syntactic form of ‘whore’: phrase

Syntactic-Stylistic Modification/implication (The first transeme in the ST is a SVO construction, which is translated into a phrase in the TT and is less informative on its own.)

#### Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	SUB-DIVISIONS
MODIFICATION	60 SYNTACTIC- PRAGMATIC MODIFICATION	61 – speech act 62 – thematic meaning

*Table 4-9 Transeme level shifts under the sub-category of Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification*

There are two subdivisions of transeme level shifts under Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification: ‘speech act’ and ‘thematic meaning’. ‘Speech act’ concerns changes in sentence patterns, e.g. a statement is rendered as a question in the translation. Thematic meaning has been defined as “what is communicated by the way in which a speaker or writer organizes the message, in terms of ordering, focus and emphasis” (Leech, 1981: 19). In this study, when a shift concerning ‘thematic meaning’ occurs, the STT and TTT differ with respect to thematic meaning but still share the same “truth-conditions” (Lyons, 1995: 154) and therefore the same propositional meaning.

Example 4-26

ST: /六国算什么/? (*Hero*: 24.56)

LT: /What are the six kingdoms counted as/?

TT: /The six kingdoms are nothing/.

ATR: six kingdoms + to be + comparison

ADstt: syntactic form of transeme: question

ADttt: syntactic form of transeme: statement

Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification/speech act (The original transeme is rendered into a statement in the subtitle, but its propositional meaning is not changed.)

Example 4-27

ST: /她出<sup>1</sup>条子//应<sup>2</sup>饭局去了/。 (*Farewell my Concubine*: 53.56)

LT: /She answered<sup>1</sup> to a message/ /and responded<sup>2</sup> to a dinner invitation/.

TT: /She was asked<sup>2</sup> out to dinner/.

ATR<sub>2</sub>: third-person subject + to respond + dinner

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: syntactic form of transeme: active construction

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: syntactic form of transeme: passive construction

Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification/thematic meaning (The original transeme is rendered into a transeme with a passive voice, but its propositional meaning is not changed.)

Example 4-28

ST: /过<sup>1</sup>个山啦/, /过<sup>2</sup>个沟了/, /过<sup>3</sup>个路口了/, /要喊<sup>4</sup>着点儿/。

(*The Road Home*: 09.21)

LT: /When climbing<sup>1</sup> the mountains/, /crossing<sup>2</sup> the river/ /and passing<sup>3</sup> the crossroads/, /we have to yell<sup>4</sup>/.

TT: /We have to yell<sup>4</sup>/ /when climbing<sup>1</sup> the mountains/, /crossing<sup>2</sup> the river/, /and passing<sup>3</sup> the crossroads/.

ATR<sub>1+2+3+4</sub>: to cross + mountain + to cross + channel with water + to cross + crossroad + to yell

ADstt<sub>1+2+3+4</sub>: syntactic form transemes: 1+2+3+4

ADttt<sub>1+2+3+4</sub>: syntactic form transemes: 4+1+2+3

Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification/thematic meaning (The transemes are rendered in a different order in the subtitle but the propositional meaning of the original is not

changed.)

In van Leuven-Zwart’s original writing, there is also a subdivision of ‘deixis/anaphora’ under this sub-category. She states that such a shift occurs if “one transeme contains an element with a referential function – a deictic/anaphoric element – while the other uses an element with an independent meaning”. The example van Leuven-Zwart gives in her writing is when ‘him’ is rendered as ‘man’ in the translation. However it is believed in the current study that such changes can better fit in the sub-category of Semantic Modulation (see Table 3-1 for van Leuven-Zwart’s original and Tables 4-3 and 4-4 for the adapted subdivisions in this current study).

#### 4.4.3 Mutation

Mutation is the third and last main category. It occurs when no aspect of conjunction can be found; therefore no basis for comparison can be established (van Leuven-Zwart, 1989) (Diagram 4-3). Shifts that fall under Mutation are all transeme level shifts. They occur as the result of deleting or adding transemes in the TT or radically changing the meaning of STT.



Figure 4-3 Mutation

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	SUB-DIVISIONS
MUTATION		71 – deletion 72 – addition 73 – radical change of meaning

Table 4-10 Transeme level shifts under the category of Mutation

#### Example 4-29

ST: (你我之间<sup>1</sup>)/不言<sup>2</sup>钱/, /那个字眼实在不雅<sup>3</sup>/。

(Farewell my Concubine: 01.12.28)

LT: /We do not talk<sup>2</sup> about money/ (between<sup>1</sup> us). /That word is<sup>3</sup> truly coarse/.

TT: /Let's not have<sup>2</sup> any vulgar talk of money/ (between<sup>1</sup> us).

ATR<sub>3</sub>: 0

ST: 那个字眼实在不雅 (That word is truly coarse.)

TT: 0

Mutation/deletion

Example 4-30

ST: /今日已是<sup>1</sup>我书馆最后一日了/。 (*Hero*: 17.45)

LT: /Today is<sup>1</sup> already our school's last day/.

TT: /I fear<sup>2</sup>/ /this may be<sup>1</sup> the last day of our school/.

ATR<sub>2</sub>: 0

ST: 0

TT: I fear

Mutation/addition

Example 4-31

ST: /行<sup>1</sup>/, /大爷<sup>2</sup>/, /你们别为难<sup>3</sup>/, /这事儿我(跟<sup>4</sup>我妈)说说<sup>5</sup>/, /劝劝<sup>6</sup>她/。

(*The Road Home*: 05.49)

LT: /OK<sup>1</sup>/, /uncle<sup>2</sup>/, /Don't put<sup>3</sup> yourself in a difficult situation/./ I will speak<sup>5</sup> (with<sup>4</sup> my mum) about this matter/./ Persuade<sup>6</sup> her/.

TT: /Thank<sup>3</sup> you for your concern/./ I will talk<sup>5</sup> it over/ (with<sup>4</sup> her).

ATR<sub>1</sub>: 0

ST: 行 (OK)

TT: 0

Mutation/deletion

ATR<sub>2</sub>: 0

ST: 大爷 (This is an appellative used in Chinese to address a male who is older than one's father or of a similar age as one's grandfather.)

TT: 0

Mutation/deletion

ATR<sub>3</sub>: 0



ST: 你们别为难 (Don't put yourself in a difficult situation.)

TT: Thank you for your concern.

Mutation/radical change of meaning

ATR<sub>6</sub>: 0

ST: 劝劝她 (Persuade her.)

TT: 0

Mutation/deletion

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter has shown that van Leuven-Zwart's method of identifying and categorising micro-structural translation shifts can be adapted to study filmic dialogue in Chinese and the English subtitles. 'Transeme' as a unit of comparison is applicable to the Chinese language and is able to accommodate features of spoken language. Main amendments to van Leuven-Zwart's categories of shifts for the purpose of the current study include 1) names and definitions of some sub-divisions, 2) the division between transems on the word/phrase level and those on the transeme level, 3) the way to count shifts – it is possible that more than one shift are identified within one transeme. It is also possible that, among the shifts in the same transeme, some are on the word/phrase level and some are on the transeme level.

The adapted method will be applied to study three Chinese films with English subtitles. This will form the comparative phase of the model designed in Chapter 3 to investigate the translator's communicative assumption in subtitling. Findings of the comparative phase will be presented in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

### Map of Translation Shifts: Findings at the Comparative Phase

#### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 has shown the feasibility of adapting van Leuven-Zwart's (1989) method to identify and categorise micro-structural translation shifts in the English subtitles of Chinese films. The revised method has been applied to study three Chinese films with English subtitles – *Hero*, *The Road Home* and *Farewell my Concubine*. To identify and categorise translation shifts in the subtitles form the first phase of the comparative-analysis model that has been designed in Chapter 3 with the aim to eventually reveal the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling at the analysis phase. The current chapter presents the findings achieved at the comparative phase.

#### 5.2 Overall Distribution of Shifts

In the comparative phase, the original filmic dialogues in the three selected Chinese films are divided into transemes and compared with their counterparts in the English subtitles. The process of comparison follows the three steps stated in Section 4.3.3 in order to determine whether any shift occurs when each transeme was translated into English. Each identified shift is then categorised according to the taxonomy of world/phase level shifts and transeme level shifts (see Section 4.3, Tables 4-3 and 4-4).

The original filmic dialogue in *Hero* are divided into 725 state of affairs transemes and 77 satellite transemes; those in *The Road Home* are divided into 1179 state of affairs transemes and 121 satellite transemes; those in *Farewell my Concubine* are divided into 2248 state of affairs transemes and 137 satellite transemes. Each of the ST transemes is compared to its corresponding TT transeme in order to identify translation shifts. Table 5-1 below presents a general picture of shift occurrence frequency in the three films.

	Transeme		
	State of Affairs	Satellite	Total
<b><i>Hero</i></b>			
No shift	93 (12.8%)	21 (27.3%)	114 (14.2%)
1 shift/transeme	323 (44.6%)	45 (58.4%)	368 (45.9%)
2 shifts/transeme	162 (22.3%)	6 (7.8%)	168 (20.9%)
3 shifts/transeme	75 (10.3%)	4 (5.2%)	79 (9.9%)
> 3 shifts/transeme	72 (9.9%)	1 (1.3%)	73 (9.1%)
<b>Total transeme</b>	<b>725 (100%)</b>	<b>77 (100%)</b>	<b>802 (100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>			
No shift	127 (10.8%)	19 (15.7%)	146 (11.2%)
1 shift/transeme	752 (63.8%)	93 (76.9%)	845 (65.0%)
2 shifts/transeme	195 (16.5%)	9 (7.4%)	204 (15.7%)
3 shifts/transeme	77 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	77 (5.9%)
> 3 shifts/transeme	28 (2.4%)	0 (0.0%)	28 (2.2%)
<b>Total transeme</b>	<b>1179 (100%)</b>	<b>121 (100%)</b>	<b>1300 (100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>			
No shift	440 (19.6%)	45 (32.8%)	485 (20.3%)
1 shift/transeme	1209 (53.8%)	82 (59.9%)	1291 (54.1%)
2 shifts/transeme	391 (17.4%)	10 (7.3%)	401 (16.8%)
3 shifts/transeme	139 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)	139 (5.8%)
> 3 shifts/transeme	69 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)	69 (2.9%)
<b>Total transeme</b>	<b>2248 (100%)</b>	<b>137 (100%)</b>	<b>2385 (100%)</b>

Table 5-1 Shift occurrence frequency in the three films

Table 5-1 shows that: 1) although shifts frequently take place, a certain number of transemes of the original dialogue have been translated into English with no occurrence of shifts – 14.2% in *Hero*, 11.2% in *The Road Home* and 20.3% in *Farewell my Concubine*; 2) the majority or near majority of transemes contain one shift – 45.9% in *Hero*, 65.0% in *The Road Home* and 54.1% in *Farewell my Concubine*. This is consistent between state of affairs transemes and satellite transemes in all the three films; and 3) when the frequency of shifts per transeme is higher, the number of such transeme is smaller, and this is consistent in all the three films.

All the shifts identified in the comparison process are presented in the following two tables depending on whether they are word/phrase level shifts or transeme level shifts. The statistics show the actual number of shifts rather than token of shifts, i.e. if the same shift of the same linguistic expression occurs in the subtitles more than once, the actual times of occurrence are recorded.

Sub-category	Subdivisions	Number of shifts					
		<i>Hero</i>		<i>The Road Home</i>		<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>	
		State of Affairs	Satellite	State of Affairs	Satellite	State of Affairs	Satellite
Semantic Modulation	Intensive element/generalisation	6	0	5	0	8	0
	Intensive element/specification	25	0	17	1	19	0
	Descriptive element/generalisation	37	2	59	3	74	1
	Descriptive element/specification	38	4	63	5	97	1
	Subjective element/generalisation	6	0	4	0	17	0
	Subjective element/specification	18	0	19	0	24	0
	Specific element/generalisation	135	5	170	15	321	7
	Specific element/specification	81	3	82	4	170	9
	<b>sub-category total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>18</b>
Stylistic Modulation	Register element/generalisation	88	2	73	2	162	8
	Register element/specification	9	0	4	0	13	0
	Temporal element/generalisation	135	4	0	0	84	3
	Temporal element/specification	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Culture-bound element/generalisation	87	7	37	4	138	6
	Culture-bound element/specification	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Syntagmatic element/generalisation	6	0	1	0	21	0
	Syntagmatic element/specification	1	0	0	0	1	0
	Paradigmatic element/generalisation	38	0	13	0	64	1
	Paradigmatic element/specification	8	0	5	0	14	0
		<b>sub-category total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>497</b>
Semantic Modification	Intensive element	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Descriptive element	20	0	10	0	18	0
	Subjective element	8	0	3	0	6	0
	Specific element	52	2	72	0	123	3
		<b>sub-category total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>147</b>
Stylistic Modification	Register element	2	0	2	0	4	1

	Temporal element	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Culture-bound element	6	0	0	0	0	0
	Syntagmatic element	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Paradigmatic element	1	0	0	0	15	1
	<b>sub-category total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total number of shifts</b>		<b>807</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1393</b>	<b>41</b>
		<b>Total: 836</b>		<b>Total: 673</b>		<b>Total: 1434</b>	

Table 5-2 Word/phase level shifts in the three films

Sub-Category	Subdivision	Number of shifts					
		<i>Hero</i>		<i>The Road Home</i>		<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>	
		State of Affairs	Satellite	State of Affairs	Satellite	State of Affairs	Satellite
Syntactic-Semantic Modification	Grammatical class/function	15	0	12	0	15	0
	Function word	46	12	36	11	81	2
	Pro-drop	77	1	144	0	229	0
	<b>sub-category total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>2</b>
Syntactic-Stylistic Modification	Explicitation	61	4	55	2	110	2
	Implication	48	1	78	2	87	0
	<b>sub-category total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>2</b>
Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification	Speech act	12	0	16	0	66	0
	Thematic meaning	61	1	82	3	143	2
	<b>sub-category total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>2</b>
Mutation	Deletion	42	20	325	56	366	53
	Addition	29	1	47	1	143	0
	Radical change of meaning	31	1	60	2	98	1
	<b>sub-category total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Total number of shifts</b>		<b>422</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>60</b>
		<b>Total: 463</b>		<b>Total: 932</b>		<b>Total: 1398</b>	

Table 5-3 Transeme level shifts in the three films

In *Hero* the total number of shifts on the word/phrase level (n=836) nearly doubles that on the transeme level (n=463), in *The Road Home* the total number of shifts on the word/phrase level (n=673) is smaller than that on the transeme level (n=932), and in *Farewell my Concubine* the total number of shifts on the word/phrase level (n=1434) is slightly larger than that on the transeme level (n=1398). Table 5-4 below presents the difference between the number of word/phrase level shifts and that of transeme level shifts in the format of percentage.

The difference of the ratio between word/phrase level shifts and transeme level shifts among the three films seem to be closely linked with the linguistic features of their dialogue. Among the three films, utterances in the period drama *Hero* have the least spoken language features and there is hardly any stutter or fragmented sentences. A large number of words and phrases with an archaistic flavour are used to create a feeling of ancientness. The syntax of the utterances is, however, of the contemporary structure. This explains why more word/phrase level shifts than transeme level shifts are found in this film. Utterances in *The Road Home* are the most verbose and fragmented among the three films, which explains why there are more transeme level shifts. As an epic drama, utterances in *Farewell My Concubine* have a wide range of stylistic features and also contain various features of spontaneous conversations. This may explain why there are a similar number of shifts at the word/phrase level and the transeme level.

	State of Affairs		Transeme		Total	
			Satellite			
<b><i>Hero</i></b>						
Word/phrase level shifts	807	(65.7%)	29	(41.4%)	836	(64.4%)
Transeme level shifts	422	(34.3%)	41	(58.6%)	463	(35.6%)
<b>Total shifts</b>	<b>1229</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>1299</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>						
Word/phrase level shifts	639	(42.8%)	34	(30.6%)	673	(41.9%)
Transeme level shifts	855	(57.2%)	77	(69.4%)	932	(58.1%)
<b>Total shifts</b>	<b>1494</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>1605</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell my Concubine</i></b>						
Word/phrase level shifts	1393	(51.0%)	41	(40.6%)	1434	(50.6%)
Transeme level shifts	1338	(49.0%)	60	(59.4%)	1398	(49.4%)
<b>Total shifts</b>	<b>2731</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>2832</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Table 5-4 Word/phrase level shifts vs. transeme level shifts in the three films

### 5.3 Shifts on the Word/Phrase Level

Among the shifts on the word/phrase level, the ones with a modulation nature (semantic and stylistic) are overwhelmingly more than those with a modification nature (semantic and stylistic). This is consistent between state of affairs transemes and satellite transemes in all the three films (Table 5-5).

	Transeme		
	State of Affairs	Satellite	Total
<b><i>Hero</i></b>			
Semantic Modulation	346 (42.9%)	14 (48.3%)	360 (43.1%)
Stylistic Modulation	372 (46.1%)	13 (44.8%)	385 (46.1%)
Semantic Modification	80 (9.9%)	2 (6.9%)	82 (9.8%)
Stylistic Modification	9 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (1.1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>807 (100%)</b>	<b>29 (100%)</b>	<b>836 (100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>			
Semantic Modulation	419 (65.6%)	28 (82.4%)	447 (66.4%)
Stylistic Modulation	133 (20.8%)	6 (17.6%)	139 (20.7%)
Semantic Modification	85 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	85 (12.6%)
Stylistic Modification	2 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>639 (100%)</b>	<b>34 (100%)</b>	<b>673 (100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>			
Semantic Modulation	730 (52.4%)	18 (43.9%)	748 (52.2%)
Stylistic Modulation	497 (35.7%)	18 (43.9%)	515 (35.9%)
Semantic Modification	147 (10.6%)	3 (7.3%)	150 (10.5%)
Stylistic Modification	19 (1.4%)	2 (4.9%)	21 (14.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1393 (100%)</b>	<b>41 (100%)</b>	<b>1434 (100%)</b>

Table 5-5 Word/phrase level shifts in the three films

In *Hero*, Stylistic Modulation is the largest group with almost half (46.1%) of all word/phrase level shifts and is closely followed by semantic modulation (43.1%). In the other two films, however, the largest group is Semantic Modulation with more than half of all word/phrase level shifts (66.4% in *The Road Home* and 52.2% in *Farewell my Concubine*). In these two films, Stylistic Modulation is the second largest group but considerably smaller (20.7% in *The Road Home* and 35.9% in *Farewell my Concubine*)



than Semantic Modulation. This difference may have a close link with film genre as utterances in a particular genre may present a particular feature. *Hero* is a period drama and contains much more archaistic words and expressions than the other two films. In the following, closer observations will be made with each sub-category.

### ***5.3.1 Shifts under Modulation***

#### **Semantic modulation**

Semantic modulation is the largest sub-category of word/phrase level shifts in both *The Road Home* and *Farewell my Concubine* and the second largest in *Hero*. Under this sub-category, tendencies are the same across all the three films: only ‘specific element’ shows a stronger tendency of generalisation than specification, and all the other three – ‘intensive element’, ‘descriptive element’ and ‘subjective element’ – show a stronger tendency of specification than generalisation (see Figure 5-1).

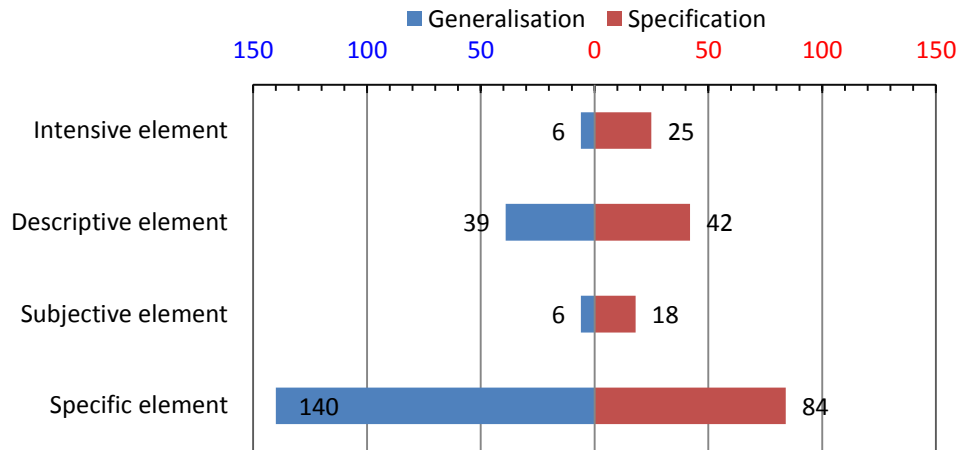
‘Specific element’ concerns the semantic focus of a word/phrase. The considerably stronger tendency of generalisation than specification in this aspect shows that, in all the three films, the translator tends to use hypernyms to render words/phrases much more often than to use hyponyms.

‘Intensive element’ concerns the semantic strength of a word/phrase. The stronger tendency of specification than generalisation in this aspect suggests that, in all the three films, the tone of the subtitles may sound stronger than that of the original utterances.

