

# ***Evaluation and Strategy Research on Multimodal Subtitle Translation of the Film "Chang'an 30000 Miles" from the Perspective of Cross Cultural Communication***

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**Abstract:** In the context of globalization, subtitle translation plays a pivotal role in cultural exchange. This paper focuses on the multimodal subtitle translation of the movie *Chang'an 30000 Miles*. Given the importance of subtitle translation for cultural exchange under globalization and the shortcomings of existing research in specific cultural contexts, qualitative analysis of audience acceptance, and evaluation of translation strategy effectiveness, this study explores the audience's acceptance of different translation strategies and their influencing factors, as well as the flexibility of strategy selection and audience differences. The findings revealed that multimodal subtitle translation could significantly boost the cultural dissemination impact of films, and audiences do appreciate the merits of varied strategies. For instance, based on audience feedback, a hybrid strategy combining literal and free translation was recommended. Looking ahead, future research could expand and deepen from multiple perspectives, be it theoretical refinement or practical application improvement, to further elevate the quality of subtitle translation.

**Keywords:** *Chang'an 30000 Miles*, Multimodal subtitle translation, Cross cultural communication, Audience acceptance, Translation strategy

## **1. Introduction**

In today's increasingly globalized era, cross-cultural communication has become an important bridge connecting cultures of different countries and regions. As one of the most influential cultural carriers, the quality of film subtitle translation directly relates to the accurate conveyance of cultural information and audience reception[1]. This paper focuses on the multimodal subtitle translation of the film "Chang'an 30,000 Miles," particularly the translation of ancient poems, and conducts an in-depth analysis of the translation effects and strategies of film subtitles. It aims to provide a new perspective and method for cross-cultural communication, exploring how to improve the accuracy of subtitle translation and audience acceptance while preserving the original cultural charm.

Multimodal discourse refers to the phenomenon of communication through multiple senses such as hearing, vision, and touch, utilizing language, images, sounds, actions, and symbolic resources[2]. Cross-cultural communication involves the exchange and understanding of information between different cultural backgrounds, emphasizing the significant role of cultural differences, cultural

identity, and language functions in the communication process[3]. In the field of multimodal subtitle translation and cross-cultural communication, numerous studies have explored translation principles, strategies, and their impact on cultural dissemination, laying a solid theoretical foundation and providing rich practical cases for this thesis. For example, under the framework of multimodal discourse analysis theory, scholars have deeply explored the English subtitle translation of *Chang'an 30000 Miles* from the cultural, content, contextual, and expressive dimensions[4]. Through various translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation, and intra-textual compensation, the English translation of cultural elements such as poems, songs, and prose in films has been effectively promoted, bringing international audiences closer to traditional Chinese classic culture[5].

However, Research on subtitle translation within specific cultural contexts is inadequate, especially in-depth analyses tied to films like *Chang'an 30000 Miles*. Its unique cultural background and artistic style pose higher requirements for subtitle translation, yet existing research has paid little attention to this. Additionally, studies predominantly focus on quantitative audience analysis, lacking qualitative exploration. Evaluation of translation strategy effectiveness also has limitations and requires further verification through comparative experiments targeting specific film works.

This study will use interviews to collect evaluations and needs on multimodal subtitle translation of *Chang'an 30,000 Miles*. Qualitative methods will analyze the content, revealing audiences' feelings and preferences, and formulating translation strategies. It aims to validate translation strategies in cross-cultural communication and provide practical guidance. It will also promote multimodal subtitle translation theories, bringing new perspectives to related research. This thesis is expected to deepen theoretical research, enhance practical guidance, facilitate interdisciplinary integration, and boost international influence. It is divided into three parts: "Literature Review" summarizing research achievements and shortcomings, "Interview Analysis" analyzing the role of multimodal subtitle translation and audience acceptance, and "Conclusion" summarizing results and pointing out limitations and future directions.

