

Dubbing from English into Chinese: A case study on translation of spoken language

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*Researches on how spoken English is dubbed into other languages in films and TV series have been on the rise over the past 30 years. But they are concerned mainly with the translation of English into European languages and there is scarce mention of any study of Chinese dubbing of spoken English. In this context, this paper investigates how spoken English is dubbed into Chinese with one American film *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006) and one British film *Atonement* (2007). By analyzing the dubbed scripts against the scripts of original films, it is found that the dubbed scripts fall short of preserving the overall original orality, for lacking the major spoken features that should be present in the target texts, though one feature, i.e., “the use of incomplete sentences”, is overrepresented. Further studies are needed.*

Keywords : orality, film dubbing, spoken English, audiovisual translation

1. Introduction

Dubbing is a process during which “the replacement of the original speech by a voice track which attempts to follow as closely as possible the timing, phrasing and lip-movements of the original dialogue” (Luyken et al. 1991: 31). Dubbing is among other ways to overcome language barriers and the goal of which “is to make the target dialogues look as if they are being uttered by the original actors so that viewers’ enjoyment of foreign products will be enhanced” (Chiaro 2009: 144). It is generally acknowledged that language transfer in European film and television is dominated by two techniques: subtitling and dubbing (Mera 1999: 73). Needless to say, there have been abundant research results on subtitling and dubbing translation.

Researches on dubbing have been focused traditionally on such aspects as synchronization, social and geographic language variations and transfer errors (cf. Delabastita 1989; Herbst 1996; Bostinelli 2002). One major issue that concerns language variations is how spoken language, like dialogues in specific contexts, is appropriately

translated from the source to the target text, and whether the orality in the original film has successfully been preserved during dubbing into another language. And as a matter of fact, we have witnessed a growing interest in orality in translation studies, just as Bandia (2011: 108) points out, which has followed two trajectories, “one is directly related to interlingual translation practice such as interpretation and audiovisual translation”. It is true that orality is one of the prominent features in interlingual oral communication, among which dubbing is a common practice in overcoming language barriers in TV series and films’ localization.

Comparing with subtitling, mirroring spontaneous conversation in dubbing might not seem to be too complicated, spoken linguistic features of fictional dialogues are also transferred using the spoken mode in the target language (Baños and Chaume 2009). However, in the case of dubbing, there are indeed “a large number of very different factors come into play, such as professional, sociocultural and technical ones, as well as language and communication factors, which include their nonverbal dimension” (Zabalbeascoa 1997: 330).

Chaume lists three extra-linguistic and/or non-verbal constraints, i.e., lip synchrony, kinesic synchrony and isochrony (2004: 43-45). Other than extra-linguistic constraints, orality is among the linguistic constraints. Delabastita (1989) and Korloff (2000) have pointed out, if the target film viewers are to be drawn into the fictional world portrayed on the screen, dubbing must preserve the original film dialogues. In other words, the spoken features of the target language must be present in the dubbed film just as the same features of the source language in the original film. Under this circumstance, identifying similarities to the spoken language is necessary for a full understanding of the mechanisms underlying viewer’s acceptance, and, ultimately, for accessing the quality of the translated product (Pavesi 2008).

However, just as stated earlier, most of the existing studies so far are concerned with the translation of English into European language like Italian, German and Spanish (cf. Malinverno 1999; Santiago 2004; Valdeon 2008; Antonini and Chiaro 2008; Pavesi 2009). However, little is known about how spoken English is dubbed into Chinese, though there have been studies that discuss subtitling and dubbing from English into Chinese from the perspective of Western-Chinese cultural and social differences (e.g., Peng 2004; Chen 2007; Xu 2009), and more studies have been found to be much general reviews of the subtitling and dubbing translation in China (cf. Qian 2004; Deng 2016). Some are case studies related to dubbing but not looking at the spoken feature during the translation (cf. Zhao and Chen 2007; Hu 2010; Xi 2015).

In the current study, I examine how spoken English (particularly in dialogues) in the film *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006) and *Atonement* (2007) are dubbed into Chinese.