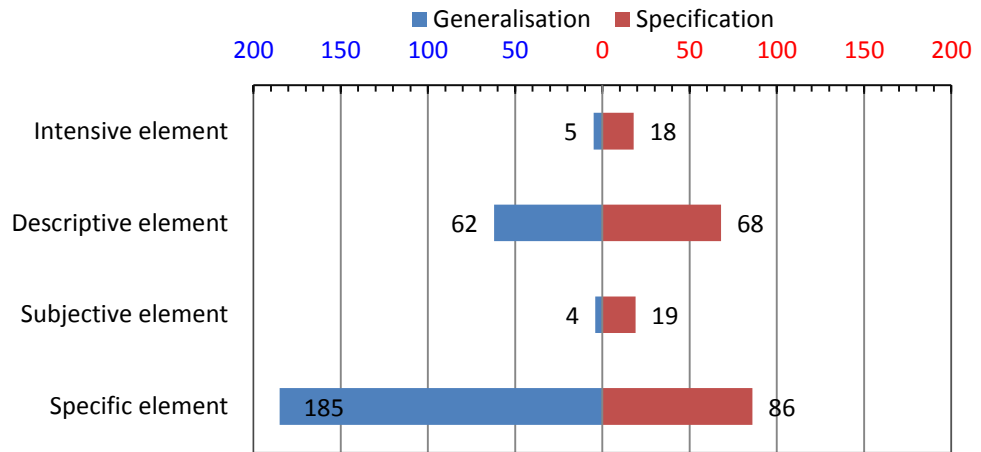
‘Descriptive element’ concerns the extent of how a word/phrase is described. The stronger tendency of specification in this aspect means that, in all the three films, words/phrases tend to be described more frequently in the subtitles than in the original dialogue.

‘Subjective element’ reflects the subjectiveness of the speaker of an utterance. The stronger tendency of specification in this aspect shows that more modal words are used in the subtitles than in the original dialogue. This suggests that, in all the three films, the inner world of some characters in the films, such as their emotions or feelings, may have been made clearer in the subtitles in some cases.

### Semantic Modulation in *Hero*



### Semantic Modulation in *The Road Home*



### Semantic modulation in *Farewell My Concubine*

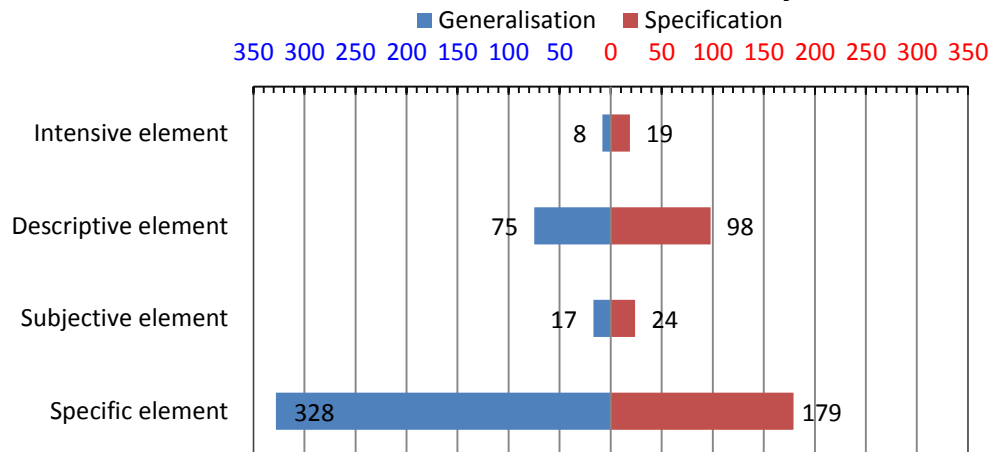
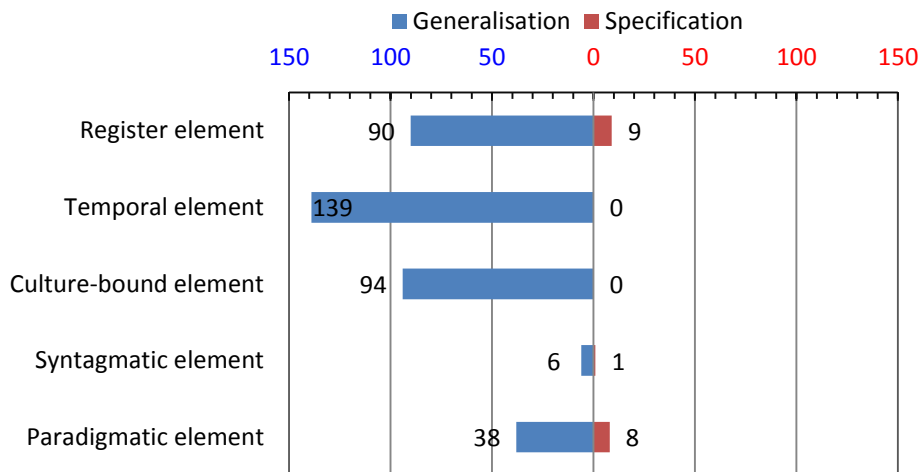


Figure 5-1 Semantic Modulation in the three films

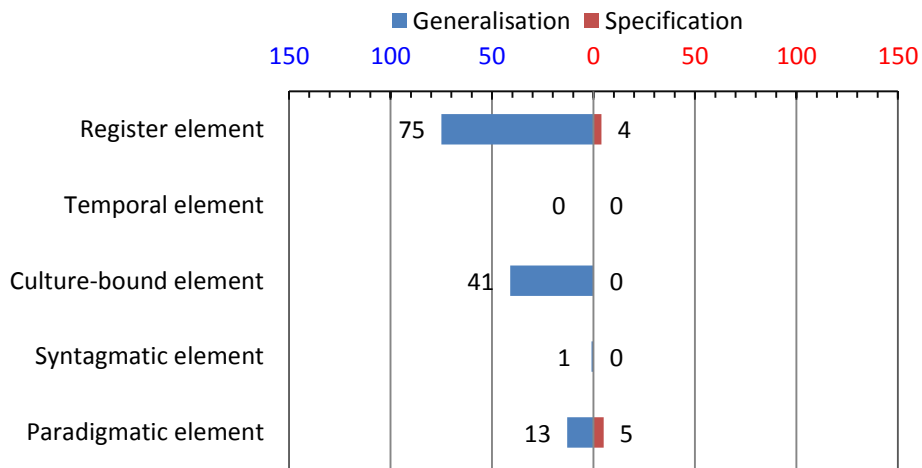
### Stylistic Modulation

Stylistic modulation is the largest sub-category of word/phrase level shifts in *Hero* but the second-largest in both *The Road Home* and *Farewell my Concubine*. It can be seen in Figure 5-2 below that, in all the three films, there is a significantly stronger tendency towards generalisation than specification with each aspect under this sub-category. This suggests that the translator tends to neutralise stylistic features of the original dialogue in general.

### Stylistic modulation in *Hero*



### Stylistic modulation in *Road Home*



### Stylistic modulation in *Farewell My Concubine*

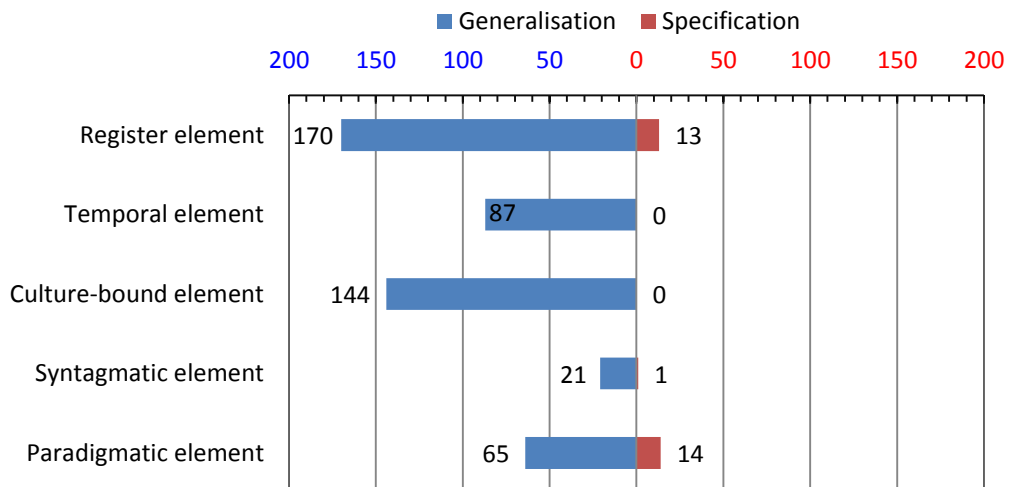


Figure 5-2 Stylistic Modulation in the three films

### 5.3.2 Shifts under Modification

#### Semantic Modification

As shown above in Table 5-5, around 10% of word/phrase level shifts (9.8% in *Hero*, 12.6% in *The Road Home* and 10.5% in *Farewell my Concubine*) in the three films are found under the sub-category of Semantic Modification. Table 5-6 below shows statistics of shifts under each subdivision of Semantic Modification.

	Transeme		
	State of Affairs	Satellite	Total
<b><i>Hero</i></b>			
Intensive element	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Descriptive element	20 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (24.4%)
Subjective element	8 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (9.8%)
Specific element	52 (65.0%)	2 (100.0%)	54 (65.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>80 (100%)</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>	<b>82 (100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>			
Intensive element	0 (0.0%)	0	0 (0.0%)
Descriptive element	10 (11.8%)	0	10 (11.8%)
Subjective element	3 (3.5%)	0	3 (3.5%)
Specific element	72 (84.7%)	0	72 (84.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>85 (100%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>85 (100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>			
Intensive element	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Descriptive element	18 (12.2%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (12.0%)
Subjective element	6 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.0%)
Specific element	123 (83.7%)	3 (100.0%)	126 (84.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>147 (100%)</b>	<b>3 (100%)</b>	<b>150 (100%)</b>

*Table 5-6 Semantic Modification in all the three films*

Table 5-6 shows the following patterns: 1) ‘Specific element’ is the largest subdivision under Semantic Modification, which contains far more shifts than other subdivisions under the same sub-category (65.0% in *Hero*, 84.7% in *The Road Home* and 83.7% in *Farewell my Concubine*); 2) ‘Descriptive element’ is the second largest subdivision under Semantic Modification; 3) A small number of shifts are found under ‘subjective

element’ of Semantic Modification; and 4) There is no shift found under ‘intensive element’ of Semantic Modification.

These patterns seem to suggest that the translators’ main concern is still about the semantic focus of words/phrases. Although in overwhelmingly more cases, the translator tends to use hypernyms or hyponyms in their renditions (see Figure 5-1), there are also cases where the translators’ choice is in a way related to the original’s semantic focus but does not form a hierarchical relationship with the original.

### Stylistic Modification

There is a very small number of shifts under the sub-category of Stylistic Modification. Table 5-7 below shows the distribution of shifts under this sub-category. In spite of the small number, these shifts suggest that the translator does not tend to neutralise stylistic features in subtitling.

	<b>Transeme</b>		
	State of Affairs	Satellite	Total
<b><i>Hero</i></b>			
Register element	2 (22.2%)	2 (100.0%)	4 (36.4%)
Temporal element	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Culture-bound element	6 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (54.5%)
Syntagmatic element	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Paradigmatic element	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (9.1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>	<b>11 (100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>			
Register element	2 (100.0%)	0	2 (100.0%)
Temporal element	0 (0.0%)	0	0 (0.0%)
Culture-bound element	0 (0.0%)	0	0 (0.0%)
Syntagmatic element	0 (0.0%)	0	0 (0.0%)
Paradigmatic element	0 (0.0%)	0	0 (0.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>			
Register element	4 (21.1%)	1 (50.0%)	5 (23.8%)
Temporal element	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Culture-bound element	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Syntagmatic element	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Paradigmatic element	15 (78.9%)	1 (50.0%)	16 (76.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>19 (100%)</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>	<b>21 (100%)</b>

*Table 5-7 Stylistic Modification*

#### 5.4 Shifts on the Transeme Level

Shifts on the transeme level include those that are under both Modification and Mutation. Relevant statistics are presented in Table 5-8:

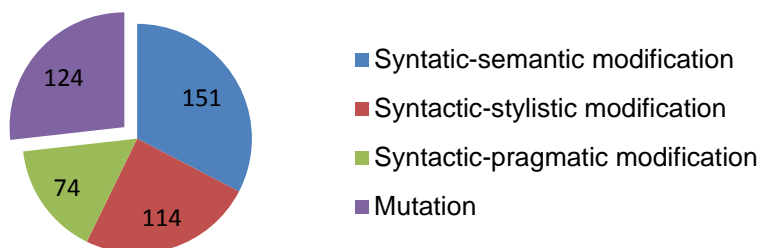
	Transeme					
	State of Affairs		Satellite		Total	
<b><i>Hero</i></b>						
Syntactic-semantic modification	138	(32.7%)	13	(31.7%)	151	(32.6%)
Syntactic-stylistic modification	109	(25.8%)	5	(12.2%)	114	(24.6%)
Syntactic-pragmatic modification	73	(17.3%)	1	(2.4%)	74	(16.0%)
Mutation	102	(24.2%)	22	(53.7%)	124	(26.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>						
Syntactic-semantic modification	192	(22.5%)	11	(14.3%)	203	(21.8%)
Syntactic-stylistic modification	133	(15.6%)	4	(5.2%)	137	(14.7%)
Syntactic-pragmatic modification	98	(11.5%)	3	(3.9%)	101	(10.8%)
Mutation	432	(50.5%)	59	(76.6%)	491	(52.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>						
Syntactic-semantic modification	325	(24.3%)	2	(3.3%)	327	(23.4%)
Syntactic-stylistic modification	197	(14.7%)	2	(3.3%)	199	(14.2%)
Syntactic-pragmatic modification	209	(15.6%)	2	(3.3%)	211	(15.1%)
Mutation	607	(45.4%)	54	(90.0%)	661	(47.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>1398</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Table 5-8 Transeme level shifts in the three films

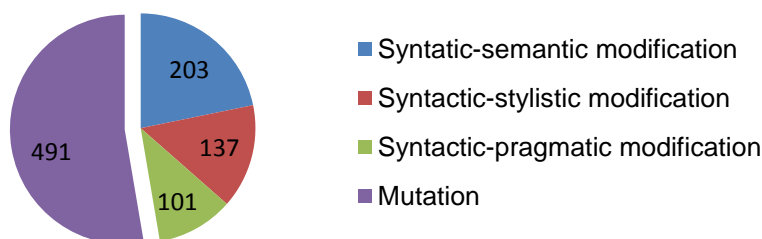
In both *Hero* and *Farewell my Concubine*, the number of shifts under Modification, which includes syntactic-semantic modification, syntactic-stylistic modification and syntactic-pragmatic modification, is larger than that under Mutation, which includes deletion, addition and radical change of meaning. However, in *The Road Home*, the opposite situation occurs where Mutation is larger than the combination of the three

modification sub-categories. This suggests that more extreme translation strategies have been employed in *The Road Home* than in the other two films, which may be due to the verbosity of the utterances in this film. These patterns are presented in the format of pie charts in Figure 5-3 below. More details about the transeme level shifts under Modification and Mutation will be given in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 respectively.

#### Transeme level shifts in *Hero*



#### Transeme level shifts in *Road Home*



#### Transeme level shifts in *Farewell My Concubine*



Figure 5-3 Transeme level shifts in the three films



### 5.4.1 Shifts under Modification

There are a large number of shifts under each of the three subdivisions of Modification.

#### Syntactic-Semantic Modification

It has been shown in Tables 5-2 and 5-8 that, under Modification, the largest number of transeme level shifts appears under Syntactic-Semantic Modification in all the three films. Table 5-9 below shows more details of the subdivisions under this sub-category.

	Transeme		
	State of Affairs	Satellite	Total
<b><i>Hero</i></b>			
Grammatical class/function	15 (10.9%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (9.9%)
Function word	46 (33.3%)	12 (92.3%)	58 (38.4%)
Pro-drop	77 (55.8%)	1 (7.7%)	78 (51.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>138 (100%)</b>	<b>13 (100%)</b>	<b>151 (100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>			
Grammatical class/function	12 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (5.9%)
Function word	36 (18.8%)	11 (100.0%)	47 (23.2%)
Pro-drop	144 (75.0%)	0 (0.0%)	144 (70.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>192 (100%)</b>	<b>11 (100%)</b>	<b>203 (100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>			
Grammatical class/function	15 (4.6%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (4.6%)
Function word	81 (24.9%)	2 (100.0%)	83 (25.4%)
Pro-drop	229 (70.5%)	0 (0.0%)	229 (70.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>325 (100%)</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>	<b>327 (100%)</b>

Table 5-9 Syntactic-Semantic Modification in the three films

In all the three films, the major contributor in this sub-category is the shifts under the subdivision of pro-drop. This is not surprising as Chinese is a pro-drop language while English is generally considered as a non-pro-drop language<sup>17</sup>. The second major contributor is the shifts under the subdivision of function word. Shifts under this subdivision occur due to deleting, adding or changing function words in the subtitles. In addition, a small number of shifts are related to grammatical class/function. It can be

<sup>17</sup> Discussions on the difference between Chinese and English can be found in Section 4.3.2, Chapter 4.

seen that shifts under Syntactic-Semantic Modification occur due to differences in language systems between Chinese and English, and in other words, these shifts are system-bound obligatory shifts. Since the current study aims to reveal translators' communicative assumptions which are arguably manifested through optional translation shifts, there will be no further discussions about shifts under Syntactic-Semantic Modification.

#### Syntactic-Stylistic Modification

In this sub-category, more shifts are found under explicitation than those under implicitation in *Hero* and *Farewell my Concubine*, but the opposite situation is observed in *The Road Home*. However, there is not a considerable difference in terms of the number of shifts between the two subdivisions. Statistics of shifts under explicitation and those under implicitation are presented in Table 5-10 below. It will be very interesting to look into how information is made more explicit in the subtitles and the possible impact such practice may have as traditionally attention is mainly paid on the reduction of information in the research of subtitling. It is equally important to look at how information is made more implicate and the impact of this practice.

	<b>Transeme</b>		
	State of Affairs	Satellite	Total
<b><i>Hero</i></b>			
Explicitation	61 (56.0%)	4 (80.0%)	65 (57.0%)
Implicitation	48 (44.0%)	1 (20.0%)	49 (43.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>109 (100%)</b>	<b>5 (100%)</b>	<b>114 (100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>			
Explicitation	55 (41.4%)	2 (50.0%)	57 (41.6%)
Implicitation	78 (58.6%)	2 (50.0%)	80 (58.4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>133 (100%)</b>	<b>4 (100%)</b>	<b>137 (100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>			
Explicitation	110 (55.8%)	2 (100.0%)	112 (56.3%)
Implicitation	87 (44.2%)	0 (0.0%)	87 (43.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>197 (100%)</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>	<b>199 (100%)</b>

Table 5-10 Syntactic-Stylistic Modification in the three films

### Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification

There are a fairly big number of shifts under Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification. Table 5-11 shows the statistics under the two subdivisions of this sub-category in the three films. Shifts under this sub-category closely relate to the translator's own preference in expression.

	<b>Transeme</b>		
	State of Affairs	Satellite	Total
<b><i>Hero</i></b>			
Speech act	12 (16.4%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (16.2%)
Thematic meaning	61 (83.6%)	1 (100.0%)	62 (83.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>73 (100%)</b>	<b>1 (100%)</b>	<b>74 (100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>			
Speech act	16 (16.3%)	0	16 (16.3%)
Thematic meaning	82 (83.7%)	0	82 (83.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>98 (100%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>98 (100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>			
Speech act	66 (31.6%)	0 (0.0%)	66 (31.3%)
Thematic meaning	143 (68.4%)	2 (100.0%)	145 (68.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>209 (100%)</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>	<b>211 (100%)</b>

*Table 5-11 Syntactic-pragmatic modification in the three films*

### 5.4.2 Shifts under Mutation

Shifts under Mutation show radical changes in the subtitles compared to the original film dialogue. These are the moments where the translator's voice is vividly manifested and deserve special attention in further discussions. Statistics of the shifts under the three subdivisions in this category are shown in Table 5-12 below.

	Transeme					
	State of Affairs		Satellite		Total	
<b><i>Hero</i></b>						
Deletion	42	(41.2%)	20	(90.9%)	62	(50.0%)
Addition	29	(28.4%)	1	(4.5%)	30	(24.2%)
Radical change of meaning	31	(30.4%)	1	(4.5%)	32	(25.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
<b><i>The Road Home</i></b>						
Deletion	325	(75.2%)	56	(94.9%)	381	(77.6%)
Addition	47	(10.9%)	1	(1.7%)	48	(9.8%)
Radical change of meaning	60	(13.9%)	2	(3.4%)	62	(12.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
<b><i>Farewell My Concubine</i></b>						
Deletion	366	(60.3%)	53	(98.1%)	419	(63.4%)
Addition	143	(23.6%)	0	(0.0%)	143	(21.6%)
Radical change of meaning	98	(16.1%)	1	(1.9%)	99	(15.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Table 5-12 Mutation in the three films

Table 5-12 shows the following patterns in all the three films: 1) the largest number of shifts in the sub-category of Mutation falls under subdivision of deletion (50.0% in *Hero*, 77.6% in *The Road Home*, and 63.4% in *Farewell my Concubine*); and 2) both 'addition' and 'radical change of meaning' also contain a good number of shifts.