## 2. Literature Review

As an important means of cultural output, the quality of film subtitle translation directly influences the degree of cultural exchange. In the field of multimodal subtitle translation research, numerous scholars have conducted fruitful studies. For instance, Hu examined film subtitle translation from the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis and explored its related elements[4]. Yin and Gu took *Ne Zha: The Birth of the Demon Child* as an example to investigate film subtitle translation from the same perspective[6]. Wu analyzed the English translation of *Sun Tzu's Art of War* from the angle of cross-cultural communication research, providing theoretical support for cultural communication in subtitle translation[3]. Wang and Li focused on the current status, problems, and suggestions regarding subtitle translation technology[7]. These studies have laid a foundation for researching film subtitle translation from different angles and provided abundant references and inspirations for an in-depth analysis of multimodal subtitle translation in *Chang'an 30000 Miles*.

Multimodal subtitle translation combines language, images, and sounds, more accurately conveying the original meaning and emotions through the synergistic effect of multiple modes. According to Hu, it can comprehensively capture the contextual information of the original work, enhancing translation accuracy and audience acceptance[4]. The application of multimodal translation technology is crucial in film subtitle translation, as it not only conveys dialogue content but also coordinates with visual and auditory effects, creating a viewing experience[6].

Wu pointed out that cross-cultural communication theory emphasizes the importance of cultural differences, cultural identity, and language functions in the translation process[3]. In subtitle translation, translators need to consider the cultural background and language habits of the target

audience and adopt appropriate translation strategies to achieve effective cross-cultural communication and understanding[8].

Audience acceptance and preferences for subtitle translations are important indicators for evaluating translation effectiveness. Data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and other methods show that audience demand for subtitle translations is rising. They hope that translations can accurately convey the original meaning while conforming to local cultural customs and contexts [9]. Additionally, audiences focus on the fluency, comprehensibility, and coordination with visual and auditory effects in subtitle translations [10].

Despite research achievements in multimodal subtitle translation, cross-cultural communication, and audience acceptance, gaps remain: Firstly, application of multimodal subtitle translation in specific cultural contexts focuses mainly on general principles and strategies, with limited research on unique cases like *Chang'an 30000 Miles*. Secondly, qualitative analysis of audience acceptance lacks depth, relying mostly on quantitative methods and lacking in-depth quantitative research. This study plans to conduct in-depth analysis through qualitative methods.

Thirdly, the effectiveness of translation strategies needs further validation.

To address these issues, this paper will deeply analyze the multimodal subtitle translation of *Chang'an 30000 Miles*, combining the specific content and cultural background of the film, to analyze its role and effectiveness in promoting cross-cultural communication. By collecting data through interviews and using qualitative research methods to conduct an in-depth assessment of audience acceptance, this paper aims to develop more scientific and effective translation strategies.

### **3. Interview analysis**

#### **3.1. The core role of multimodal subtitle translation in the cross-cultural dissemination of *Chang'an 30000 Miles***

##### **3.1.1. Multi dimensional integration and deepening of viewing experience**

In the interview, five students generally emphasized the important impact of "multimodal subtitle translation" on the viewing experience. This translation method not only involves text, but also cleverly integrates various sensory elements such as images, sounds, colors, etc., jointly constructing a comprehensive viewing environment. For example, in *Chang'an 30000 Miles*, through carefully designed images and sound effects such as bustling streets, melodious music, and delicate presentation of Tang Dynasty costumes, the audience can more intuitively feel the style and atmosphere of the Tang Dynasty, thereby enhancing the cultural immersion of the film. This multidimensional fusion not only enhances the fun of watching movies, but also deepens the audience's understanding of the cultural connotations of movies. This multidimensional fusion is specifically reflected in the following aspects:

1. The complementarity of images and text: Through carefully designed images, such as Tang Dynasty architecture, clothing, utensils, etc., combined with subtitle text, the audience can more intuitively feel the style and atmosphere of the Tang Dynasty. As a visual modality, images complement the textual modality, enhancing the cultural immersion of movies.