## 5.5 Summary

In summary, the following tendencies of translation shifts manifest themselves most obviously at the comparative phase. Further analysis and discussions of the tendencies will be carried out at the analysis phase and presented in Chapter 6.

- Some transemes, i.e. parts of the dialogue in the three films, have been translated into English without the occurrence of translation shifts, although such cases may be in relatively small quantities.
- Most transemes contain one shift, but there are also a large number of transemes that contain more than one shift.
- Both word/phrase level shifts and transeme level shifts occur in large quantities in subtitling. Either of the two types of shifts could be more dominant than the other.
- Among the shifts on the word/phrase level, the dominant ones in term of quantity could be of either a semantic or stylistic nature, and this may have a close link with the genre of the film as a particular genre of films usually present certain collective linguistic features in the utterances.
- At the word/phrase level: 1) among the shifts of a semantic nature, the majority are under the subdivision of ‘specific element’ and show a much stronger tendency towards generalisation than specification; however, other shifts of a semantic nature fall under three other subdivisions and show a stronger tendency towards specification than generalisation; and 2) all shifts of a stylistic nature show a much stronger tendency towards generalisation than specification.
- At the transeme level, dominant shifts could be either those under Modification or those under Mutation. Shifts under both categories, especially those concerning explicitation, implicitation, deletion, addition and radical change of meaning, will be analysed and discussed further in order to see how information of the original dialogue is manipulated. This is because shifts under these sub-divisions are the results of the translator’s application of more radical translation strategies, and in such cases, the translator’s communicative assumptions are vividly at work.

## Chapter 6

### Reading the Map of Translational Shifts: Revealing Translators' Communicative Assumptions at the Analysis Phase

#### 6.1 Introduction

Through discussions in Chapters 3 and 4, a Comparative-Analysis Model has been established with the aim to investigate the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling. This model has been applied to study three Chinese films – *Hero*, *The Road Home* and *Farewell my Concubine*. The findings at the comparative phase are presented in Chapter 5. The current chapter details the analysis and discussions carried out at the analysis phase. The analysis and discussions are based on the tendencies of translation shifts observed at the comparative phase. The framework for the analysis phase is informed by filmic perception and cognition (e.g. Bordwell, 1997a), Text World Theory (e.g. Gavins, 2007; Werth, 1999) and Relevance Theory (e.g. Gutt, 1991; Sperber & Wilson, 1986). It is hoped that the concept of the translator's communicative assumptions can be refined and that a detailed description of the translator's assumptions in subtitling Chinese feature films into English can be achieved upon the completion of this chapter.

As shown in Chapter 5, in each of the three films, shifts are observed in most TT transemes and there is also a small percentage of ST transemes translated with no occurrence of shift. Subtitles are stimuli purposefully created by the translator for the target viewers to understand as part of a filmic text. They contain communicative clues that the translator assumes to be adequately relevant for the target viewers to pick up, no matter whether they are with or without translation shifts. According to Text World Theory, comprehension is achieved through the creation and progress of text-worlds in the human mind. Communicative clues, if relevant, must be able to supply efficient information for the target viewers to use as world-building elements and function-advancing propositions in their text-worlds. Therefore, the translator's communicative assumptions and linguistic choices that give rise to various shifts would be about the manipulation of information in these two aspects.

In the current chapter, firstly discussions are made about the TT transemes with no shift and the corresponding ST transemes, which leads to the first conclusions of the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling. The focus of the chapter then turns to TT transemes with shifts and the corresponding ST transemes. The impact that translation shifts may have on world-building elements and function-advancing propositions is analysed and discussed separately. This leads to the second and third conclusions about the translator's communicative assumptions in subtitling. At the completion of this chapter, the three conclusions are considered together in defining the concept of the translator's communicative assumptions and describing the translator's assumptions in subtitling Chinese feature films into English.

## **6.2 Direct Translation and Communicative Clues**

### ***6.2.1 Transemes translated with no shifts***

As shown in Table 5-1 of Chapter 5, a certain percentage of the ST transemes in the three films have been translated into English with no shift: 14.2% (n=114) in *Hero*, 11.2% (n=146) in *The Road Home* and 20.3% (n=485) in *Farewell my Concubine*. There are both state of affairs transemes and satellite transemes among them (see Table 6-1). The statistics seem to suggest that, at certain points, translators believe that the target viewers of the subtitled version of the film share their "cognitive environment" (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 38-46, discussed in Section 3.5.1) with the target viewers of the original film. When information falls in what the translator assumes to be the shared cognitive environment, the translator tends not to intervene through strategies that give rise to translation shifts. Generally speaking, satellite transemes provide deictic information that the viewers can use as world-building elements, although deictic information can also be conveyed in state of affairs transemes. On the other hand, function-advancing propositions that propel the narrative or dynamic within the text-world forward are mainly found in state of affairs transemes. The transemes translated with no shift appear to be randomly distributed throughout the whole films, and their frequency does not seem to be associated with any particular segment, plot development or scene.

ST Transemes translated with no shifts					
	State of Affairs		Satellite		Total
<i>Hero</i>	93	(12.8%)	21	(27.3%)	114 (14.2%)
<i>The Road Home</i>	127	(10.8%)	19	(15.7%)	146 (11.2%)
<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>	440	(19.6%)	45	(32.8%)	485 (20.3%)

Table 6-1 ST Transemes translated with no shifts in the three films

Linguistically, the ST transemes translated without shift are all of a very basic structure<sup>18</sup>. All of the satellite transemes translated with no shift are in the form of a simple prepositional structure (see Example 6-1) or a word/phrase indicating time or place (see Example 6-2). All of the state of affairs transemes translated with no shift are also of very simple structures: some of them are of a basic SVO structure forming part of longer sentences (see Example 6-3); the majority are independent sentences themselves, including one-word sentences as typical spoken structures (see Example 6-4) and those of a basic SVO structure (see Example 6-5). In *Hero*, among the state of affairs transemes translated with no shift, 60.2% (n=55) are independent sentences. In *The Road Home* and *Farewell my Concubine*, the percentage is 67.6% (n=86) and 83.2% (n=366) respectively. Due to the characteristic constraints associated with subtitling, the simple linguistic structure of these ST transemes may be an important contributing factor to the non-shift translation. At the same time, the translator must have believed that these transemes do not give rise to situations of what Hermans (1996) terms “performative self-contradiction” (see Section 3.2.2) and that there is no need for their intervention.

#### Example 6-1

ST: (在<sup>2</sup>垓下) /中<sup>1</sup>了汉军的十面埋伏/ ... ... (*Farewell My Concubine*: 29.44)

LT: (At<sup>2</sup> Gaixia) /he fell<sup>1</sup> into Han army’s ten-side ambush/.

TT: (At<sup>2</sup> Gaixia) /he was outwitted<sup>1</sup>/ (by<sup>3</sup> the Han king).

ATR<sub>2</sub>: satellite of location: preposition + proper name of place

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: 0

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: 0

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<sup>18</sup> See Section 4.3.1 for the definition and linguistic structure of ‘state of affair transeme’ and ‘satellite transeme’.



Example 6-2

ST: (明天<sup>2</sup>)/我就要走<sup>1</sup>了/。 (*The Road Home*: 01.18.05)

LT: (Tomorrow<sup>2</sup>) /I am leaving<sup>1</sup>/.

TT: /I am leaving<sup>1</sup>/ (tomorrow<sup>2</sup>).

ATR<sub>2</sub>: satellite of time: the day after today

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: 0

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: 0

Example 6-3

ST: /你说<sup>1</sup>//这字中有<sup>2</sup>剑法/。 (*Hero*: 29.34)

LT: /You say<sup>1</sup>/ /this character contains<sup>2</sup> method of swordplay/.

TT: /You say<sup>1</sup>/ /this calligraphy contains<sup>2</sup> the mystery of swordplay/.

ATR<sub>1</sub>: second person pronoun + to speak

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: 0

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: 0

Example 6-4

ST: /对<sup>1</sup>, /二十二年<sup>2</sup>/。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.02)

LT: /Yes<sup>1</sup>, /twenty-two years<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: /Yes<sup>1</sup>, /twenty-two years<sup>2</sup>/.

ATR<sub>1</sub>: exclamation for agreement

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: 0

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: 0

ATR<sub>2</sub>: quantity + a word indicating the period from 1 January to 31 December

ADstt<sub>2</sub>: 0

ADttt<sub>2</sub>: 0

Example 6-5

ST: /他等着我呢/。 (*The Road Home*: 43.47)

LT: /He is waiting<sup>1</sup> for me/.

TT: /He's waiting<sup>1</sup> for me/.

ATR<sub>1</sub>: male third person pronoun + to stay until sb. comes + first person pronoun

ADstt<sub>1</sub>: 0

ADttt<sub>1</sub>: 0

The practise of translating a transeme with no shift can be seen as an example of Gutt's direct translation (1991, see Section 3.5.2). In this case, the communicative clues of the ST transeme are presented through the same linguistic structure in the target language. The translator, as the communicator in his/her ostensive-inferential communication with the TT viewers, seems to believe that the directly translated transeme would be efficient stimuli that the TT viewers can process at the smallest effort to achieve the greatest contextual effects. The non-shift translation of transeme can be seen as moments when translators rely on the ST stimuli. Their act of communication at these moments is in a "stimulus-oriented mode" (Gutt 2004a, see Section 3.5.2) appearing to inform the audience 'what is said' in the ST rather than 'what is meant'.

On the other hand, when receiving subtitles with no translation shift, the target viewers are given access to the same information in these parts of a film through reading as what the viewers of the original film receive through listening. They are provided with an opportunity to arrive at the intended interpretation of these parts of a film within their actual cognitive environment. It is possible that, when no translation shift occurs, the target viewers can gain the same information of world-building elements and function-advancing propositions to create text-worlds similar to the primary viewers'. As a result, the target viewers can gather the same syuzhet information for their construction of the fabula as the primary viewers and their comprehension of these parts of the film can be similar to the primary viewers'. The target viewers' actual reception of the non-shift TT transeme is beyond the scope of this study and will not be discussed further.

Due to the characteristic constraints associated with subtitling, studies of this type of translation practice tend to focus on the situations where the translator is under pressure to intervene in the filmic text, especially where s/he turns to reduction as the solution to media-related translation constraints. The statistics of the current study show that it is in practice possible for the translator to retain both the linguistic form and content of part of the original dialogue when subtitling films. Although van Leuven-Zwart (1989) observed a 100% shift in her study of the translations of narrative texts, the overall percentage of non-shift transeme has been observed to be as high as 20.3% in the current study (see Table 6-1). Such a drastic difference may be partly due to the revisions made in the current study to van Leuven-Zwart's definitions and categories of

translation shifts. Another reason may lie in the fact that the text type examined as ST in van Leuven-Zwart's study is different from that in the current study. Van Leuven-Zwart looks at the translation of fictional texts while the current study looks at the written translation of filmic dialogue, as imitated conversational sentences. Generally speaking, compared to sentences in fictional texts, conversational sentences are shorter in length and simpler in linguistic structure, which may have contributed to the possibility of no-shift translations.

### ***6.2.2 Conclusions 1***

A non-shift translation is the result of direct translation practice, and indirect translation gives rise to various shifts depending on the strategy employed by translators. In this current study, direct translation and indirect translation coexist at the micro level in the English subtitles of the three Chinese films. Since the transemes translated with no shift appear to be randomly distributed throughout the whole films, it seems that the translators' language use frequently switches between a stimulus-oriented mode (direct translation) and an interpretation-oriented mode (indirect translation) during the process of subtitling. Direct translation may have been made possible by the simple linguistic structure of certain ST transemes but it also reflects the translator's willingness to do so. In the case of direct translation, the translators are in a stimulus-oriented mode of language use and rely on what they believe to be the shared cognitive environment between the target viewers of the original film and those of the subtitled version. In such cases, the translator seems to assume that duplicating the linguistic structures of the ST transemes in the TL would create adequately relevant stimuli for the target viewers' understanding of the ST transemes. According to Text World Theory, human beings understand a text by creating and processing text-worlds in their mind. Any type of text world is composed of world-building elements and develops because of function-advancing propositions. When it is the case of direct translation, world-building elements and function-advancing propositions of the ST are presented in the TT for the target audience in the same quantity and method. When a translator resorts to direct translation, s/he believes that the target audience can draw sufficient information of the communicative clues from the non-shift translation to create and process text-worlds in order to understand the ST.

### **6.3 Translation Shifts and Communicative Clues: World-Building Elements**

The focus of this chapter now turns to the situations where the translator feels the need to intervene in the filmic text and resorts to indirect translation in rendering the original dialogue. In the case of indirect translation, translation shifts occur and the translator's act of communication is in an interpretation-oriented mode. In such a mode, the translator recreates the communicative clues of the original message in linguistic forms different from the original. The translator assumes that these forms would serve as efficient stimuli for the target viewers to process at a reasonable effort and achieve similar contextual effects to what the primary viewers are likely to arrive at.

Subtitles, the translation of filmic dialogue, join the *syuzhet* of the original film as cues of the narrative for the target viewers to grasp in the process of establishing the *fabula*. As other types of comprehension, the establishment of the *fabula* is realised through the creation and development of text-worlds in the target viewers' mind. A film narrative includes three basic aspects: a cause-effect relationship between a chain of events, time and space (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008: 74). All the four meaning-making channels (Delabastita, 1989: 199) in a film provide information of the three aspects to different extents, including the verbal visual channel where subtitles operate. The information the target viewers pick up in all the four channels collectively contributes to the building and advancing of text-worlds for comprehending the whole film narrative.

Film characters are the agents in the cause-effect relationship and react to events. They are the main enactors in the viewers' text-worlds. Enactors also include any non-character figures presented in the images or dialogue. The causes and effects in a film take place at particular time and locales, and also involve inanimate entities (tangible and intangible). 'Time', 'location', 'object' and 'enactor' constitute the four types of building elements of text-worlds. Function-advancing propositions found in linguistic expressions include relational process, material process, mental process and existential process (see Section 3.4.3). The current section looks at the translation shifts that can affect the information to be potentially used by the target viewers as world-building elements. Shifts and function-advancing propositions will be discussed in Section 6.4.

All the shifts identified and categorised in the comparative phrase are revisited and separated between those affecting world-building elements and those affecting function-

advancing propositions. In *Hero*, shifts affecting world-building elements account for 60.3% of the total shifts; in *The Road Home* and *Farewell My Concubine*, the figure is 53.1% and 47.2% respectively (Table 6-2). A comparison between the relevant ST and TT transems shows that most of the shifts affecting world-building elements can be grouped according to the possible motivations behind the translator’s linguistic choices. Three main motivations have been identified (Table 6-3): 1) to deal with extralinguistic cultural reference, 2) to manipulate syuzhet information conveyed in the filmic dialogue, and 3) to aim for good readability. It should be pointed out that these motivations are at work in the environment of the distinctive constraints of subtitling. The three motivations will be discussed separately in sections 6.3.1-6.3.3.

In addition to the above motivations, some shifts have occurred as a response to other shifts in another transeme (see Example 6-6). There are also a small number of shifts that do not seem to be caused by a clear motivation. They may simply be the translator’s arbitrary linguistic solutions. These shifts will not be discussed further in this study.

	<i>Hero</i>	<i>The Road Home</i>	<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>
Time	29 (3.7%)	112 (13.1%)	110 (8.2%)
Location	83 (10.6%)	129 (15.1%)	75 (5.6%)
Object	209 (26.7%)	235 (27.6%)	269 (20.1%)
Enactor	462 (59.0%)	376 (44.1%)	883 (66.0%)
Total	783	852	1337
Percentage in total shifts	60.3%	53.1%	47.2%
Total shifts	1299	1605	2832

*Table 6-2 Shifts that affect world-building elements in the three films*

Film title	Shifts	Possible motivations
<i>Hero</i>	783	To react to ECRs 110 (14.0%)
		To manipulate syuzhet info 139 (17.8%)
		To aim for good readability 456 (58.2%)
		To respond to other shift 33 (4.2%)
		Other 45 (5.7%)
<i>The Road Home</i>	852	To react to ECRs 88 (10.3%)
		To manipulate syuzhet info 162 (19.0%)
		To aim for good readability 443 (52.0%)
		To respond to other shift 71 (8.3%)
		Other 88 (10.3%)
<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>	1337	To react to ECRs 150 (11.2%)
		To manipulate syuzhet info 187 (14.0%)
		To aim for good readability 869 (65.0%)
		To respond to other shift 35 (2.6%)
		Other 96 (7.2%)

Table 6-3 Possible motivations that give rise to shifts affecting world-building elements

Example 6-6

ST: /这学校都几十年了<sup>1</sup>/, /你爸爸就(在<sup>3</sup>这学校)教书<sup>2</sup>/。

(*The Road Home*: 01.18.19)

LT: /This school has been<sup>1</sup> tens of years/. /Your father taught<sup>2</sup>/ (in<sup>3</sup> this very school).

TT: /Your father helped build<sup>1</sup> this school/. /He taught<sup>2</sup> (here<sup>3</sup>)/ (for<sup>4</sup> so many years).

73

72

The first ST transeme was translated with a drastic change of meaning (coded as 73). The lost information due to this shift is compensated by the addition of a transeme in the TT (coded as 72). Therefore, the latter is believed to occur as a response to the former.

### 6.3.1 Extralinguistic cultural references

‘Extralinguistic cultural reference’, or ECR, is defined by Pedersen (2011: 43) as “reference that is attempted by means of any cultural linguistic expressions, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process. The referent of the said expression may prototypically be assumed to be identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopaedic knowledge of this audience”. Pedersen (ibid) also explains some of the terms used in this definition: ‘cultural linguistic expression’ is used in a very wide sense, including e.g. geographical names and is regardless of word class, syntactic function or size; ‘extralinguistic entity’ includes fictional ones; ‘assumed’ can be understood as implied in the speech situation; and ‘a relevant audience’ could be, for example the primary target audience of an original audiovisual text.

The domains of ECRs that are used in the current study are based on those identified by Pedersen (ibid: 59): 1) weights and measures, 2) proper names, subdivided into personal names, geographical names, institutional names and brand names, 3) professional titles, 4) food and beverages, 5) literature, 6) government, 7) entertainment, 8) education, 9) sports, 10) currency, 11) technical material, 12) historical events, and 13) other. The current section is interested in the shifts that occur in the rendition of ECRs related to time, location, object and enactor because information of the four aspects is likely to be used by the target viewers as world-building elements in their text-worlds. In all the three films, there are ECRs related to each of the four elements. Shifts related to ECRs account for a small percentage of all the shifts related to world-building elements (Table 6-4).

	<i>Hero</i>	<i>The Road Home</i>	<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>
Time	6 (5.5%)	10 (11.4%)	14 (9.3%)
Location	23 (20.9%)	17 (19.3%)	14 (9.3%)
Object	54 (49.1%)	37 (42.0%)	75 (50.0%)
Enactor	27 (24.5%)	24 (27.3%)	47 (31.3%)
Total	110	88	150
ECRs percentage	14.0%	10.3%	11.2%
Total shifts related to world-building elements	783	852	1337

*Table 6-4 Shifts related to ECRs as world-building elements in the three films*

Most of the shifts related to ECRs have occurred on the word/phrase level although there are also a number of them on the transeme level. Among the ones on the world/phrase level, most of the semantic shifts and all of the stylistic shifts show a tendency towards generalisation rather than specification (see Figures 5-1 and 5-2). This shows that the translator generally renders ECRs into their hypernyms with no distinct stylistic features. In many cases, more than one shift takes place at the same time when an ECR is translated because an ECR can affect a few stylistic aspects concurrently (see Examples 6-7, 6-8, 6-9 and 6-10).

#### Example 6-7

ST: 臣和长空面对面站着，有半个时辰。(Hero: 12.37)

LT: I and Sky were standing face to face for one shichen.

TT: We stood facing each other for a long time.

04G+12G+13G

‘时辰’ is a traditional Chinese time measurement equivalent to two hours. This measurement is no longer in common use. ‘半个时辰’ [half of a *shichen*] is ‘one hour’.

#### Example 6-8

ST: 妈，你上炕暖和暖和吧。(The Road Home: 07.27)

LT: Mum, get on the heated bed to get warm.

TT: Get on the bed. It’s warm there.

04G+13G

‘炕’ [heated bed] is a heatable brick bed used in some rural areas in North China where it is extremely cold in the winter.

#### Example 6-9

ST: 八尺剑字需要朱砂。(Hero: 18.38)

LT: A Chinese character of ‘sword’ of eight chi needs cinnabar.

TT: A scroll of that size requires red ink.