2. Resonance between sound and emotion: sound elements, such as background music, environmental sound effects, etc., often convey the emotion of the film together with subtitles[11]. The addition of sound modes allows the audience to experience the atmosphere of the film both visually and auditory, thereby deepening their understanding of the cultural connotations of the film.

3. The rendering of color and emotion: Color, as a part of image modality, also plays an important role in multimodal subtitle translation. Through the use of colors, such as the grandeur of the Tang

Dynasty court and the simplicity and authenticity of folk life, combined with subtitle text, the emotional atmosphere of the film is rendered together.

### 3.1.2. A bridge for precise cultural communication and cross-cultural dissemination

In interviews, accuracy and cultural adaptability are key for subtitle translation, as Nida noted[12]. The goal is to replicate source language information naturally in the target language, considering cultural nuances. The audience expects loyalty to the original text and cultural alignment for understanding and acceptance by non-native speakers.

1. The translation challenge of ancient poetry and idioms: As culturally rich content, ancient poetry and idioms are important elements in the movie *Chang'an 30000 Miles*. According to Venuti, translation is not just the conversion of language but also the transmission of culture[13]. Translators need to find a balance between maintaining the original meaning and adapting to new contexts while preserving the charm and artistic conception of ancient poetry and ensuring that the target audience can understand its meaning. This requires translators to have a profound cultural background and a keen cross-cultural awareness. When translating poems such as "Looking up at the bright moon, looking down at hometown," translators can effectively utilize a combination of literal and semantic translation techniques. This approach not only preserves the original form of the poem but also aids the audience in comprehending its deeper meaning through explanation, aligning with the concept put forward by Munday, who emphasizes that translation should serve the understanding and feelings of the target readers[14].

2. Decoding and Annotation of Cultural Symbols: Cultural symbols present in movies, such as clothing, architecture, and etiquette, might not be familiar to audiences who are not native to the depicted culture. To bridge this gap, translators can provide annotations or voiceover explanations to aid the audience in comprehending the significance and background of these symbols. As Bassnett pointed out in her work on translation and culture, the process of translation extends beyond mere language conversion; it also involves the transmission and interpretation of cultural elements[15]. By adopting this approach, audiences can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural underpinnings in movies, which in turn demonstrates respect and tolerance for cultural diversity.

### 3.1.3. The importance of decoding and annotating cultural symbols

The processing of cultural symbols is considered a key step in multimodal subtitle translation. In *Chang'an 30000 Miles*, some cultural symbols with Tang Dynasty characteristics, such as "Yumen Pass" and "Silk Road", some geographical terms with Tang Dynasty characteristics, such as "Yumen Pass" and "Silk Road", as well as the Tang Dynasty palace dance "Rainbow-Like Robe and Feathered Garment Dance" that appears in the movie, may be unfamiliar to native language audiences. The translator compensates for this deficiency by providing annotations or voiceover explanations, enabling the audience to better understand the historical background and cultural connotations of these cultural symbols.

1、The complementarity of images and text: In movies, images and text often complement each other. Translators can use visual elements in images to supplement the lack of textual information and help audiences better understand the cultural connotations in movies. For example, when showcasing Tang Dynasty costumes such as "Tang made round necked robes" and "Ruqun"(The Tang Dynasty's Ruqun refers to the traditional attire of women wearing short jackets or shirts and long skirts.)in movies, translators can briefly introduce the characteristics and cultural significance of the costumes in the subtitles, while also incorporating the details of the costumes in the images to make the audience more intuitively feel the charm of Tang Dynasty costumes.

2、The fusion of sound and image: Sound and image are two other important elements in movies. Translators can create a more vivid viewing experience by combining sound and visuals. For example, when showcasing the Tang Dynasty palace dance "Rainbow-Like Robe and Feathered Garment Dance" in a movie, the translator can introduce the name and characteristics of the dance in the subtitles, while also incorporating beautiful music and dance scenes to allow the audience to have a deeper understanding of the cultural connotations of Tang Dynasty palace dance.