04G+13G 04G+13G 04G+13G

This transeme contains three object-related ECRs: ‘尺’, ‘字’ and ‘朱砂’. ‘尺’ is a Chinese unit of length, which equals 1/3 metre and is still in common use. ‘字’ refers to Chinese characters, and ‘朱砂’ is cinnabar which was grounded with water and used as ink in ancient China.



#### Example 6-10

ST: 楚霸王气度尊贵。要是威而不重，岂不成了江湖上的黄天霸了？

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 51.51)

LT: The King of Chu is honorable and respectable. If he appeared imposing but not dignified, would he be just like Huang Tianba in the society?

TT: If the King of Chu fails to bear himself with majestic dignity, he's little better than a gangster!

04G+13G

‘黄天霸’ [Huang Tianba] is a fictitious character in a novel of Qing Dynasty (around 1790s). He started as a righteous outlaw, but then broke his faith and ganged up with despotic local tyrants. This character has also appeared in a few Beijing operas.

Although generalisation is the most frequent strategy in the rendition of ECRs, the translator also employs other strategies and brings to the TT information that is not explicitly conveyed in the original dialogue. In such cases, the translator seems to have different concerns in the mind. It can be a way to help the target viewers gain basic knowledge about the implications of the ECRs that fall out of their cognitive environment (see Examples 6-11 and 6-12) or to compensate the generalised information (see Example 6-13). However, more often, the translator's concerns seem to be more closely connected with the relations between the ECRs and other syuzhet information (see Examples 6-14 and 6-15). In some cases, the translator presents information ahead of the original dialogue (see Examples 6-16 and 6-17). More interestingly, the translator even embeds in the subtitles traces of information from his/her discourse-world (see Example 6-18) or even text-world (see Example 6-19). It is difficult to say whether the translator employed these strategies consciously or unconsciously.

#### Example 6-11

ST: 哟，程老板，准知道你就得回来，这上座都给你留着呐。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.15.13)

LT: Ah, Boss Cheng. I surely knew you would come back. The top seat has been reserved for you.

TT: Ah, Mister Cheng. I knew you'd come. We saved a seat at the head table for you.

04S

‘上座’ [top seat] refers to the seat reserved for the most respected guest. Seating arrangement is one of the most important parts of Chinese dining etiquette, and guests are seated according to their social status. ‘A seat at the head table’ conveys the sense of respect associated with the seat and would be easier for the viewers to locate its likely whereabouts.

#### Example 6-12

ST: 这块布就叫“红”，通常是由村儿里最漂亮的姑娘来织。(The Road Home: 17.15)

LT: The cloth is called ‘Red’. It is usually woven by the most beautiful maiden in the village.

TT: The cloth is called the “Lucky Red Banner.” It must be woven by the most  
02S+04G  
beautiful maiden in the village.

‘红’ means ‘red colour’. In the Chinese culture, the red colour is associated with good luck. In this film, it is one of the village customs to have a red piece of cloth wrapped around the beam for good luck when a new building is completed. By making the word ‘红’ more semantically specific and adding a description in front of it, the translation would be easier for the target viewers to understand what the item is and why it is in red.

#### Example 6-13

ST: 在下赵国易县人。(Hero: 17.39)

LT: I am from Yi County in Zhao.

TT: I am from a small province in Zhao.  
02S+04G+13G

‘易县’ is the name of a place located in the Zhao Kingdom (403-222BC) in the Chinese history. The character ‘县’ in the proper name indicates the specific level of the place in the hierarchy of administrative regions. The term ‘province’ in the subtitles does not convey the culture-specific information and also sounds a larger district than what a ‘县’ normally is. To compensate, the translator adds a description ‘small’ in the translation.

#### Example 6-14

ST: 差一年，一个月，一天，一个时辰，都不算一辈子。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.01.10)

LT: One year, one month, one day, or one shichen less does not make it a lifetime.

TT: One year, one month, one day, even one second less makes it less than a lifetime!  
01S+12G+13G

In this example, ‘时辰’ also means two hours as in Example 6-7. However, the translator renders this word as ‘one second’ in this instance. This may be related to the translator’s interpretation of the relationship between this phrase and emotions of the character. This sentence is said by a character called Cheng Dieyi, a Beijing opera singer, when he is worried that his stage brother may not fulfill their oath to perform together for a lifetime. The word choice in the subtitles enhances the tone of anxiety embedded in the utterance.

#### Example 6-15

ST: 张公公那是当年陪太后老佛爷听过戏的主儿。( *Farewell My Concubine*: 32.06)

LT: Grandpa Zhang is a person who attended operas with Laofoye.

TT: When he was a palace eunuch, Old Man Zhang attended operas with the Empress  
72 12G+13G

Dowager herself.

‘公公’ [grandpa] is a polite way to address an old man. It is also a term used to address an imperial eunuch. ‘张’ [Zhang] is the surname of the eunuch in the film. The translation ‘Old Man Zhang’ alone would not supply sufficient information for the target viewers to gather this person’s identity. However, his identity is important syuzhet information in the film and the translator resorts to the addition of a whole transeme to make the necessary information clear in the subtitles.

#### Example 6-16

ST: 臣探听到，两人化名高山流水藏身于赵国邢城一家书馆。( *Hero*: 17.16)

LT: I found out that the two persons changed their names to be Mountain and Water respectively and was hiding in a school in Xing city, Zhao.

TT: It was rumoured that they were hiding in a small calligraphy school.  
02S

‘书馆’ can refer to a school in the ancient times or a tea house with storytelling actors.

When this example sentence is uttered, it has not been made clear in the film what exact

this place is or its size. Soon after that, scenes of students writing with traditional Chinese calligraphy brushes show that it is a small school. The translator presents slightly more information ahead of the original dialogue.

Example 6-17

ST: 听说您在八大胡同打出名来了。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 59.34)

LT: I heard that you became famous by fighting at Ba Da Hutong.

TT: I heard you got into a fight at the House of Blossoms.

04S

‘八大胡同’ was formerly Beijing’s largest red-light district in its history. In the film, ‘House of Blossoms’ is a fictitious brothel located in this district. In the original dialogue, this specific name does not appear until a later stage, although some scenes inside this brothel, including a fight taking place there, have already been presented in the images before this example sentence is uttered. In the subtitles of this example sentence, the translator does not explain this ECR; instead, s/he presents the target viewers some more specific syuzhet knowledge than that embedded in the original dialogue.

Example 6-18

ST: 她记着父亲说过的那句话，腊月初八一定回来，因为腊月初九学校就放假了。  
(*The Road Home*: 01.00.30)

LT: She remembered the words Father said that he would definitely come back on the eighth day of the last month of the Chinese lunar calendar year because the school holiday would start on the ninth day of the last month.

TT: She remembered his promise that he would return on the 27<sup>th</sup> before the school holiday began on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

04G+13G

04G+13G

‘腊月初八’ and ‘腊月初九’ are a traditional way to state a specific date. In China, the lunar calendar is still in use although not as widely as the Gregorian calendar. The two lunar-calendar dates may have fallen on the 27<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup> of a certain month on the Gregorian calendar in the year when the subtitles were composed, and the translator uses the real discourse-world information to replace the enactor-accessible text-world information. The syuzhet information has been altered in this case but the logic relation between the two dates has been maintained.

### Example 6-19

ST: (那天晚上<sup>1</sup>), /刮着<sup>2</sup>大风/, /刘邦的兵唱<sup>3</sup>了一宿的楚歌/。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 29.50)

LT: (That night<sup>1</sup>) /strong wind was blowing<sup>2</sup>/. /Liu Bang's troops sang<sup>3</sup> Chu songs for a whole night/.

TT: /As they prepared<sup>4</sup> for battle/, /Han's troops sang<sup>3</sup> victory songs/ /which carried<sup>2</sup> on the wind/ /and echoed<sup>5</sup>/ (through<sup>6</sup> the valley).

72

In the film, this sentence is uttered by the master of the Beijing opera troupe when he is telling his pupils about the historic event the opera *Farewell My Concubine* is based on. Liu Bang is the emperor who founded Han Dynasty in 207BC by defeating his rival Xiang Yu, the last king of Chu kingdom. Liu Bang is normally portrayed as a cunning and calculating figure, while Xiang Yu brave and courageous. During their last battle, Liu Bang instructed his soldiers to sing songs of the Chu kingdom and tricked Xiang Yu and his soldiers into believing that their homeland had been captured by Liu Bang and even Chu people had joined the Han army. Xiang Yu and his soldiers lost fighting spirit and were defeated. *Farewell My Concubine* is about the last moments of Xing Yu, when his most beloved concubine committed suicide in front of him to show her love and loyalty. The translator seems to be familiar with this historic event and has presented in the subtitles the scene of the battle created in his/her own text-world (i.e. the valley and the echoes).

#### **6.3.2 Hierarchy of syuzhet information as world-building elements**

All the information for world-building elements is part of syuzhet and can potentially contribute to the fabula that the target viewers eventually establish. Judging from the strategies employed, the translator seems to have a hierarchy of the information for world-building elements. The point of reference used to gauge the importance of information seems to be the fabula established in the translator's text-worlds and the translator's estimation about the encyclopaedic knowledge in the target viewers' cognitive environment. The translator resorts to various strategies in order to assist the target viewers in accessing what s/he assumes to be important for the building of text-world. The employment of the strategies may be the result of the translator's conscious or unconscious behaviour.

### Temporal and spatial parameters

In normal circumstances, when a translator composes subtitles, s/he is already familiar with the whole film and has an established fabula in the mind. The fabula is a coherence story in which the cause-effect relationships between a chain of events have been established in a chronological temporal order with specific spatial reference. It has been observed that the translator provides additional and specific deictic terms in the subtitles to help the target viewers locate the unfolding events (see Examples 6-20 and 6-21). When the deictic information provided in the original dialogue is assumed to contain information that is beyond the target viewers' cognitive environment, the translator would replace it with an expression that is more likely to be part of the target viewers' encyclopaedic knowledge. By doing this, the target viewers is likely to be able to locate the unfolding events without going into information that does not contribute much to the construction of their own fabula (see Examples 6-22 and 6-23).

#### Example 6-20

ST: /秦王紧急召见<sup>1</sup>我/。 (*Hero*: 01.55)

LT: /The King of Qin summoned<sup>1</sup> me/.

TT: /The King of Qin has summoned<sup>1</sup> me/ (to court<sup>2</sup>).

72

This example sentence is uttered shortly after the start of the film by a warrior called Nameless as the narrator. The locative 'court' does not appear in the original dialogue. In the images, the warrior is sitting in a horse cart rushing at a high speed. In the original film, it is only made clear a few minutes later that he was heading to the palace of the emperor. The location information is very important as the rest of the film is set in the court with a number of flashbacks of events taking place elsewhere. At the point of this subtitle, the translator in fact has provided the target viewers syuzhet information ahead of the original dialogue and images. Such information is informed by the translator's already established fabula in his/her text-worlds.

#### Example 6-21

ST: 学校毕业，在家没事儿，在县上乱逛，看见敲锣打鼓的，喊人报名儿。

(*The Road Home*: 37.40)

LT: I graduated from school and had nothing to do at home. I was walking aimlessly in the town and saw someone beat drums and gongs asking people to sign up.

TT: After graduation, I had nothing to do. One day I saw someone on the street signing people up.

72

This sentence is uttered by a young man when explaining how he ended up taking the position of a primary school teacher in the village. This utterance would generate a sub-world in the target viewers' mind. The addition of the temporal term 'one day' would help establish a clearer deictic boundary of the sub-world, so that the chronological order of the events is made more explicit.

Example 6-22

ST: A: 今年是什么年?

B: 是... .. 是民国二十一年。

A: 不对! 是大清宣统二十四年! (*Farewell My Concubine*: 39.23)

LT: A: What year is this year?

B: It is ... is the 21<sup>st</sup> year of the Republic of China.

A: Incorrect! It is the 24<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Xuantong of the great Qing Dynasty!

TT: A: What year is this?

B: This is ... this is 1932.

12G+13G

A: Wrong! This is still the Qing dynasty!

04G+12G+13G

This is a dialogue between an imperial eunuch (A) and a young Beijing opera singer (B). The Qing Dynasty in the Chinese history came to an end when the Republic of China was established in 1912. '民国二十一年' [the 21<sup>st</sup> year of the Republic of China] in B's utterance is a traditional way to indicate an era: an emperor's reign + number of years into the reign. When a new emperor was enthroned, a new era would start. This way of indicating an era is still in use in Taiwan but no longer in China. The translator filtered out the culture-specific content of the expression and converted it into the Christian era. Similarly, '大清宣统二十四年' in A's second utterance means 'the 24<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Xuantong of the great Qing Dynasty'. With regards to this expression, the translator not only filtered out its culture-specific flavour but also made it a more general temporal expression. By applying these strategies, the translator supplies sufficient information for the target viewers to locate the events temporally without giving information that s/he assumes to be less relevant to the to-be established fabula.

### Example 6-23

ST: 一九三七年“七.七”事变前夕。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 43.45)

LT: 1937 on the eve of July 7 Incident

TT: 1937 On the eve of war with Japan  
04G

This is the translation of the caption in the film. July 7 incident marks the start of Japan's invasion of China in the 1930s. The translator uses 'war with Japan', which is the knowledge more likely to be in the target viewers' cognitive environment and would be sufficient for the target viewers to temporally locate the unfolding events in the film.

### Identity of enactors

Enactors are an important part of the fabula. They are the agents of the events arranged in a chronological and causal order in a viewer's mind. An enactor's identity may have a great bearing on the development of events and the relationships between characters. There are various ways to present enactors' identity in films. Sometimes such information is apparent and can be gathered immediately upon its first appearance in images or dialogue. Sometimes such information is implicit and subtle. A viewer needs to understand certain clues offered in the meaning-making channels of the film before arriving at a realisation. In the cases when the translator assumes that the target viewers would have difficulty in realising an enactor's identity when such information is crucial for the understanding of the unfolding events, s/he may interfere and provide additional information. As a result, the target viewers would gather sufficient information to prepare for the advancement of their text-worlds. Example 6-15 in the previous section is a relevant example. Example 6-24 below serves as another example.

### Example 6-24

ST: 不是养活不起，实在是男孩大了，留不住。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 07.07)

LT: It is not that I cannot afford to raise him. It is truly because the boy is too grown up to keep.

TT: I can afford to raise him but he's getting too big to keep at the brothel.

72

The underscored section in the English subtitles is a complete addition of transense to the original dialogue. The utterance is from the beginning of the film. It is said by a woman when she is begging the master of a Beijing opera troupe to take in her son as a student. The woman is a prostitute and a minor character in the film. There is no explicit



verbal expression about her identity up to this point of the film although there are some hints in the images – her clothes, her makeup and the way a man says hi to her on the street. Her son is one of the protagonists in the film. His background as a prostitute’s son is an important contributing factor in the development of his personality and fate in the film. The addition of the transeme ‘at the brothel’ provides explicit information about the enactors.

### Inner world of enactors

The inner world of enactors, their emotions and feelings, can be conveyed through various techniques and in different channels. Their utterances can be one of the channels. The translator, like other viewers of the film, would feel more or less emotionally involved in the development of events and characters. This is because humans are likely to project their notion of a zero reference point of subjectivity, i.e. the origo, onto the enactors or something in the text-worlds. Such understanding of the enactors is likely to be part of the fabula eventually established. There are moments when the translator’s sympathy and understanding of the enactors is embedded in the subtitles. As a result, the inner world of the enactors, although being strictly enactor-accessible in principle, is brought closer to the target viewers and influences the target viewers’ emotional involvement in the filmic text. Example 6-14 in the previous section is a relevant instance. Example 2-25 below is a further illustration.

### Example 6-25

ST: 母亲一连好几天早出晚归，她把那几十里山路都跑遍了。

(*The Road Home*: 49.55)

LT: Mother went out early and came back late for a few successive days. She went through all the dozens of *li*’s mountain roads.

TT: My mother retraced her steps every day searching back and forth.

73

There is a drastic change of meaning in the rendition of this particular satellite transeme. The translator seems to have felt the character’s anxiety in finding what she lost and has made the emotion more explicit in the subtitles.

### Coordination between syuzhet information

In a film, some syuzhet information is deliberately planted at a certain point of the film to coordinate or echo with an event or scene at a later stage. When the translator renders

such information, the connections between the events or scenes may have already been established in his/her fabula. It has been observed that the translator may make the connection more explicit in the translation (see Examples 6-26 and 6-27).

#### Example 6-26

ST: 留不住了，不如用上一回。(Farewell My Concubine: 02.26.30)

LT: We cannot keep them. We might as well use them once.

TT: We can't keep them, so we might as well use them one last time.

02S

This sentence is said by Juxian, the female protagonist, during the Cultural Revolution about a pair of jade wine glasses. She is aware that the glasses are associated with the so-called 'old society' by communists and would have to be destroyed for her own good. The glasses were smashed by Juxian in the next shot. Then, in the following scenes of the film, Cultural Revolution became more violent and fierce, and Juxian eventually hanged herself in despair. It would be the *last* time when she used the jade glass. The translator's established fabula, especially his/her knowledge about the development of the events, seems to have made the coordination between syuzhet information closer and more explicit.

#### Example 6-27

ST: 上殿二十步，与王对饮! (Hero: 06.03)

LT: Get onto the great hall twenty paces and drink with his majesty!

TT: Advance within twenty paces of the throne and drink with his majesty!

51

In this instance, the subtitles contain more explicit information about the twenty paces than the original dialogue. In the film, the exact distance between the warrior called Nameless and Emperor Qin is a crucial factor deciding whether the assassination Nameless planned would be successful or not. The translator embeds in the subtitles his/her own interpretation about the distance for the target viewers to pick up as clues to understand the filmic narrative.

#### Ideological implication beyond the fabula

Films are often of ideological implications, which prompt viewers to deep thought.

*Hero* is one of such films, which addresses the relationship between culture and

political power. The two protagonists in the film are a warrior called Nameless and Qing Shi Huang, the first emperor who unified China more than 2,000 years ago. Emperor Qin is usually regarded as a villain for enslaving nations and burying scholars. *Hero* tries to challenge this view and portrays the emperor as a wise and perceptive man who launched warfare against other kingdoms for the sake of peace and the greater good. Nameless, who is from a kingdom invaded by Qin and once so determined to assassinate the emperor, gave up his plan when he was convinced that Qin would bring peace and prosperity to a unified land. He also gave up his life because of the decision. The title of the film ‘*Hero*’ can deeply entertain a thought: who is the hero? Nameless or Emperor Qin? The former gives up his own life for what he believes to be the greater good and the latter unified what is known as China for the first time in history. The translator seems to have his/her answer and does not hesitate to embed his/her own understanding in the subtitles: In the original dialogue, Nameless is addressed as ‘壮士’ (zhuàngshi) or ‘大侠’ (dàxiá). Both terms are archaisms. The former refers to a masculine and brave man, and the latter refers to a martial arts master. However, the translator uses ‘hero’ to refer to Nameless in a subtitle less than 5 minutes into the film. The translator’s ideology and understanding would inevitably influence the target viewers. The shifts that occur in rendering ‘壮士’ (zhuàngshi) or ‘大侠’ (dàxiá) to be ‘hero’ are intensive element/specification + specific element/generalisation + temporal element/generalisation (01S+04G+12G).

#### Lower hierarchy syuzhet

As discussed above, the translator employs a range of strategies rendering information that is treated as higher hierarchy syuzhet. There is also information that seems to be regarded as lower hierarchy syuzhet, which includes repeated information (see Examples 6-28 and 6-29), common sense shared in people’s cognitive environment or information obvious in the image (see Examples 6-30 and 6-31), and information that contributes little to the fabula (see Examples 6-32, 6-33 and 6-34).

#### Example 6-28

ST: 我知道你昨天迎先生去了。 (*The Road Home*: 01.03.53)

71

LT: I know you went to meet up with the teacher.

TT: I know you went to wait for the teacher.

When this sentence is uttered in the film, it has already become clear in the unfolded images when the character went to wait for the teacher.

#### Example 6-29

ST: 不是张公公府上的堂会吗? (*Farewell My Concubine*: 45.11)

LT: Wasn't it the entertainment party in Grandpa Zhang's mansion house?

TT: It was Mister Zhang's birthday party.

04G+12G+13G

As explained in Example 6-15, ‘公公’ is how people usually address an imperial eunuch. ‘府上’ is a respectful way to say a rich or powerful person’s mansion. This current example sentence is uttered by the theatre manager when referring to an event that took place in Zhang’s mansion a number of years ago. This event has been depicted in the images earlier in the film. The translator assumes that the mention of the eunuch earlier on in the film is sufficient for the target viewers to recall the location of the party when reading the current subtitles.

#### Example 6-30

ST: 你与长空为行刺寡人暗自串通，引我秦宫高手在在一旁观看作证。(*Hero*: 45.47)

LT: You and Sky colluded secretly in order to assassinate me, luring Qin’s imperial elites to be your witnesses at the scene.

71

TT: In order to assassinate me, the two of you staged a fight, using my guards as witnesses.

‘在一旁’ is used in the original dialogue about the guards’ physical position when they witness the fight. This transeme is deleted in the subtitles probably as unnecessarily repeated information because the target viewers can see in the images where the guards stand.

#### Example 6-31

ST: 听母亲说是姥爷死的时候姥姥天天哭把眼睛给哭坏了。(*The Road Home*: 16.30)

LT: I heard from Mother that when Grandfather died, Grandmother cried every day until her eyes went bad.

TT: Mother said when Grandfather died, Grandmother cried until she went blind.

02G

‘天天哭’ is used in the original dialogue to emphasise that Grandmother cried a lot without referring to exactly every day. Target viewers can easily imagine how much one

must have cried to go blind.

Example 6-32

ST: 学校毕业，在家没事儿。 (*The Road Home*: 37.40)

LT: I graduated from school and had nothing to do at home.

71

TT: After graduation, I had nothing to do.

‘在家’ [at home] is not translated in the subtitles. This sentence is uttered by the young man when explaining how he ended up taking the position of a primary school teacher in the village. This is the only occasion when the young man’s home is mentioned in the whole film. It would have little bearing on the viewers’ construction of the fabula even if the transeme was included in the subtitles.

Example 6-33

ST: 这武二郎碰上西门庆，不打，不打能成吗？ (*Farewell My Concubine*: 59.45)

LT: This is Wu Erlang bumping into Ximen Qing. No fighting? Is it possible that they do not fight?

TT: You know the old story about Pan Jinlian’s husband meeting the man who screwed her? Did he have any choice but to fight?

73

This sentence is uttered by one of the protagonists when explaining to his stage brother why he got into a fight. The shift that occurs in this example is ‘Mutation/radical change of meaning’ as no conjunction can be established between the ST transeme and the TT transeme. ‘武二郎’ [Wu Erlang] and ‘西门庆’ [Ximen Qing] in the ST and ‘Pan Jinlian’ in the TT are all fictitious characters in the same classic work called 《水浒传》 (*The Water Margin*). In this book, Pan Jinlian and Ximen Qing commit adultery and murder Pan’s husband who is Wu Erlang’s brother. These names have little bearing on the construction of the fabula. Since the name of Pan Jinlian is referred to a few more times in the later stage of the film, the translator keeps her name and bypasses the other two names in the subtitles. As a result, the target viewers would not need to accommodate the two enactors in their text-worlds.

### 6.3.3 World-building elements and target text readability

As presented in Table 6-3 earlier in this section, a large number of shifts seem to have occurred due to the translator's motivation to achieve good readability in the target text. These shifts can be loosely grouped into obligatory, semi-obligatory and voluntary shifts. Obligatory shifts are dictated by the syntactic differences between Chinese and English in order to avoid grammatical errors. Since obligatory shifts are not closely related to translators' communicative assumptions, there will only be some brief examples and explanation to follow in the coming pages. Semi-obligatory shifts can lead to more smooth and natural English expressions than more literal translations although the more literal translations are not grammatically incorrect. Voluntary shifts are due to the translator's own preference.

#### Obligatory shifts

Due to differences between Chinese and English language systems, there are a large number of obligatory shifts. Generally speaking, obligatory shifts have little impact on the information that the target viewers can pick up as world-building elements.

Shifts under 'Syntactic-Semantic Modification/pro-drop' are the most obvious ones because Chinese is a pro-drop language while English is not. This means that the translator frequently adds subjects or objects in the subtitles in order to compose grammatically correct English sentences. This, of course, does not mean that the translator provides additional information for the target viewers to use as world-building elements.

Other typical examples include shifts under 'Semantic Modulation/descriptive element/specification' (coded as 02S, see Example 6-34), shifts under 'Syntactic-Semantic Modification/function word' (coded as 42, see Example 6-35), and a few types of word/phrase level stylistic shifts, such as 'register element/generalisation' (coded as 11G, see Example 6-36).

#### Example 6-34

ST: 我是父母唯一的孩子，也是村儿里唯一念过大学的。(The Road Home: 01.15)

TT: I am the only child the only one from our village who went to college.

02S

The addition of ‘our’ is dictated by the syntactic requirement of English; otherwise, ‘from village’ would be grammatically incorrect.

Example 6-35

ST: 如月身为丫鬟，八岁跟了主人。 (*Hero*: 01.23.17)

TT: I have served my master since I was eight.

42

The addition of the conjunction ‘since’ is required by the English syntax, although this is not necessary in Chinese.

Example 6-36

ST: 袁四爷今儿晚上请咱们过去，要栽培咱们。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.09.28)

TT: Master Yuan wants us to visit him tonight. He wants to become our patron.

11G

‘今儿晚上’ is said in a colloquial tone and a Beijing accent in the original dialogue, which is not reflected by ‘tonight’ in the subtitles.

### Semi-obligatory shifts

Differences between Chinese and English language systems have also given rise to a large number of semi-obligatory shifts. Among these shifts, efforts seem to have been made especially to avoid unnecessary redundancies and wordiness. The following are typical examples: to remove adverbials of time if the information is indicated through the tense of the TT transeme (see Example 6-37); to remove redundant or unnecessarily repeated descriptions (e.g. some shifts under ‘02G’, see Examples 6-38 and 6-39); to use another expression (pronoun, noun or other expressions) to refer back to a noun mentioned before (e.g. some shifts under ‘04G’, see Examples 6-40 and 6-41); to use condensed expressions to refer to some information that has already been made clear in an earlier part of the film (e.g. shifts under ‘52’, see Examples 6-41 and 6-42), etc. Typical features of spoken language, such as fragmented sentences, repetitions and fillers, are suppressed in the subtitles (Examples 6-43 and 6-44).

Example 6-37

ST: 日后怎么做人? (*Farewell My Concubine*: 05.51)

LT: How will be a proper person in the future?

71

TT: What are you going to do with your life?

Chinese is a non-inflectional language. What can be made clear by tenses in inflectional languages is expressed frequently through the use of adverbials of time in Chinese. The meaning of ‘日后’ [in the future] is already embedded in the simple future tense of the English translation and does not need to be expressed especially by an adverbial of time.

Example 6-38

ST: 充满了勃勃的生机 ... .. (*The Road Home*: 01.07.05)

LT: Full of vigorous energy.

TT: Full of energy...

02G

It would sound redundant if ‘勃勃的’ [vigorous] was translated into ‘full of vigorous energy’.

Example 6-39

“大秦” (dàqín) meaning ‘great Qin’, is frequently used in *Hero* as a proud expression used by Emperor Qin and his people to refer to their country. It would sound redundant and even awkward if this translation is used throughout the English subtitles. In many cases, the translator opts for ‘the kingdom’ or simply ‘Qin’ as appropriate.

Example 6-40

ST: 今日已是我书馆最后一日了。 (*Hero*: 17.46)

LT: Today is already our school’s last day.

TT: I fear this may be the last day of our school.

04G

‘今日’ means ‘today’. The translator uses a demonstrative word ‘this’ to avoid repeating ‘day’ in the subtitles.



Example 6-41

ST: 从这天开始, 母亲就天天去听。 (*The Road Home*: 24.58)

LT: From this day, Mother went to listen every day.

TT: She went by the school every day after that.

04G

52

‘母亲’ [mother] is rendered into a pronoun ‘she’ to avoid repeating this noun. ‘从这天开始’ [starting from this day] is translated into a more vague expression so that the word ‘day’ would not be repeated in the subtitles.

Example 6-42

ST: 臣求的剑字 ... .. (*Hero*: 20.14)

LT: The Chinese character of sword that I requested.

TT: ... the scroll ...

52

Since what is requested has already been made clear in the early part of the film, the translator resorts to the strategy of condensation for a more concise rendition.

Example 6-43

ST: 治疗呢, 看, 不行, 结果呢, 你爸呢也不盯了, 这就 ...

(*The Road Home*: 04.00)

LT: Treatment ... , examination ... , no use. The result ... , your father could not hold out for longer. This was ...

71

TT: They tried saving him, but it was no use. Your father then passed away.

The original utterance is extremely fragmented and full of hesitation. The translator has arranged the information that can be deduced from the original into three state of affairs transems. The deleted is a fragmented transeme.

Example 6-44

ST: 你只要囫圇个儿地把小楼给弄出来, 我哪儿来哪儿去, 回我的花满楼。

02G

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.23.23)

LT: As long as you can get Xiaolou out in one piece, I will go back to where I came from and go back to my House of Blossoms.

TT: If you can get Xiaolou out of there in one piece I'll go back to the House of Blossoms.

In spoken Chinese, the possessive pronoun ‘我的’ [my] can be used to emphasise that someone goes a separate way. This example sentence is uttered by Juxian when she is trying to persuade Dieyi to help get her husband, Xiaolou, out of a Japanese prison. This spoken language feature is suppressed in the subtitles.

### Voluntary shifts

The translator’s strategies have shown a tendency to avoid redundancies and unnecessary repetitions, but this does not mean that the translator always put conciseness as a priority. There are a few cases where the translator tries to use figurative language even under the extreme spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling (see Examples 6-45 and 6-46). In more cases, the translator seems to make an effort to enhance coherence and logic of utterances (see Examples 6-47, 6-48 and 6-49).

#### Example 6-45

ST: 书法剑术境界相通。 (*Hero*: 29.43)

LT: Calligraphy and swordplay are connected in their realms.

TT: The brush and the sword are fundamentally connected.

15S

15S

In the subtitles, ‘the brush’ is used to refer to calligraphy and ‘sword’ is used to refer to swordplay. In both case, metonymy is resorted to as a type of figurative language use.

#### Example 6-46

ST: 什么叫“盛代元音”啊？这他妈就是。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 02.11.56)

LT: What is called “fundamental sound in the prosperous era”? This is fucking it.

TT: It’ll be the goddamn golden hit of a golden era.

35

‘盛代元音’ [fundamental sound in the prosperous era] is used in the original dialogue to refer to Beijing opera actor Cheng Dieyi’s superb singing skills. The translator has made an effort to use figurative language in the TT to render the figurative language used in the ST.

Example 6-47

ST: A: 那他住哪儿啦? Where is he staying?

B: 村政府吧。The village council office.

04S

(*The Road Home*: 15.51)

LT: A: Where is he staying then?

B: The village council.

TT: A: Where is he staying?

B: The village council office.

04S

This is a dialogue between the mother and daughter about where the new village teacher will stay. What they mean is the office used by the village council, rather than its abstract meaning as a local authority. The use of the more specific word ‘village council office’ makes the sentence sounds more logical.

Example 6-48

ST: 我师哥可是在您的手上让人逮走的。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.21.50)

LT: My stage brother was taken away by people from your hands.

TT: But you allowed them to take him away in the first place.

72

The underscored satellite transeme is an addition by the translator. This sentence is said by one of the protagonists when he is trying to irritate the female protagonist. The translator is willing to add such a long expression in the subtitles to make the sentence read more like an utterance in an argument.

Example 6-49

ST: 它能不亡吗? 报应! 报应! (*Farewell My Concubine*: 02.40.04)

LT: Could it not die? Retribution! Retribution!

TT: It's doomed! Is it not? This is what's called retribution! Karmic retribution.

51

02S

The translator renders ‘报应’ [retribution] into two much longer expressions in the subtitles. With this effort, the sentences in the subtitles are made more coherent than a bare word ‘retribution’.

### **6.3.4 Conclusions 2**

When translators are dealing with information that can be potentially used by the target viewers as world-building elements, their linguistic behaviour shows the following tendencies:

- Translators tend to neutralise stylistic features of the original dialogue in general.
- Translators see the target viewers as culture outsiders in general and tend to filter out culture-specific information contained in the original dialogue.
- Translators constantly judge the importance of the information carried in the original dialogue with reference to the fabula they have already established in the mind. They enhance the information that is closely linked with their fabula and suppresses the information that does not directly contribute to the fabula. As a result, the subtitles contain more fabula contributing information than the original dialogue.
- Translators do not trust that all information carried in the images is comprehensible to the target viewers. They tend to explicate information that they believe to be important but not clear enough for the target viewers.
- Translators pay attention to the readability of the subtitles. Compared to the original dialogue, the subtitles contain much less spoken language features and are more coherent and logical to certain extent.
- As the result of all the above points, it seems that a subtitled film does not require the target viewers to rely on the semiotic cohesion between the four meaning-making channels as much as the primary viewers do. The viewers of the subtitled version can gain through the written translation some information that is carried by other channels in the original film.

### **6.4 Translation shifts and communicative clues: function-advancing propositions**

Section 6.3 has discussed the translators' communicative assumptions that influence their linguistic behaviour in presenting information to be potentially used by the target viewers as world-building elements in their text-worlds. The current section tries to deduce the translators' assumptions in rendering information of the filmic dialogue that may potentially operate as function-advancing propositions in the target viewers' text-worlds. There are three primary types of function-advancing propositions: 'relational processes', 'material processes', and 'mental processes' (see Section 3.4.3).

State of affairs transemes with a predicate can potentially serve as function-advancing propositions. Since this study has expanded the concept of state of affairs transeme to accommodate features of spoken language, some expressions that lack a predicate are categorised as state of affairs transemes as well (see Section 4.3.1). Among these expressions, vocatives serve as world-building elements and the others can serve as different types of function-advancing propositions: 1) a greeting phrase is identified as a mental process; 2) a responsive expression to a yes-no question is identified as one of the three function-advancing propositions according to the structure of the question. For example, in ‘- Are you a student? – Yes’, ‘yes’ is classified as a relational process, while in ‘- Do you like music? – No.’, ‘no’ is identified as a mental process; 3) a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response to an imperative sentence is identified as a mental process; 4) an independent exclamation word is classified as a mental process; and 5) a transeme as an independent sentence without a verb is identified as a relational process.

Among the state of affairs transemes in the original filmic dialogue, some were translated without any shift (see Section 6.2) and some have been identified as potential world-building elements and analysed in Section 6.3. The rest of the state of affairs transemes can all potentially serve as function-advancing propositions in the target viewers’ text-worlds and are grouped under the three primary categories of processes (Table 6-19). During the process of subtitling, most of these transemes are translated as the same types processes in the TT, and some are rendered into a different type and some are omitted. There are also new transemes added in the TT, and the added ones can also be grouped under the three primary categories of processes.

		<i>Hero</i>	<i>The Road Home</i>	<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>
	<b>total in ST</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>387</b>
Relational	Deleted	10	74	78
	Added	3	7	26
	No switch	63	66	182
	Switched to Material	25	26	77
	Switched to Mental	16	27	50
	<b>total in TT</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>326</b>
	<b>change (ST → TT)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-66</b>	<b>-61</b>
	<b>total in ST</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>825</b>
Material	Deleted	25	109	140
	Added	10	7	24
	No switch	200	186	546
	Switched to Relational	37	47	89
	Switched to Mental	16	14	50
	<b>total in TT</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>599</b>
	<b>change (ST → TT)</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>-126</b>	<b>-226</b>
	<b>total in ST</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>283</b>
Mental	Deleted	7	93	89
	Added	8	13	40
	No switch	94	104	146
	Switched to Relational	11	7	29
	Switched to Material	12	11	19
	<b>total in TT</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>192</b>
	<b>change (ST → TT)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-91</b>

*Table 6-5 Potential function-advancing propositions in the three films*

As a result of the deletion, addition and switches between types of processes, the total number of transems and the number under each primary type of processes are different in the TT from the ST. In all the three films, the total number of TT state of affairs transems is smaller than that in the ST. Consequently, the target viewers of the subtitled film need to process less verbal information than the primary viewers. This may mean that the target viewers' text-worlds are of fewer details and/or contain fewer sub-worlds.

The smallest change in terms of number of transemes is found in *Hero* (-4.1%), which is followed by *Farewell My Concubine* (-25.3) and *The Road Home* (-30.1%). The amount of reduction is closed linked with the number and density of utterances in the films and their linguistic features. Table 6-6 below gives a general picture of the density of utterances in the three films, which shows that the density in *Hero* is considerably lower than that in *The Road Home* and *Farewell My Concubine*. Furthermore, *Hero* is set more than 2,000 years ago, and the dialogue in this film are deliberately concise and free of most linguistics feature of spontaneous conversations. In contrast, the dialogue in the other two films intentionally imitates real-life conversations and is full of fragmented sentences, hesitations, repetitions, exclamations, etc.

	Total Chinese characters in the original dialogue	Runtime (min)	Character/min
<i>Hero</i>	5149	99	52
<i>The Road Home</i>	8163	89	92
<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>	14972	171	88

*Table 6-6 Word count of dialogue in the three films*

Function-advancing propositions have a direct impact on the dynamics and evolution of the target viewers' text-worlds. How they are presented in the TT is shaped by the translator's assumptions about their relevance to the target viewers. In the following sub-sections, analysis and discussions will be made to look at two aspects: 1) switches between types of processes and 2) deletion, addition and radical changes of processes.

#### ***6.4.1 Switches between relational, material and mental processes***

As briefly stated above, most of the ST transemes are rendered as the same types of processes in the subtitles. This means that the shifts in these transemes would not affect the basic 'route' along which the events or actions involved are unfolded in the target viewers' mind. The same type of processes provides information along the same 'route' as their counterparts in the ST transemes and can trigger increment of the same type of knowledge on the side of the target viewers. More specifically, relational processes lead to better understanding of the relations between entities; material processes, the most 'active' among the three primary categories, describe physical actions and give rise to

text-worlds along an actional, rather than a descriptive line; mental processes describe emotions and feelings and provide access to one's inner world.

As discussed in Section 3.5.3, Chapter 3, the communication between the translator and the target viewers is about a pre-existing text that is not originally intended for the target viewers. In the context of cinematic discourse, only a very limited amount of information conveyed in a filmic text is possibly participant-accessible and most is enactor-accessible only. The translator and the target viewers are all discourse-world participants and situated at a different ontological level from the enactors in the filmic text. The changes made to the types of processes in the TT show that the translator in fact actively recreates enactor-accessible information for the target viewers, and the recreation is informed by his own interpretation of the syuzhet, or in other words, by the fabula established in his own text-worlds. When the translator uses the same type of processes in the translation, s/he assumes that this is the most efficient route for the target viewers to access the intended communicative clues; otherwise, when the translator renders transemes into a different type of processes, s/he assumes that the intended clues can be better accessed through a different route.

Table 6-5 shows that the switch between types of processes takes place most frequently between material and relational processes and least frequently between material and mental processes. The frequency of switch between relational and mental processes is between the two types of switches. These tendencies are consistent with all the three films. It will be interesting to deduce what assumptions the translators may hold when deciding the switches and what possible impact such practice may have on the target viewers?

#### Switching from a material to a relational process

Such a switch omits the physical action in the original transeme and instead describes a type of relation established as the result of this action (see Examples 6-50 and 6-51).



#### Example 6-50

ST: 先父临终留下遗愿，求贵馆一幅墨宝。 (*Hero*: 17.43)

LT: My late father left a wish before dying to acquire a calligraphy work from your school.

TT: My father's dying wish was to acquire a scroll from your prestigious school.  
04G

#### Example 6-51

ST: 我就让他听明白了，没他四爷的捧场，咱在北平也照唱照红。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 49.03)

LT: I just wanted him to understand that without him being a clique, we can still sing and get famous in Beiping.

TT: But I wanted him to know that even without his patronage we'd still be the talk of the town here in Beijing.

52+35

#### Switching from a material to a mental process

Such switches are of a small number in all the three films. When it occurs, the physical action in the original utterance is replaced by an expression about an enactor's feelings or desires. Such inner world information could be the reason or the result of the physical action (see Examples 6-52 and 6-53).

#### Example 6-52

ST: 吃得真香! (*The Road Home*: 37.15)

LT: You're eating really deliciously!

TT: You're enjoying it!

04G

#### Example 6-53

ST: 我王一日不得安睡。 (*Hero*: 03.12)

LT: My king has not got good sleep even for a day.

TT: He has not known a single peaceful night's sleep.

24

#### Switching from a relational to a material process

Such switches are often found in transemes with shifts under 'Semantic Modulation/specific element/specification' (coded as 04S) and 'Syntactic-Stylistic Modification/explicitation' (coded as 51). With such a switch, the transeme explicitly presents information about an action that an enactor has done or expected to do instead of taking about a type of relation that is in a way linked to this action. As a result,

transemes with such a switch often offer more specific and explicit information than the original (see Examples 6-54 and 6-55).

#### Example 6-54

ST: 段小楼不老实! (*Farewell My Concubine*: 02.35.34)

LT: Duan Xiaolou is not honest!

TT: Duan Xiaolou isn't telling the truth!

51

#### Example 6-55

ST: 就母亲陪着姥姥。 (*The Road Home*: 16.40)

LT: Only Mother was with maternal Grandmother.

TT: Mother was the only one to take care of Grandmother.

04S

#### Switching from a relational to a mental process

Such switches are often found in transemes with shifts under 'Syntactic-Stylistic Modification/explicitation' (coded as 51). With such a switch, the transeme goes beyond the surface relations between entities and is more explicitly about the inner world feelings or desires linked to the relations (see Examples 6-56 and 6-57).

#### Example 6-56

ST: 他们三年无话? (*Hero*: 06.56)

LT: They did not have words for three years.

TT: They had not spoken to each other for three years.

51

#### Example 6-57

ST: 这不是小楼吗? (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.49.03)

LT: Isn't this Xiaolou?