### 3.2. Audience acceptance of different translation strategies and their influencing factors

#### 3.2.1. Accuracy and cultural preservation

The audience's pursuit of "accuracy" indicates their strict requirements for translation quality[9]. They hope that the translation can faithfully reflect the meaning and emotions of the original text, especially when dealing with content rich in cultural heritage. However, as shown in Table 2, they also realized that in some cases, a certain compromise may need to be made on accuracy in order to maintain the uniqueness and charm of the culture.

1. The importance of cultural preservation: The audience believes that translators should preserve the cultural characteristics and artistic conception of the original text as much as possible, avoiding excessive simplification or distortion. This requires translators to have a profound cultural background and a keen cross-cultural awareness, able to achieve precise cultural communication while maintaining the accuracy of the original text. When translating ancient poems, idioms, costumes, etc., efforts should be made to preserve their original form and charm as much as possible, in order to showcase the unique charm of Tang Dynasty culture.

2. The cultivation of cross-cultural awareness: In order to achieve the dual goals of cultural preservation and cross-cultural dissemination, translators need to have a profound cultural background and a keen cross-cultural awareness. They need to have a deep understanding and comprehension of Tang Dynasty culture, as well as the cultural background and language habits of the target audience, to ensure the accuracy and adaptability of the translation.

Table 1: Basic information of interviewee

Serial number	interviewee	Gender	Age	major	Grade	Have you watched a movie
1	Maria	female	nineteen	Translation major	Sophomore	yes
2	Porry	male	nineteen	Mechanical Engineering major	Sophomore	yes
3	Lucy	female	twenty	English Major	Junior	yes
4	Larry	male	twenty-four	Speciality of Law	Third year graduate student	yes
5	Anwro	female	twenty-two	Translation major	First year graduate student	yes

Table 2: Viewpoints of interviewees

Serial number	interviewee	Main viewpoint	Category of viewpoints	Specific examples
1	Maria	Multimodal translation should focus on accuracy and cultural adaptability, utilizing elements such as images and sounds to assist in translation	accuracy	1、The translation of 'The bright moon in front of the bed, suspected to be frost on the ground' not only preserves the artistic conception of the original poem, but also allows non Chinese audiences to feel homesickness. 2、The translation of "imperial examination" combined with background introduction helps the audience understand its importance.
2	Porry	Simplicity and appropriateness are very important, and translation should be straightforward. If the translation is too cumbersome or unable to convey information in a short period of time, it will affect satisfaction.	Fluency	The word 'ahead' in 'Don't worry about the road ahead without a confidant' is only translated as 'ahead ', which is considered to be somewhat lacking in translation.
3	Lucy	Accuracy, completeness, fluency, and cultural connotation communication can all affect translation satisfaction. The translation should accurately convey the lexical meaning of the original text, avoiding incorrect translation or vague expression.	accuracy	1、The translation of 'Do you not see the water of the Yellow River rising from the sky' can be tried with more exaggerated or poetic language 2、The translation of 'Quiet Night Thoughts' preserves the artistic conception of the original poem.
4	Larry	The satisfaction of subtitle translation is influenced by various factors such as accuracy, completeness, and fluency, emphasizing the grammatical structure, logical coherence, and cultural connotation of the translated text	Fluency	The translation should use a natural and fluent target language expression that conforms to the expression habits of the target language.
5	Anwro	Translation should pay more attention to cultural sensitivity and contextual adaptability, preserving the cultural connotations and artistic conception of the original text	accuracy	Pointing out that the literal translation of 'green mountains and blue waters' lacks poetic meaning



### 3.2.2. Fluency and comprehensibility

In the interview, all students (five students) mentioned "fluency" as one of the important indicators for evaluating translation quality, indicating that "fluency" and "comprehensibility" are highly important in the minds of the audience.

This conclusion is based on the emphasis on fluid flow mentioned directly or indirectly in each student's answer:

Maria mentioned, "The factors that affect my satisfaction with translation include accuracy, fluency, cultural adaptability, and emotional communication." This indicates that fluency is an important dimension for evaluating translation quality.