TT: Don't you recognize Xiaolou?

73

#### Switching from a mental to a material process

Such switches are of a very small number. When such a switch occurs, the desire of an enactor is expressed as a statement about a physical action (Examples 6-58 and 6-59).

Example 6-58

ST: 十年前知道身世。 (*Hero*: 01.05.12)

LT: I got to know my identity ten years ago.

TT: Ten years ago I discovered my real identity.

04S

Example 6-59

ST: 他是人的，就得听戏。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 12.00)

LT: If you are a human, you listen to the opera.

TT: If you belong to the human race, you go to the opera.

24

Switch from a mental to a relational process

With such a switch, the transeme in question states a type of relation that is linked in a way to the inner world of an enactor (Examples 6-60 and 6-61).

Example 6-60

ST: 又去找那把剑去了不是？早不知卖哪儿去了。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 45.24)

LT: Didn't you go to look for the sword again? It was sold to somewhere a long time ago.

TT: I know you've been looking for the sword, but it's long gone.

52

Example 6-61

ST: 咋能都不要呢？ (*The Road Home*: 01.11.10)

LT: How come not wanting it?

TT: Why is it?

52

From the discussions above, one can see that what all the switches between different types of processes have in common is the more explicitly stated intention of the original transeme in the TT. In all the examples given above, the original transeme is stated not purely about a type of relation, action or inner world feeling; instead, they are implicatures that convey the enactors' deep layer of intentions. The enactors expect that their intentions would be recognised by their co-enactors.

When rendering such linguistic input between the enactors for the target viewers, translators make connections between 'what is said' and 'what is meant' and embed in

the subtitles what s/he believes to be the relevant interpretation consciously or unconsciously. The connection between ‘what is said’ and ‘what is meant’ is what the translator believes to be the communicative clues of the original transeme, and they are presented to the target viewers in a more direct way. The target viewers, on the other hand, would need less processing effort when reading such subtitles and achieve a great degree of relevance about the particular subtitle and the moment of the whole filmic text.

#### ***6.4.2 Deletion, addition and radical change of processes***

The category of Mutation contains shifts due to deletion, addition or radical change of meaning. In all the three cases, there is no conjunction found between a ST transeme and its counterpart in the TT. Therefore, shifts under this category reflect the most liberal changes the translator makes to the source text. The majority of the shifts in this category would affect information as function-advancing propositions. Only a small number of them would affect information as world-building elements.

A close examination of shifts in this category shows that there are two major factors that may be linked to such liberal practice: the readability of the TT and the translator’s judgement on syuzhet information. There are also shifts that have occurred as a response to other shifts or due to unclear reasons. Tables 6-21, 6-22 and 6-23 below present the statistics of shifts under Mutation in the three films and the possible motivations for such practice.

Possible motivations for deletion	<i>Hero</i>	<i>The Road Home</i>	<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>
To remove certain spoken language features	3	45	50
To remove certain syuzhet information	31	198	227
To respond to other shifts	4	28	23
Other	4	5	7
total	42	276	307

*Table 6-7 Possible reasons for deleting some state of affairs transemes*

Possible motivations for addition	<i>Hero</i>	<i>The Road Home</i>	<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>
To clarify syuzhet information	7	6	23
To improve sentence coherence	12	18	65
To respond to other shifts	0	1	1
Other	2	2	1
total	21	27	90

*Table 6-8 Possible reasons for adding some state of affairs transemes*

Possible motivations for radical change of meaning	<i>Hero</i>	<i>The Road Home</i>	<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>
To clarify syuzhet information	13	25	19
To improve sentence coherence	10	26	46
To respond to other shift	2	4	10
Other	4	5	14
total	29	60	89

*Table 6-9 Possible reasons for radically changing meaning of state of affairs transemes*

With regard to deletions, most of them are made as the result of the translator's judgement on the importance of syuzhet information than the urge of removing spoken language features undesirable in writing. This tendency is consistent in all the three films. With regard to additions, more of them are made in an effort to create a TT of good readability rather than to enhance syuzhet information. This tendency is consistent in all the three films. With regard to radical changes of meaning, the tendency is different in the three films: in *Hero* and *The Road Home*, the number of shifts for

clarifying syuzhet information is similar to the number of shifts for improving sentence coherence; in *Farewell My Concubine*, considerably more shifts occur aiming for good readability. These are interesting and meaningful findings. In the writings about subtitling, deletions are normally linked to spoken language features (e.g. Kovačič, 1995) and additions are normally associated with assistance in understanding certain syuzhet (e.g. Perego, 2009). There is little research into cases of radical changes of meaning. More discussions about the three types of shifts are as follows.

### Deletions

The types of syuzhet information that have been deleted by the translator include: 1) common sense (see Example 6-62); 2) relatively less important transeme in a longer sentence (see Example 6-63); 3) repeated information conveyed in more than one transemes (see Example 6-64); and 4) information also concurrently conveyed in other meaning making channels of the film (see Example 6-65).

#### Example 6-62

ST: 武功琴韵虽不相同，但原理相通。 (*Hero*: 12.29)

LT: Martial arts and music is different, their principles are similar.

71

TT: Martial arts and music share the same principles.

#### Example 6-63

ST: 听母亲说，以前有许多事儿女人都不能上前。 (*The Road Home*: 19.34)

LT: Mother said that in the past women could not go ahead and do many things.

71

TT: In the old days, women were not allowed to participate in many things.

#### Example 6-64

ST: 你放开他，放开他！ (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.44.24)

LT: You leave him alone! Leave him alone!

71

TT: Leave him alone!

Example 6-65

ST: A: 后晌你一定来吃饺子。

B: 哎。 (*The Road Home*: 40.04)

LT: A: You make sure to come to eat dumplings in the afternoon.

B: OK.

71

TT: A: Don't forget to come back for dumplings this afternoon.

B: (No subtitle)

What is deleted here is a colloquial word used as an affirmation answer. In the image person B smiles at person A and slightly nods.

Generally, filmic dialogue means to imitate real-life conversations to a certain extent. Therefore, filmic dialogue reflects some of the features of spoken language. The features that have been deleted from the subtitles include: 1) discourse markers (see Example 6-66); 2) repetitions due to hesitation and stutter (see Example 6-67); 3) exclamations (see Example 6-68).

Example 6-66

ST: 告诉你, 我真急了!

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 55.17)

LT: To tell you, I'm really angry now!

71

TT: I'm really angry now!

Example 6-67

ST: 我, 我本是男儿郎。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 17.12)

LT: I ... I am by nature a boy.

71

TT: I am by nature a boy.

Example 6-68

ST: 哦, 对, 我该走了。 (*The Road Home*: 39.17)

LT: Oh, yes, I should go now.

71

TT: Yes, I should go.

### Additions

Various efforts have been made aiming for good readability: 1) to improve the transition between sentences (see Example 6-69); 2) to clarify the logic within a sentence (see Example 6-70); and 3) to imitate spoken language features (see Example 6-71).

#### Example 6-69

ST: 那好，那我连这钱先拿上。咱们村儿呢，你娘儿俩是第一份儿。

(*The Road Home*: 01.17.57)

LT: All right, in that case I'll take the money. In our village, the two of you are the first.

TT: All right, I'll take it then. You are the first, but surely not the last to help.

72

#### Example 6-70

ST: 这么说，有个潘金莲了？ (*Farewell My Concubine*: 59.47)

LT: According to this, is there a Pan Jinlian?

TT: Does this mean there's a Pan Jinlian in your life?

72

#### Example 6-71

ST: 你看他去了，把咱们娘儿俩撂下，孤孤单单的。你在外边好好工作啊。

(*The Road Home*: 01.23.00)

LT: You see he is gone and left us here. So lonely. You must do your work well.

TT: With your father gone, it's hard not to feel lonely. You know, you must work hard and make a good life for yourself.

72

Additions have also been made to help the target viewers' understanding of syuzhet information, which include 1) to clarify information closely linked to the establishment of fabula (see Example 6-72) and 2) to make the character's emotion and/or personality more prominent (see Example 6-73).

#### Example 6-72

ST: 如月快要到了。 (*Hero*: 51.37)

LT: Moon will arrive soon.

TT: Moon will soon be here to take care of you.

72

#### Example 6-73

ST: 姓袁的他管得着姓段的吗？ (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.09.35)

LT: Does the person called Yuan in charge of me whose name is Duan?

TT: Who does he think he is? No one tells me what to do.

72



### Radical change of meaning

Meaning has been radically changed 1) to clarify information closely linked to the establishment of fabula (see Example 6-74); 2) to enhance the characters (see Example 6-75); 3) to clarify the logic within a sentence (see Example 6-76); 4) to make the transition between sentences smoother (see Example 6-77); and 5) to use more natural-sounding expressions (see Example 6-78)

#### Example 6-74

ST: 自幼流落在秦，被秦人收养。 (*Hero*: 01.05.09)

LT: I wandered about in Qin since I was very young, and was taken in by a Qin person.

TT: Orphaned, I was taken in by a family here in Qin.

73

#### Example 6-75

ST: 把戏唱完拿回包银，太太平平就是了。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 02.00.43)

LT: We finish singing and take back payment. It is just peaceful.

TT: We sing and get paid for it. What more could you want?

73

#### Example 6-76

ST: 他不回来招娣咋办? (*The Road Home*: 01.05.52)

LT: If he does not come back, what can Di do?

TT: I don't know how to help her if he doesn't come back.

73

#### Example 6-77

ST: 好你个蝶衣，这面子总算是给师哥了。要不然... ..

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.15.32)

LT: Good, Dieyi, you finally gave me your stage brother a face. Otherwise ...

TT: Well, if it isn't Dieyi! It's a good thing you showed up. Otherwise ...

73

#### Example 6-78

ST: 您慢走。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 53.14)

LT: Please walk slowly. (This is a polite way to say goodbye to the person who is leaving.)

TT: Thank you for coming.

73

### **6.4.3 Conclusions 3**

When the translator is dealing with information that can be potentially used by the target viewers as function-advancing propositions, his/her linguistic behaviour show the following tendencies:

- The translator tends to follow the original types of processes in most cases and guide the advancing of the target viewers' text-worlds along the same route as the original dialogue.
- The translator also frequently translates the speeches into different types of processes and consequently has an influence on how the target viewers' text-worlds are advancing. When the translator renders a transeme into a different type of process, s/he generally uses a more direct way to provide information in the subtitles. This shows that the translator frequently consults the fabula already established in his/her mind about relations between utterances and brings his/her understanding of the relations in the subtitles. As a result, communicative clues of the original dialogue are made more explicit in the subtitles.
- The translator frequently employs radical strategies including deletion, addition and radical change of meaning. When these strategies are employed, the translator has two primary concerns: the importance of syuzhet information and the readability of the subtitles. The translator appears to judge the importance of syuzhet information against his/her own established fabula. The enhanced coherence in the subtitles compared to the original dialogue seems to suggest that the translator assumes that good readability can facilitate the target viewers in extracting communicative clues to construct the fabula.

### **6.5 Summary**

In this chapter, analysis and discussions have been made to reveal the translator's communicative assumptions. According to findings achieved in this chapter, the translator's communicative assumptions can be further defined as any belief that the translator holds, consciously or unconsciously, in regulating his/her linguistic choice when providing the target viewers with information through subtitles that can potentially be used as world-building elements and function-advancing propositions to influence the target viewers' construction of text-worlds in the cinematic discourse.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

### 7.1 Conclusion and Implications

Subtitling, like any other type of translation method, is a “purposeful act of communication” (Nord, 1997). It is a type of ostensive-inferential communication initiated by the translator for the target audience of the subtitled film in order to help the audience overcome language barriers when they watch a foreign film.

This study was set out to go beyond medium-bound features and translation strategies, which are the two central issues in the academic exchanges of subtitling, to understand more about the translator in the context of this type of translation practice. Following three threads of thoughts, this study sought to first establish the concept of the translator’s communicative assumptions, and then to design an interdisciplinary model to reveal the translator’s communicative assumptions in subtitling, and finally to employ this model to study translators involved in subtitling Chinese feature films into English.

The concept of the translator’s communicative assumption in subtitling has been established in this study through theoretical exploration. This concept is first inspired by Hermans’s (1996) notion of “the translator’s voice”. It is argued in this study that the translator’s communicative assumptions form a critical part of the translator’s voice muted but evident in the TT. In the context of subtitling, the translator’s communicative assumptions can be generally defined as any belief the translator holds, consciously or unconsciously, in regulating his/her linguistic choices in subtitles as an essential part of the target viewers’ cinematic experience.

Since translators are not always consciously aware of the assumptions that s/he holds in the translation process, this study has made the following arguments about what kind of model can be effective in understanding the translator’s communicative assumptions in subtitling and what theoretical and methodological foundations are necessary for different phases of this model:

First of all, a bottom-up model is necessary for understanding translators' assumptions. The starting point is to identify and categorise translation shifts in the subtitles in comparison to the original film dialogues. Descriptive Translation Studies provides the methodological ground for identifying translation shifts. Since translation shifts occur as the result of translators' linguistic behaviour to fulfil purposeful communicative activities, they are a manifestation of translators' communicative assumptions. Translation shifts can be grouped under categories, and certain patterns and tendencies will emerge because translators' linguistic behaviour is governed by translation norms. The patterns and tendencies of the shifts are a window to look into the translation process and understand translators' communicative assumptions. In other words, the model begins with a comparative phase, followed by an analysis phase.

The current study has demonstrated that van Leuven-Zwart's method (1989) of identifying and categorising micro-structural translation shifts can be revised and expanded to be applied in the comparative phase of the current study. Syntactic differences of the Chinese language and features of spoken language in filmic narratives have been accommodated in the adapted method.

Based on the identified and categorised translation shifts, the bottom-up model enters its second phase: the analysis phase. At this phase, findings about the translation shifts at the comparative phase serve as the basis for further analysis and discussions with the aim to reveal translators' communicative assumptions. An integrated framework informed by filmic perception and cognition (e.g. Bordwell 1997), Text World Theory (e.g. Gavins, 2007; Werth 1999) and Relevance Theory (e.g. Gutt, 1991; Sperber & Wilson, 1986) provide a sound theoretical base for the analysis and discussions. Knowledge developed in research about the medium-bound features and translation strategies can facilitate this process. The current study has developed the following arguments about how to apply Bordwell's approach to filmic perception and cognition, Text World Theory and Relevance Theory:

According to Bordwell, film can be seen as a phenomenal process consisting of fabula (story), syuzhet (plot element) and style, and the comprehension of film narratives is realised through the viewer's active perception and cognition. Fabula is a mental construct by the viewer, which is based on the viewer's perception and cognition of

syuzhet and style. In a subtitled film, subtitles form an essential part of the syuzhet and would directly contribute to the target viewers' construction of the fabula. Since subtitles are shaped by translators' communicative assumptions, the assumptions would have a direct impact on the target viewers' cinematic experience.

The concept of the translator's communicative assumptions falls in the domain of human cognition. Text World Theory and Relevance Theory, as two theories about human cognition and communication, can lend explanatory power to the revelation of the assumptions. Text World Theory holds that all human discourse processing is realised by the establishment and advancement of text-worlds (mental representations). In the cinematic discourse, the contents and progress of the text-worlds are closely linked with the fabula that the target viewers establish. Text-worlds are based on world-building elements and propelled forward by function-advancing propositions. Therefore, the impact that translators' communicative assumptions have on the target viewers can be revealed by looking at how the translator's linguistic behaviour affects the information that the target viewers potentially use as world-building elements and function-advancing propositions. The existence of the translation shifts means that translators alter the information contained in the original filmic dialogue before sending it to the target viewers. The motivations behind the alterations can be explained by Relevance Theory.

Relevance Theory is an efficiency-based cognitive approach to communication, which concerns ostensive-inferential communicative acts. Although any type of translation, including subtitling can be seen as communication, it is the communication between the translator and the target viewers that is of an ostensive-inferential nature. The translator is the communicator and the target viewers are the addressees. According to Relevance Theory, the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition. Relevance is defined in terms of contextual effect and processing effort. Optimal relevance is achieved when the addressee gains the greatest positive cognitive effect at the smallest processing effort. The closer the context actually used by the addressee is to the originally intended context, the higher degree of relevance may be able to gain. Context is the addressee's mental construct. Its content is determined by the addressee's cognitive environment. As the communicator, translators' linguistic behaviour is closely linked with their assumptions about the effort the target viewers may need to process

the integrated stimuli of the subtitled film and the possible contextual effects that can be achieved.

The current study argues that, by adapting and combining Text World Theory and Relevance Theory, the inner process of translators' strategy in subtitling, which is shaped by their communicative assumptions, can be revealed during the analysis phase.

This comparative-analysis model is then applied to study three Chinese feature films subtitled into English with the aim to test the model and reveal the communicative assumptions of translators involved in the language pair of Chinese and English. The three films as case studies were decided through a selection stage and a subtitle quality check stage. In the first stage, five factors – production year, film genre, grouping of the filmmaker, language variety and the popularity of the film in both domestic and international markets – were taken into consideration as selecting criteria. In the second stage, English native speakers were invited to watch the selected films and give general comments on the quality of the subtitles in the films. The two stages were imposed to ensure the validity of the current study and to keep the cases to study within a manageable number. When applying the model, the entire subtitles of the three films were included, rather than excerpted sections. This is to control unnecessary variables and have a large enough sample size for meaningful analysis and comparison.

The first achievement at the comparative phase is to demonstrate that it is possible to identify and categorise micro-structural translation shifts for the research objectives of the current study using a modified version of van Leuven-Zwart's (1989) method. The modified version overcomes the shortcomings in the original method, and the scope of the comparative unit of this method, i.e. 'transeme', has been expanded to be applicable to spoken Chinese language. Upon the completion of the comparative phase, a map of shifts for the three films became available. The most interesting finding may be that there are up to 20.3% of TT transems with no shifts. This finding shows that, contrary to the common belief that subtitling is a translation method based on information reduction, in practice translators find it possible and desirable to present the communicative clues of some original dialogue in the original linguistic structures. This finding may serve as a reminder for researchers to look at other facets of this type of

translation and give rise to further research into the conditions and motivations behind the translation of transemes with no shifts. The number of TT transemes with no shifts indicates that there are moments when translators' act is in a stimulus-oriented mode. In this case, translators choose to duplicate the linguistic structures of the original message when conveying the communicative clues. On the other hand, the large number of TT transemes with shifts show that translators' act is in an interpretation-oriented mode most of the time. In such cases, translators feel the need to present the communicative clues in a different linguistic structure from the original dialogue.

Based on this finding, the first conclusions about translators' communicative assumptions are: Subtitling as a method of translation is a higher-order act of communication, and translators' communicative act constantly switches between the stimulus-oriented mode and interpretation-oriented mode.

The current study, however, is particularly interested in the transemes where shifts do occur. The map of shifts is very informative and forms a good foundation for further analysis and discussions. It shows that shifts exist in large quantities and are of various linguistic natures. Among the word/phrase level shifts, either semantic or stylistic shifts are the dominant group and this is closely linked with the genre of the film. Among word/phrase level semantic shifts, those concerning the semantic focus of a word/phrase are in the largest number and show a strong tendency towards generalisation. Stylistic shifts show a strong tendency of generalisation. Among the transeme level shifts, those concerning explicitation, implicitation, deletion, addition and radical change of meaning deserve special attention in further analysis and discussion because these shifts are the result of the translators' application of more radical translation strategies and the influence of their communicative assumptions are vividly at work.

The patterns and tendencies of shifts identified at the comparative phase were more closely scrutinised at the analysis phase. The discussions at this phase were conducted to look at translators' assumptions in manipulating information for world-building elements and function-advancing propositions separately. How translators present the communicative clues of the original dialogue is the focus of the discussions. Before the discussions were carried out, all the shifts identified at the comparative phase were placed in two groups: the group that affects world-building elements and the group that

affects function-advancing propositions. It has been found that the shifts in each group show the same general tendencies as when they were considered together at the comparative phrase.

Most of the shifts affecting world-building elements are found on the word/phrase level and some of them are found on the transeme level. This study found that there are three main motivations behind translators' manipulation of information for world-building elements: 1) to react to extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs), 2) to manipulate syuzhet information, and 3) to aim for good readability of the TT.

When dealing with ECRs, translators generally neutralise the references and concentrates on the possible contributions they may have as syuzhet information to the construction of the fabula. Stylistic features of the world-building elements are also generally diminished. Translators seem to constantly judge the importance of the information contained in the subtitles against the fabula established in her/him own mind. As a result, translators have a hierarchy of the information and employs different strategies when rendering them: the information considered to be remote to the fabula is suppressed and the information considered to be important to the construction of the fabula is made more explicit. Translators sometimes even present in the subtitles information ahead of the original dialogue or information they gather from other meaning-making channels of the film or even information from their own text-worlds.

Translators also seem to be very much concerned about the readability of the subtitles. Shifts caused by this motivation can be loosely grouped as obligatory shifts, semi-obligatory shifts and voluntary shifts. The first group is dictated by syntactic requirements of linguistic systems and the second group is preferred and influenced by requirements of linguistic systems. The third group, however, are the translators' free choices. Analysis of the third group indicates that translators pay great attention to the coherence and logic development in utterances.

Based on the above observations and analysis, the second conclusions of the translator's communicative assumptions are: Translators seem to assume that the information to be potentially used as world-building elements should be rendered differently in order to highlight the information that can make more contribution to the construction of the



target viewers' fabula. To highlight such information is the efficient way to convey the communicative clues of the original dialogue. Translators also seem to assume that more coherent and logically smoother subtitles can help the target readers to extract communicative clues.

Most of the shifts affecting function-advancing propositions take place on the transeme level and many of them take place on the transeme level as well. This study found that translators render most state of affairs transemes into the same types of processes as the original. This means that translators assume it is desirable to follow the original route to unfold events and actions for the target viewers linguistically. When translators do choose to use a different type of process to render state of affairs transemes, the renditions often spell out the intention of the original. As result, syuzhet information, especial that closely linked to translators' established fabula, is made more explicit and the characters' inner worlds and personal features are enhanced. In the extreme condition of constraints in subtitling, this may be the way translators assume to be most efficient to save the target viewers' effort on processing and enhance the contextual effects they can achieve.

This study also pays special attention to shifts generated due to deletion, addition and radical change of meaning because these shifts indicate the moments when translators' communicative assumptions are vividly at work. A close scrutiny of these shifts shows: What translators delete includes not only spoken language features but also minor syuzhet information that does not directly contribute to the construction of the fabula; in fact, transemes deleted due to its 'unimportance' outnumber the ones deleted as spoken language features. Translators add not only information that can facilitate the target viewers' understanding of other syuzhet information and construction of the fabula but also expressions that can make the subtitles read more smooth and coherent than the transcription of the actual dialogue; in fact, transemes added for good readability outnumber those added for facilitating comprehension. The radical changes made in the subtitles were to facilitate the target viewers' comprehension and to create readable subtitles; the number of transemes for either of the two purposes is roughly equal.

Based on the above observations and analysis, the third conclusions of translators' communicative assumptions are: The translator assumes that the events and actions

conveyed in the filmic dialogue should be presented to the target viewers in the subtitles in a way that saves the target viewers' processing effort and enhance the possible contextual effects so as to facilitate the target viewers' construction of the fabula. This often means that translators would re-arrange information at different ontological levels and presents it to the target viewers in a different type of process from the original. Translators also seem to assume that more coherent and logically smoother subtitles can help the target readers to extract communicative clues.

## **7.2 Limitations of this Study and Further Research**

The current study has its limitations and it has been suggested that there is much room for further research in this area. First, the model developed in this study to understand translator's communicative assumptions has been applied to only three films. Although the entire subtitles of the three films have been examined in this study, this model needs to be applied to a much larger number of films of more genres to test its efficacy. To establish a corpus of film subtitles and to apply theories and methodologies of corpus linguistics may be a direction to generate more research achievements.

Second, the conclusions about translators' communicative assumptions are based on the application of the model to study English subtitles of Chinese films. This model need to be applied to study subtitles involving different language pairs and compare the findings with the conclusions made in this study.

Thirdly, van Leuven-Zwart's (1989) method of identifying and categorising translation shifts has been adapted for the research aims of this study. Although the application proves to be feasible in this study, further modification may be necessary if it is to be applied to study other language pairs in order to accommodate differences in language system if necessary.

Lastly, this study has presented a picture of translators' communicative assumptions in subtitling Chinese feature films into English. Findings and conclusions of this study can be used as a point of departure to study audience reception of Chinese films with English subtitles. Such studies can be of a pedagogical value and inform trainee translators engaged in subtitling about the audience's preference so as to help nurture

good professional practice to enhance target viewers' cinematic experience. Findings and conclusions of this study can also be valuable for the subtitling industry. Translators can be more aware of the role and impact of their work and can therefore be more engaged in the exploration of quality subtitles.

### **7.3 Concluding Remarks**

This study has proposed a concept of the translator's communicative assumptions as a step forward to go beyond the two central issues of medium-bound features and translation strategies in subtitling to understand more about the translator. The translator's communicative assumptions are defined as any belief that the translator holds, consciously or unconsciously, in regulating his/her linguistic choice when providing the target viewers with information through subtitles. The subtitles provide information which would be potentially used as world-building elements and function-advancing propositions by the target viewers, and the shifts introduced by the translator influence the target viewers' construction of text-worlds in the cinematic discourse. A bottom-up model consisting a comparative phase and an analysis phase has been established upon an interdisciplinary foundation to investigate translators' communicative assumptions. This model has been applied to study translators who subtitle Chinese feature films into English. The revealed assumptions are: The translator sees the target viewers as culture outsiders in general. S/he assumes that culture-specific and stylistic features of information are secondary to its contribution to the construction of the fabula. S/he also assumes that more coherent and logically structured subtitles than the original dialogue can help the target viewers in comprehending the communicative clues presented in the subtitles and achieve the construction of the fabula. These translator's communicative assumptions will provide a point of departure for future studies in audience reception in subtitled films. Furthermore, the theoretical framework and comparative-analysis model can be further developed for studying subtitling between other language pairs.

## Appendix 1 Shifts affecting world-building elements

### Shifts affecting world-building elements: to deal with ECRs

Category / subcategory	Code	<i>T</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Hero</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>The Road Home</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Farewell My Concubine</i>
Semantic Modulation / intensive element / specification	01S											1				1
Semantic Modulation / descriptive element / generalisation	02G	1	1		1	3		2	2		4	1	1		4	6
Semantic Modulation / descriptive element / specification	02S		2		2	4			2		2			4	1	5
Semantic Modulation / specific element / generalisation	04G	1	8	21	3	33	6	4	3	6	19	5	2	20	15	42
Semantic Modulation / specific element / specification	04S		3	8	1	12			4		4		2	8	6	16
Stylistic Modulation / register element / generalisation	11G				1	1									1	1
Stylistic Modulation / temporal element / generalisation	12G	1		1	4	6						2	5	2	3	12
Semantic Modulation / culture-bound element / generalisation	13G	3	5	12	7	27	4	9	16	1	30	5		22	7	34
Stylistic Modulation / descriptive element / generalisation	15G												2	1	2	5
Semantic Modification / descriptive element	22				1	1			1		1			1	1	2
Semantic Modification / specific element	24		2	4	4	10			1	15	16			4	1	5
Stylistic Modification / culture-bound element	33		1	2	3	6										
Syntactic-Semantic Modification / function word	42							1			1					
Syntactic-Stylistic Modification / explicitation	51			4		4			2		2		1	5	2	8
Syntactic-Stylistic Modification / impliciation	52								4		4			2		2
Mutation / deletion	71		1	1		2			2	2	4			2	1	3
Mutation / addition	72							1			1		1	2		3
Mutation / radical change of meaning	73			1		1								2	3	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>150</b>

### Shifts affecting world-building elements: to manipulate Syuzhet information

Category / subcategory	Code	T	L	O	E	Hero	T	L	O	E	The Road Home	T	L	O	E	Farewell My Concubine
Semantic Modulation / intensive element / generalisation	01G				1	1				1	1				1	1
Semantic Modulation / intensive element / specification	01S			4	5	9	1		4	1	6				5	5
Semantic Modulation / descriptive element / generalisation	02G			1	2	3	8	1	4	1	14		1	2	2	5
Semantic Modulation / descriptive element / specification	02S		3	7	3	13	3		5	3	11	3		7	14	24
Semantic Modulation / specific element / generalisation	04G		6	7	4	17	4	9	8	7	28	1	4	6	9	20
Semantic Modulation / specific element / specification	04S		2	7	14	23	6	4	11	6	27	4	2	7	27	40
Stylistic Modulation / register element / generalisation	11G			1	2	3			4		4	2			1	3
Stylistic Modulation / register element / specification	11S				2	2									2	2
Stylistic Modulation / temporal element / generalisation	12G												1		1	2
Semantic Modulation / culture-bound element / generalisation	13G												2		1	3
Stylistic Modulation / descriptive element / generalisation	15G									1	1			4	1	5
Semantic Modification / descriptive element	22			1	5	6		2	2		4	2		5	2	9
Semantic Modification / specific element	24			4	6	10	1	2	1	3	7		1	3	5	9
Stylistic Modification / register element	31				2	2										
Syntactic-Semantic Modification / function word	42						1	1			2					
Syntactic-Stylistic Modification / explicitation	51		3	7	11	21	1	1	3		5			2	1	3
Syntactic-Stylistic Modification / impliciation	52			6	5	11		11	3	1	15			2	1	3
Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification / thematic meaning	62	1				1	2				2					
Mutation / deletion	71	5	1	1	5	12	5	14	1	3	23	8	2	4	9	23
Mutation / addition	72	1	3		1	5	3	2		5	10	4	5	3	13	25
Mutation / radical change of meaning	73						1	1			2	1		4		5
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>187</b>

### Shifts affecting world-building elements: to aim for good readability

Category / subcategory	Code	T	L	O	E	Hero	T	L	O	E	The Road Home	T	L	O	E	Farewell My Concubine
Semantic Modulation / intensive element / specification	01S								1		1					
Semantic Modulation / descriptive element / generalisation	02G		3	1	7	11		4	3	6	13	2	4	2	9	17
Semantic Modulation / descriptive element / specification	02S		1	11	1	13		3	3	33	39	1	1	13	24	39
Semantic Modulation / specific element / generalisation	04G	1	6	8	25	40	1	3	26	43	73	4	3	19	92	118
Semantic Modulation / specific element / specification	04S	1		3	2	6		3	7	2	12			2	21	23
Stylistic Modulation / register element / generalisation	11G		3	1	69	73	3		12	25	40	11		3	123	137
Stylistic Modulation / temporal element / generalisation	12G		1	20	107	128								2	61	63
Semantic Modulation / culture-bound element / generalisation	13G				65	65				8	8		4		92	96
Semantic Modulation / specific element / generalisation	14G									1	1					
Stylistic Modulation / descriptive element / generalisation	15G			3	4	7		1	1	2	4		1	5	4	10
Stylistic Modulation / descriptive element / specification	15S			5	1	6									1	1
Semantic Modification / descriptive element	22			1	3	4			2		2			2	2	4
Semantic Modification / specific element	24		1			1		2		3	5		1	6	15	22
Stylistic Modification / register element	31									1			1		4	5
Stylistic Modification / paradigmatic element	35											1	1	2	2	6
Syntactic-Semantic Modification / grammatical class / function	41			3		3		1			1					
Syntactic-Semantic Modification / function word	42	5	4	7	2	18	7	8	1		16	6		1	1	8
Syntactic-Semantic Modification / pro-drop	43			7	51	58			30	114	144			34	195	229
Syntactic-Stylistic Modification / explicitation	51		2	2		4	1		5	2	8	2		8	3	13
Syntactic-Stylistic Modification / impliciation	52			5	5	10	2	4	2	1	9	3	1	3	1	8
Syntactic-Pragmatic Modification / thematic meaning	62											1	1			2
Mutation / deletion	71		1	3	2	6	12	6	6	37	61	13	1	2	40	56
Mutation / addition	72			1	2	3	3	1		1	5	4	3	2	3	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>869</b>

## Appendix 2 Examples discussed in this study

### Chapter 4

#### Mapping Translation Shifts in the English Subtitles of Chinese Films: the Comparative Phase

##### Example 4-1

ST: /教室门开着<sup>1</sup>/, /被村长看见了<sup>2</sup>/。 (*The Road Home*: 59.52)

LT: /The classroom door was<sup>1</sup> open/. /She was seen<sup>2</sup> by the village mayor/.

TT: /The door was<sup>1</sup> open/, /and the mayor saw<sup>2</sup> her there/.

##### Example 4-2

ST: /我怕!/ (*Farewell my Concubine*: 02.28.34)

LT: /I am afraid/.

TT: /I'm so afraid/!

##### Example 4-3

ST: /此地归我辖管/。 (*Hero*: 10.16)

LT: /This place is for me to have jurisdiction over/.

TT: /This region is under my control/.

##### Example 4-4

ST: /答应<sup>1</sup>我/, /你得(给<sup>3</sup>我)立<sup>2</sup>字据/。 (*Farewell my Concubine*: 01.47.56)

LT: /Promise<sup>1</sup> me/. /You must (for<sup>3</sup> me) put<sup>2</sup> in writing/.

TT: /Promise<sup>1</sup> me this/. /Put<sup>2</sup> it in writing/.

##### Example 4-5

ST: /好快的剑!/ (*Hero*: 15.35)

LT: /How fast a sword/!

TT: /How swift your sword must be/!

##### Example 4-6

ST: /我(现在<sup>1</sup>)最担心<sup>2</sup>母亲/。 (*The Road Home*: 01.22)

LT: /I am (now<sup>1</sup>) most worried<sup>2</sup> about Mother/.

TT: /I am very worried about<sup>2</sup> my mother/.

##### Example 4-7

ST: /好剑法!/ (*Hero*: 28.58)

LT: /Good swordplay/.

TT: /Beautiful swordplay/!

Example 4-8

ST: /小楼<sup>1</sup>/, /虞姬都上<sup>2</sup>了/, /你该盯场<sup>3</sup>了/。 (*Farewell my Concubine*: 02.19.12)  
LT: /Xiaolou<sup>1</sup>/, /Concubine Yu is<sup>2</sup> on already/. /You should get on<sup>3</sup> the stage/.  
TT: /Xiaolou<sup>1</sup>/, /the concubine is<sup>2</sup> on stage/. /You'd better hurry<sup>3</sup>/.

Example 4-9

ST: /弟子来<sup>1</sup>//借<sup>2</sup>朱砂/。 (*Hero*: 19.22)  
LT: /Your student comes<sup>1</sup>/ /to borrow<sup>2</sup> cinnabar/.  
TT: /Your student respectfully requests<sup>2</sup> some red ink/.

Example 4-10

ST: (子夜<sup>1</sup>), (藏书阁<sup>2</sup>)。 (*Hero*: 28.46)  
LT: (Midnight<sup>1</sup>), (library<sup>2</sup>).  
TT: /Please meet me/ (at<sup>1</sup> the library) (at<sup>2</sup> midnight).

Example 4-11

ST: /寡人猜测<sup>1</sup>//你与长空早就相识<sup>2</sup>/。 (*Hero*: 45.28)  
LT: /I suspect<sup>1</sup>/ /you have long known<sup>2</sup> Sky/.  
TT: /I suspect<sup>1</sup>/ /you and Sky were<sup>2</sup> allies/.

Example 4-12

ST: /君王意气尽<sup>1</sup>/, /贱妾何聊生<sup>2</sup>/? (*Farewell my Concubine*: 01.13.12)  
LT: /The king has lost<sup>1</sup> his spirit/. /How would his humble concubine live<sup>2</sup>/?  
TT: /Since the good king has lost<sup>1</sup> his fighting spirit/, /why should his humble concubine value<sup>2</sup> her life/?

Example 4-13

ST: /读书识字多长见识/。 (*The Road Home*: 24.12)  
LT: /Reading books and writing characters increase one's knowledge/.  
TT: /Reading and writing open's one's eyes/.

Example 4-14

ST: /有<sup>1</sup>何本事//能破<sup>2</sup>赵国的三大刺客/? (*Hero*: 06.40)  
LT: /What skill do you have<sup>1</sup>/ /to overcome<sup>2</sup> the three major assassins from Zhao/?  
TT: /What enables<sup>1</sup> you// to overcome<sup>2</sup> the three deadly assassins from Zhao/?

Example 4-15

ST: (当时<sup>1</sup>) /我真不敢<sup>2</sup>相信/。 (*The Road Home*: 00:54)  
LT: (At that time<sup>1</sup>), /I dared not believe<sup>2</sup>/.  
TT: /I couldn't<sup>2</sup> believe it/.



Example 4-16

ST: /是<sup>1</sup>人吗/? /畜生<sup>2</sup>! (*Farewell my Concubine*: 12.10)

LT: /Are<sup>1</sup> they human being/? /Domestic animals<sup>2</sup>!

TT: /Are<sup>1</sup> they human being/? /They're<sup>2</sup> beasts/!

Example 4-17

ST: /所以长空是你的第一位捐助者/。 (*Hero*: 46.10)

LT: /Therefore Sky was your first donator/.

TT: /So Sky became your first accomplice/.

Example 4-18

ST: - /几尺<sup>1</sup>? - /八尺<sup>2</sup>/。 (*Hero*: 18.31)

LT: - /How many *chi*<sup>1</sup>? - /Eight *chi*<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: - /What dimension<sup>1</sup> of scroll/? - /Eight feet<sup>2</sup>/.

Example 4-19

ST: /他要想<sup>1</sup>//把大烟戒<sup>2</sup>了/, /还得脱<sup>3</sup>几层皮呢!

(*Farewell my Concubine*: 02.09.32)

LT: /If he wants<sup>1</sup> to/ /give up<sup>2</sup> opium/, /he is going to have<sup>3</sup> several layers of skin torn off/!

TT: /If he really wants<sup>1</sup>/ /to overcome<sup>2</sup> his addiction/, /he's going to have to go<sup>3</sup> through hell/!

Example 4-20

ST: /就是<sup>1</sup>年纪大了/, /再赶上<sup>2</sup>那个风雪/。 (*The Road Home*: 04.21)

LT: /Just the old ago<sup>1</sup>/ /and also the storm<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: /He had gotten<sup>1</sup> older/, /plus<sup>2</sup> the bad storm/.

Example 4-21

ST: /这是什么话/? (*Farewell my Concubine*: 59.49)

LT: /What remark is this/?

TT: /What are you saying/?

Example 4-22

ST: (六月十五<sup>1</sup>), /长空(在一家棋馆内<sup>2</sup>)现身<sup>3</sup>/。 (*Hero*: 09.38)

LT: (The fifth day of the sixth month<sup>1</sup>). /Sky appeared<sup>3</sup>/ (in<sup>2</sup> a chess house).

TT: (On the fifth day of the sixth month<sup>1</sup>), /Sky appeared<sup>3</sup>/ (in<sup>2</sup> a chess house).

Example 4-23

ST: /按<sup>1</sup>老规矩//是<sup>2</sup>定然七步/, /而您只走<sup>3</sup>了五步/。

(*Farewell my Concubine*: 51.42)

LT: /Obeying<sup>1</sup> the custom/, /it is<sup>2</sup> definitely seven steps/, /but you only walked<sup>3</sup> five steps/.

TT: /Custom has<sup>1</sup> it/ /he takes<sup>2</sup> seven steps/. /You take<sup>3</sup> but five/.

Example 4-24:

ST: /变<sup>1</sup>成//没法动<sup>2</sup>了/。 (*The Road Home*: 03.42)

LT: /He became<sup>1</sup>/ /to be not able to move<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: /He was<sup>1</sup> too sick //to be moved<sup>2</sup>/.

Example 4-25

ST: /她是<sup>1</sup>花满楼的头牌妓女/! /潘金莲<sup>2</sup>/! (*Farewell my Concubine*: 02.40.32)

LT: /She is<sup>1</sup> the top whore at the House of Blossoms/! /Pan Jinlian<sup>2</sup>/!

TT: /Top whore at the House of Blossoms<sup>1</sup>/! /Pan Jinlian<sup>2</sup>/!

Example 4-26

ST: /六国算什么/? (*Hero*: 24.56)

LT: /What are the six kingdoms counted as/?

TT: /The six kingdoms are nothing/.

Example 4-27

ST: /她出<sup>1</sup>条子//应<sup>2</sup>饭局去了/。 (*Farewell my Concubine*: 53.56)

LT: /She answered<sup>1</sup> to a message/ /and responded<sup>2</sup> to a dinner invitation/.

TT: /She was asked<sup>2</sup> out to dinner/.

Example 4-28

ST: /过<sup>1</sup>个山啦/, /过<sup>2</sup>个沟了/, /过<sup>3</sup>个路口了/, /要喊<sup>4</sup>着点儿/。

(*The Road Home*: 09.21)

LT: /When climbing<sup>1</sup> the mountains/, /crossing<sup>2</sup> the river/ /and passing<sup>3</sup> the crossroads/,  
/we have to yell<sup>4</sup>/.

TT: /We have to yell<sup>4</sup>/ /when climbing<sup>1</sup> the mountains/, /crossing<sup>2</sup> the river/, /and  
passing<sup>3</sup> the crossroads/.

Example 4-29

ST: (你我之间<sup>1</sup>)/不言<sup>2</sup>钱/, /那个字眼实在不雅<sup>3</sup>/。

(*Farewell my Concubine*: 01.12.28)

LT: /We do not talk<sup>2</sup> about money/ (between<sup>1</sup> us). /That word is<sup>3</sup> truly coarse/.

TT: /Let's not have<sup>2</sup> any vulgar talk of money/ (between<sup>1</sup> us).

Example 4-30

ST: /今日已是<sup>1</sup>我书馆最后一日了/。 (*Hero*: 17.45)

LT: /Today is<sup>1</sup> already our school's last day/.

TT: /I fear<sup>2</sup>/ /this may be<sup>1</sup> the last day of our school/.