Porry said, "Firstly, it's about conciseness. I would think that translations should be more concise and appropriate in expressing themselves... Translations that are too cumbersome or unable to convey information in a short period of time can affect satisfaction." The terms "conciseness" and "being able to convey information in a short period of time" here actually imply a requirement for fluency.

Lucy believed that "accuracy and fluency are the most fundamental aspects... Translation requires a certain degree of cultural adaptation and the ability to skillfully handle cultural differences." She explicitly mentioned fluency as one of the basic indicators for evaluating translation.

Larry listed in detail the factors that affect the satisfaction of subtitle translation, including: "The translation should use natural and fluent target language expression, in line with the expression habits of the target language." This further emphasizes the importance of fluency in translation quality evaluation.

Anwro also mentioned that "the accuracy, fluency, cultural sensitivity, and contextual adaptability of translation all affect my satisfaction with translation." She listed fluency as one of the key factors affecting translation satisfaction.

In summary, analyzing the interview content of five students concludes that "fluency" and "comprehensibility" are key indicators for evaluating translation quality, reflecting audience needs for natural and easy-to-understand translations:

1. Implementation of fluency: Translators should ensure natural language flow and correct grammatical structures, avoiding rigid literal translations and grammar errors to seamlessly integrate subtitles into the movie.

2. Improvement of comprehensibility: Strategies like free translation and cultural substitution can enhance information transmission[16]. Adding annotations or explanations in subtitles can also help audiences better understand cultural connotations.

### 3.2.3. Flexibility in Strategy Selection and Audience Differentiation

Students show a certain degree of flexibility in their acceptance of different translation strategies. They realized that the 'best translation strategy' is constantly adjusted based on specific content and audience groups.

1. The choice of flexible strategies: Students deeply realize that there is no absolute "best translation strategy", and the specific text content and target audience group are different, so the strategy should also be different accordingly. For example, when facing audiences with familiar cultural backgrounds, they may be more inclined to use literal translation or try to preserve the cultural characteristics of the original text to showcase its charm and essence. However, for audiences who are not familiar with the cultural background, free translation or cultural substitution may be more appropriate, which can help them better understand the content of the text and avoid misunderstandings or confusion[9].

2. Consideration of Audience Diversity: To meet the needs of diverse audiences, translators need to develop targeted and adaptive translation strategies. This involves considering various aspects such

as their language habits, cognitive levels, and more[17]. This not only requires translators to possess profound language skills and translation techniques but also demands their keen insight and rich cultural reserves to ensure effective information transmission and accurate cultural conveyance.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study on *Chang'an 30,000 Miles* reveals its significant role in cross-cultural communication and explores audience reception of different translation strategies and its influencing factors. The research finds that multimodal subtitle translation, by integrating various elements such as language, images, and sound, significantly enhances the film's cultural transmission effects, enabling international audiences to better understand and accept the cultural information in the film. Audiences approve of the literal translation strategy as it preserves the cultural charm of the original, while free translation and cultural substitution strategies are popular due to their better adaptation to the cultural habits of the target language.

Although this study has achieved certain results, there are still some limitations. Firstly, the limited sample size and geographical scope of the study may affect the generalizability of the research results. Secondly, the complexity of multimodal subtitle translation makes it difficult for this study to cover all possible scenarios in evaluating the effectiveness of translation strategies. However, the main contribution of this study lies in the in-depth exploration of the importance of multimodal subtitle translation in cross-cultural communication through qualitative research methods, as well as the audience's acceptance of different translation strategies, providing new perspectives and ideas for subtitle translation, and providing rich theoretical and practical cases for research in related fields. In addition, based on audience feedback, this study proposes a translation strategy that combines literal and free translation, emphasizes cultural adaptability and substitutability, providing useful references for improving the accuracy of subtitle translation and audience acceptance.

Future research can explore larger samples, cross-cultural acceptance of subtitle translation, leveraging new technologies, and integrating psychology and communication theories to analyze audience preferences. These studies will refine multimodal subtitle translation theory, enhancing its application in cross-cultural communication.

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