Example 4-31

ST: /行<sup>1</sup>/, /大爷<sup>2</sup>/, /你们别为难<sup>3</sup>/, /这事儿我(跟<sup>4</sup>我妈)说说<sup>5</sup>/, /劝劝<sup>6</sup>她/。

(*The Road Home*: 05.49)

LT: /OK<sup>1</sup>/, /uncle<sup>2</sup>/, /Don't put<sup>3</sup> yourself in a difficult situation/./ I will speak<sup>5</sup> (with<sup>4</sup> my  
mum) about this matter/./ Persuade<sup>6</sup> her/.

TT: /Thank<sup>3</sup> you for your concern/./ I will talk<sup>5</sup> it over/ (with<sup>4</sup> her).

**Chapter 6**  
**Reading the Map of Translational Shifts: Revealing the Translator's**  
**Communicative Assumptions at the Analysis Phase**

Example 6-1

ST: (在<sup>2</sup>垓下) /中<sup>1</sup>了汉军的十面埋伏/ ... ... (*Farewell My Concubine*: 29.44)

LT: (At<sup>2</sup> Gaixia) /he fell<sup>1</sup> into Han army's ten-side ambush/.

TT: (At<sup>2</sup> Gaixia) /he was outwitted<sup>1</sup>/ (by<sup>3</sup> the Han king).

Example 6-2

ST: (明天<sup>2</sup>) /我就要走<sup>1</sup>了/。 (*The Road Home*: 01.18.05)

LT: (Tomorrow<sup>2</sup>) /I am leaving<sup>1</sup>/.

TT: /I am leaving<sup>1</sup>/ (tomorrow<sup>2</sup>).

Example 6-3

ST: /你说<sup>1</sup>//这字中有<sup>2</sup>剑法/。 (*Hero*: 29.34)

LT: /You say<sup>1</sup>//this character contains<sup>2</sup> method of swordplay/.

TT: /You say<sup>1</sup>//this calligraphy contains<sup>2</sup> the mystery of swordplay/.

Example 6-4

ST: /对<sup>1</sup>/, /二十二年<sup>2</sup>/。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.02)

LT: /Yes<sup>1</sup>/, /twenty-two years<sup>2</sup>/.

TT: /Yes<sup>1</sup>/, /twenty-two years<sup>2</sup>/.

Example 6-5

ST: /他等着我呢/。 (*The Road Home*: 43.47)

LT: /He is waiting for me/.

TT: /He's waiting<sup>1</sup> for me/.

Example 6-6

ST: /这学校都几十年了<sup>1</sup>/, /你爸爸就(在<sup>3</sup>这学校)教书<sup>2</sup>/。

(*The Road Home*: 01.18.19)

LT: /This school has been<sup>1</sup> tens of years/. /Your father taught<sup>2</sup>/ (in<sup>3</sup> this very school).

TT: /Your father helped build<sup>1</sup> this school/. /He taught<sup>2</sup> (here<sup>3</sup>)/ (for<sup>4</sup> so many years).

73

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Example 6-7

ST: 臣和长空面对面站着，有半个时辰。 (*Hero*: 12.37)

LT: I and Sky were standing face to face for one shichen.

TT: We stood facing each other for a long time.

04G+12G+13G

Example 6-8

ST: 妈，你上炕暖和暖和吧。 (*The Road Home*: 07.27)

LT: Mum, get on the heated bed to get warm.

TT: Get on the bed. It's warm there.

04G+13G

Example 6-9

ST: 八尺剑字需要朱砂。 (*Hero*: 18.38)

LT: A Chinese character of 'sword' of eight chi needs cinnabar.

TT: A scroll of that size requires red ink.

04G+13G 04G+13G 04G+13G

Example 6-10

ST: 楚霸王气度尊贵。要是威而不重，岂不成了江湖上的黄天霸了？

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 51.51)

LT: The King of Chu is honorable and respectable. If he appeared imposing but not dignified, would he be just like Huang Tianba in the society?

TT: If the King of Chu fails to bear himself with majestic dignity, he's little better than a gangster!

04G+13G

Example 6-11

ST: 哟，程老板，准知道你就得回来，这上座都给你留着呐。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.15.13)

LT: Ah, Boss Cheng. I surely knew you would come back. The top seat has been reserved for you.

TT: Ah, Mister Cheng. I knew you'd come. We saved a seat at the head table for you.

04S

Example 6-12

ST: 这块布就叫“红”，通常是由村儿里最漂亮的姑娘来织。 (*The Road Home*: 17.15)

LT: The cloth is called 'Red'. It is usually woven by the most beautiful maiden in the village.

TT: The cloth is called the "Lucky Red Banner." It must be woven by the most

02S+04G

beautiful maiden in the village.

Example 6-13

ST: 在下赵国易县人。 (*Hero*: 17.39)

LT: I am from Yi County in Zhao.

TT: I am from a small province in Zhao.

02S+04G+13G

Example 6-14

ST: 差一年，一个月，一天，一个时辰，都不算一辈子。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.01.10)

LT: One year, one month, one day, or one shichen less does not make it a lifetime.

TT: One year, one month, one day, even one second less makes it less than a lifetime!

01S+12G+13G

Example 6-15

ST: 张公公那是当年陪太后老佛爷听过戏的主儿。( *Farewell My Concubine*: 32.06)

LT: Grandpa Zhang is a person who attended operas with Laofoye.

TT: When he was a palace eunuch, Old Man Zhang attended operas with the Empress

72

12G+13G

Dowager herself.

Example 6-16

ST: 臣探听到，两人化名高山流水藏身于赵国邢城一家书馆。( *Hero*: 17.16)

LT: I found out that the two persons changed their names to be Mountain and Water respectively and was hiding in a school in Xing city, Zhao.

TT: It was rumoured that they were hiding in a small calligraphy school.

02S

Example 6-17

ST: 听说您在八大胡同打出名来了。( *Farewell My Concubine*: 59.34)

LT: I heard that you became famous by fighting at Ba Da Hutong.

TT: I heard you got into a fight at the House of Blossoms.

04S

Example 6-18

ST: 她记着父亲说过的那句话，腊月初八一定回来，因为腊月初九学校就放假了。

(*The Road Home*: 01.00.30)

LT: She remembered the words Father said that he would definitely come back on the eighth day of the last month of the Chinese lunar calendar year because the school holiday would start on the ninth day of the last month.

TT: She remembered his promise that he would return on the 27<sup>th</sup> before the school holiday began on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

04G+13G

04G+13G

Example 6-19

ST: (那天晚上<sup>1</sup>)，/刮着<sup>2</sup>大风/，/刘邦的兵唱<sup>3</sup>了一宿的楚歌/。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 29.50)

LT: (That night<sup>1</sup>) /strong wind was blowing<sup>2</sup>/. /Liu Bang's troops sang<sup>3</sup> *Chu* songs for a whole night/.

TT: /As they prepared<sup>4</sup> for battle/, /Han's troops sang<sup>3</sup> victory songs/ /which carried<sup>2</sup> on the wind/ /and echoed<sup>5</sup>/ (through<sup>6</sup> the valley).

72

Example 6-20

ST: /秦王紧急召见<sup>1</sup>我/。 (*Hero*: 01.55)

LT: /The King of Qin summoned<sup>1</sup> me/.

TT: /The King of Qin has summoned<sup>1</sup> me/ (to court<sup>2</sup>).

72

Example 6-21

ST: 学校毕业，在家没事儿，在县上乱逛，看见敲锣打鼓的，喊人报名儿。

(*The Road Home*: 37.40)

LT: I graduated from school and had nothing to do at home. I was walking aimlessly in the town and saw someone beat drums and gongs asking people to sign up.

TT: After graduation, I had nothing to do. One day I saw someone on the street signing people up.

72

Example 6-22

ST: A: 今年是什么年?

B: 是... .. 是民国二十一年。

A: 不对! 是大清宣统二十四年! (*Farewell My Concubine*: 39.23)

LT: A: What year is this year?

B: It is ... is the 21<sup>st</sup> year of the Republic of China.

A: Incorrect! It is the 24<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Xuantong of the great Qing Dynasty!

TT: A: What year is this?

B: This is ... this is 1932.

12G+13G

A: Wrong! This is still the Qing dynasty!

04G+12G+13G

Example 6-23

ST: 一九三七年“七.七”事变前夕。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 43.45)

LT: 1937 on the eve of July 7 Incident

TT: 1937 On the eve of war with Japan

04G

Example 6-24

ST: 不是养活不起，实在是男孩大了，留不住。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 07.07)

LT: It is not that I cannot afford to raise him. It is truly because the boy is too grown up to keep.

TT: I can afford to raise him but he's getting too big to keep at the brothel.

72

Example 6-25

ST: 母亲一连好几天早出晚归，她把那几十里山路都跑遍了。

(*The Road Home*: 49.55)

LT: Mother went out early and came back late for a few successive days. She went through all the dozens of *li*'s mountain roads.

TT: My mother retraced her steps every day searching back and forth.

73

Example 6-26

ST: 留不住了，不如用上一回。(Farewell My Concubine: 02.26.30)

LT: We cannot keep them. We might as well use them once.

TT: We can't keep them, so we might as well use them one last time.

02S

Example 6-27

ST: 上殿二十步，与王对饮!(Hero: 06.03)

LT: Get onto the great hall twenty paces and drink with his majesty!

TT: Advance within twenty paces of the throne and drink with his majesty!

51

Example 6-28

ST: 我知道你昨天迎先生去了。(The Road Home: 01.03.53)

71

LT: I know you went to meet up with the teacher.

TT: I know you went to wait for the teacher.

Example 6-29

ST: 不是张公公府上的堂会吗?(Farewell My Concubine: 45.11)

LT: Wasn't it the entertainment party in Grandpa Zhang's mansion house?

TT: It was Mister Zhang's birthday party.

04G+12G+13G

Example 6-30

ST: 你与长空为行刺寡人暗自串通，引我秦宫高手在一旁观看作证。(Hero: 45.47)

LT: You and Sky colluded secretly in order to assassinate me, luring Qin's imperial elites to be your witnesses at the scene.

71

TT: In order to assassinate me, the two of you staged a fight, using my guards as witnesses.

Example 6-31

ST: 听母亲说是姥爷死的时候姥姥天天哭把眼睛给哭坏了。(The Road Home: 16.30)

LT: I heard from Mother that when Grandfather died, Grandmother cried every day until her eyes went bad.

TT: Mother said when Grandfather died, Grandmother cried until she went blind.

02G

Example 6-32

ST: 学校毕业，在家没事儿。(The Road Home: 37.40)

LT: I graduated from school and had nothing to do at home.

71

TT: After graduation, I had nothing to do.

Example 6-33

ST: 这武二郎碰上西门庆，不打，不打能成吗？ (*Farewell My Concubine*: 59.45)

LT: This is Wu Erlang bumping into Ximen Qing. No fighting? Is it possible that they do not fight?

TT: You know the old story about Pan Jinlian's husband meeting the man who screwed her? Did he have any choice but to fight? 73

Example 6-34

ST: 我是父母唯一的孩子，也是村里唯一念过大学的。 (*The Road Home*: 01.15)

TT: I am the only child the only one from our village who went to college.

02S

Example 6-35

ST: 如月身为丫鬟，八岁跟了主人。 (*Hero*: 01.23.17)

TT: I have served my master since I was eight.

42

Example 6-36

ST: 袁四爷今儿晚上请咱们过去，要栽培咱们。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.09.28)

TT: Master Yuan wants us to visit him tonight. He wants to become our patron.

11G

Example 6-37

ST: 日后怎么做人？ (*Farewell My Concubine*: 05.51)

LT: How will be a proper person in the future?

71

TT: What are you going to do with your life?

Example 6-38

ST: 充满了勃勃的生机 ... .. (*The Road Home*: 01.07.05)

LT: Full of vigorous energy.

TT: Full of energy...

02G

Example 6-39

“大秦” (dàqín) meaning ‘great Qin’, is frequently used in *Hero* as a proud expression used by Emperor Qin and his people to refer to their country. It would sound redundant and even awkward if this translation is used throughout the English subtitles. In many cases, the translator opts for ‘the kingdom’ or simply ‘Qin’ as appropriate.



Example 6-40

ST: 今日已是我书馆最后一日了。 (*Hero*: 17.46)

LT: Today is already our school's last day.

TT: I fear this may be the last day of our school.

04G

Example 6-41

ST: 从这天开始，母亲就天天去听。 (*The Road Home*: 24.58)

LT: From this day, Mother went to listen every day.

TT: She went by the school every day after that.

04G

52

Example 6-42

ST: 臣求的剑字... .. (*Hero*: 20.14)

LT: The Chinese character of sword that I requested.

TT: ... the scroll ...

52

Example 6-43

ST: 治疗呢，看，不行，结果呢，你爸呢也不盯了，这就 ...

(*The Road Home*: 04.00)

LT: Treatment ... , examination ... , no use. The result ... , your father could not hold out for longer. This was ...

71

TT: They tried saving him, but it was no use. Your father then passed away.

Example 6-44

ST: 你只要囫圇个儿地把小楼给弄出来，我哪儿来哪儿去，回我的花满楼。

02G

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.23.23)

LT: As long as you can get Xiaolou out in one piece, I will go back to where I came from and go back to my House of Blossoms.

TT: If you can get Xiaolou out of there in one piece I'll go back to the House of Blossoms.

Example 6-45

ST: 书法剑术境界相通。 (*Hero*: 29.43)

LT: Calligraphy and swordplay are connected in their realms.

TT: The brush and the sword are fundamentally connected.

15S

15S

Example 6-46

ST: 什么叫“盛代元音”啊？这他妈就是。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 02.11.56)

LT: What is called “fundamental sound in the prosperous era”? This is fucking it.

TT: It'll be the goddamn golden hit of a golden era.

35

Example 6-47

ST: A: 那他住哪儿啦? Where is he staying? (*The Road Home*: 15.51)

B: 村政府吧。The village council office.

04S

LT: A: Where is he staying then?

B: The village council.

TT: A: Where is he staying?

B: The village council office.

04S

Example 6-48

ST: 我师哥可是在您的手上让人逮走的。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.21.50)

LT: My stage brother was taken away by people from your hands.

TT: But you allowed them to take him away in the first place.

72

Example 6-49

ST: 它能不亡吗? 报应! 报应! (*Farewell My Concubine*: 02.40.04)

LT: Could it not die? Retribution! Retribution!

TT: It's doomed! Is it not? This is what's called retribution! Karmic retribution.

51

02S

Example 6-50

ST: 先父临终留下遗愿, 求贵馆一幅墨宝。 (*Hero*: 17.43)

LT: My late father left a wish before dying to acquire a calligraphy work from your school.

TT: My father's dying wish was to acquire a scroll from your prestigious school.

04G

Example 6-51

ST: 我就让他听明白了, 没他四爷的捧场, 咱在北平也照唱照红。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 49.03)

LT: I just wanted him to understand that without him being a claque, we can still sing and get famous in Beiping.

TT: But I wanted him to know that even without his patronage we'd still be the talk of the town here in Beijing.

52+35

Example 6-52

ST: 吃得真香! (*The Road Home*: 37.15)

LT: You're eating really deliciously!

TT: You're enjoying it!

04G

Example 6-53

ST: 我王一日不得安睡。 (*Hero*: 03.12)

LT: My king has not got good sleep even for a day.

TT: He has not known a single peaceful night's sleep.

24

Example 6-54

ST: 段小楼不老实! (*Farewell My Concubine*: 02.35.34)

LT: Duan Xiaolou is not honest!

TT: Duan Xiaolou isn't telling the truth!

51

Example 6-55

ST: 就母亲陪着姥姥。 (*The Road Home*: 16.40)

LT: Only Mother was with maternal Grandmother.

TT: Mother was the only one to take care of Grandmother.

04S

Example 6-56

ST: 他们三年无话? (*Hero*: 06.56)

LT: They did not have words for three years.

TT: They had not spoken to each other for three years.

51

Example 6-57

ST: 这不是小楼吗? (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.49.03)

LT: Isn't this Xiaolou?

TT: Don't you recognize Xiaolou?

73

Example 6-58

ST: 十年前知道身世。 (*Hero*: 01.05.12)

LT: I got to know my identity ten years ago.

TT: Ten years ago I discovered my real identity.

04S

Example 6-59

ST: 他是人的, 就得听戏。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 12.00)

LT: If you are a human, you listen to the opera.

TT: If you belong to the human race, you go to the opera.

24

Example 6-60

ST: 又去找那把剑去了不是? 早不知卖哪儿去了。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 45.24)

LT: Didn't you go to look for the sword again? It was sold to somewhere a long time ago.

TT: I know you've been looking for the sword, but it's long gone.

52

Example 6-61

ST: 咋能都不要呢? (*The Road Home*: 01.11.10)

LT: How come not wanting it?

TT: Why is it?

52

Example 6-62

ST: 武功琴韵虽不相同, 但原理相通。 (*Hero*: 12.29)

LT: Martial arts and music is different, their principles are similar.

71

TT: Martial arts and music share the same principles.

Example 6-63

ST: 听母亲说, 以前有许多事儿女人都不能上前。 (*The Road Home*: 19.34)

LT: Mother said that in the past women could not go ahead and do many things.

71

TT: In the old days, women were not allowed to participate in many things.

Example 6-64

ST: 你放开他, 放开他! (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.44.24)

LT: You leave him alone! Leave him alone!

71

TT: Leave him alone!

Example 6-65

ST: A: 后晌你一定来吃饺子。

B: 哎。 (*The Road Home*: 40.04)

LT: A: You make sure to come to eat dumplings in the afternoon.

B: OK.

71

TT: A: Don't forget to come back for dumplings this afternoon.

B: (No subtitle)

Example 6-66

ST: 告诉你, 我真急了! (*Farewell My Concubine*: 55.17)

LT: To tell you, I'm really angry now!

71

TT: I'm really angry now!

Example 6-67

ST: 我，我本是男儿郎。

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 17.12)

LT: I ... I am by nature a boy.

71

TT: I am by nature a boy.

Example 6-68

ST: 哦，对，我该走了。 (*The Road Home*: 39.17)

LT: Oh, yes, I should go now.

71

TT: Yes, I should go.

Example 6-69

ST: 那好，那我连这钱先拿上。咱们村儿呢，你娘儿俩是第一份儿。

(*The Road Home*: 01.17.57)

LT: All right, in that case I'll take the money. In our village, the two of you are the first.

TT: All right, I'll take it then. You are the first, but surely not the last to help.

72

Example 6-70

ST: 这么说，有个潘金莲了？ (*Farewell My Concubine*: 59.47)

LT: According to this, is there a Pan Jinlian?

TT: Does this mean there's a Pan Jinlian in your life?

72

Example 6-71

ST: 你看他去了，把咱们娘儿俩撂下，孤孤单单的。你在外边好好工作啊。

(*The Road Home*: 01.23.00)

LT: You see he is gone and left us here. So lonely. You must do your work well.

TT: With your father gone, it's hard not to feel lonely. You know, you must work hard and make a good life for yourself.

72

Example 6-72

ST: 如月快要到了。 (*Hero*: 51.37)

LT: Moon will arrive soon.

TT: Moon will soon be here to take care of you.

72

Example 6-73

ST: 姓袁的他管得着姓段的吗？ (*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.09.35)

LT: Does the person called Yuan in charge of me whose name is Duan?

TT: Who does he think he is? No one tells me what to do.

72

Example 6-74

ST: 自幼流落在秦，被秦人收养。 (*Hero*: 01.05.09)

LT: I wandered about in Qin since I was very young, and was taken in by a Qin person.

TT: Orphaned, I was taken in by a family here in Qin.

73

Example 6-75

ST: 把戏唱完拿回包银，太太平平就是了。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 02.00.43)

LT: We finish singing and take back payment. It is just peaceful.

TT: We sing and get paid for it. What more could you want?

73

Example 6-76

ST: 他不回来招娣咋办? (*The Road Home*: 01.05.52)

LT: If he does not come back, what can Di do?

TT: I don't know how to help her if he doesn't come back.

73

Example 6-77

ST: 好你个蝶衣，这面子总算是给师哥了。要不然... ..

(*Farewell My Concubine*: 01.15.32)

LT: Good, Dieyi, you finally gave me your stage brother a face. Otherwise ...

TT: Well, if it isn't Dieyi! It's a good thing you showed up. Otherwise ...

73

Example 6-78

ST: 您慢走。 (*Farewell My Concubine*: 53.14)

LT: Please walk slowly. (This is a polite way to say goodbye to the person who is leaving.)

TT: Thank you for coming.

73

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霸王别姬 (1993)

Country: China, Hong Kong

Director: Chen Kaige

Language: Mandarin Chinese

Runtime: 171 minutes

Subtitling: Fine Art Production Company

*Hero* (2002)

英雄 (2002)

Director: Zhang Yimou

Country: China, Hong Kong

Language: Mandarin Chinese

Runtime: 99 minutes

Subtitling: SBS Language Services

*The Road Home* (1999)

我的父亲母亲 (1999)

Country: China

Director: Zhang Yimou

Language: Mandarin Chinese

Runtime: 89 minutes

Subtitling: no information available

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