Though they were on shown for a long time, both films have been accumulating a great many positive reviews (over 300,000 and over 150,000 each) on one of the most popular film reviewing website in China¹⁾. Both films are overwhelmingly better than over 80% of drama film and over 70% better than romance film, according to the reviewers from the website. The degree of their popularity has stood the test of time and features in these films, orality alike, deserve to be investigated in Translation Studies.

Two original films are one in British English and the other in American English. It also arose my interest that whether there are some differences in terms of orality in both English languages in the two films, even though studies on natural languages have listed a few (Partridge 1951; Hofland and Johansson 1982; Tottie 1991; Tottie and Hoffmann 2006). It will further lead the research question of the current study like, if there's any difference in orality in the two films, and if there *is*, whether such kind of differences been observed and preserved in their Chinese dubbing?

Though it is based only on two films, I hope my initial results will shed some light on how and to what extent the translator uses spoken Chinese where it is required, and more importantly, to what extent he/she is aware of the issue of spoken language in translation. The English film dubbed transcriptions are obtained on line²⁾. By observation, these two films portray a great deal of dialogues in which spontaneous oral English is used. The soundtracks of the dubbed Chinese films are also obtained on line³⁾. Each dubbed script had been edited into clean text, paralleled at syntactic level with its original scripts and run by AntConc 3.4.3w (Anthony 2014)⁴⁾.

Undoubtedly and unavoidably during the process of dubbing, there are many players who may change the original translation for dubbing like voice actors, technicians and even dubbing directors. Bearing that in mind, after systematic and thorough comparison, both sound tracks of the two films are in line with their dubbed scripts I obtained on line. It is then believed that they are the final dubbed script which will definitely carry orality as well as other features of the dubbed film. And also given the fact that different dubbing studios may have their own dubbing process which may lead to deviations in their final products (Chaume 2007: 204-205), both films are believed to be re-voiced by the same studio, a state-owned Shanghai Film Dubbing Studio.

1) <https://movie.douban.com/subject/1482072/>

<https://movie.douban.com/subject/1950148/>

2) http://cinemascopian.com/pics/2008oscars/Atonement_Script.pdf

http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/devil_wears_prada.pdf

3) <http://cmct.cc/thread-10484-1-1.html>

<http://kuai.xunlei.com/d/XOGJJHMHJIJZ>

4) Details in tagging and screenshots please refer to section 3.

In order to systematically investigate the dubbed Chinese scripts, and compare them with the original English dialogues, a set of spoken features needs to be identified specifically, with the consideration of language specifications between English and Chinese. In the following, I will first outline the basic cross-linguistic features of spoken language, and then use those features as a set of criteria to characterize the original English films and their dubbed Chinese scripts. I will then discuss the possible reasons for the successes and/or failures of the latter in conveying the conversational orality of the original English films.

2. Cross-linguistic Features of Spoken Language

Drawing on research studies in linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and literacy, the attempt has been made over the years to analyze common features of spoken language across national borders by distinguishing them from those of the written language. (Woolbert 1922; Horowitz and Berkowitz 1964; Gruner Kibler and Gibson 1967; Hanson 1981). The distinctions lie in many places, like the articulatory or grammatical differences. According to Brown (1978: 271-276), the spontaneous spoken language differs from the written language in two major ways:

Firstly, they are produced differently. When writing, the writer has to be mindful of his reader and therefore constantly adjusts his style, but he can only do this by a process of empathy because he has no immediate feedback to take into account. In contrast, spontaneous speech is usually produced in an interactive situation where the speaker has to face the hearer. This creates parenthetical expressions from time to time. Under this general category, many specific features are found to be shared across languages, such as dysfluencies, repetitions, repairs, turn-taking, etc. (cf. Biber 1988; Shegloff 2000; Sidnell 2001).

Secondly, the functions of written and spoken language differ from one another. One of prime functions of written language is to make accurate records of what has been said, thought about or done on a particular occasion. In contrast, natural speech is not, on the whole, used for transmission of detailed information, but rather for the purpose of social interaction. In this way, the sentence structures of the spoken language are usually less complex than those in a written form. Under this general category, syntactic and discourse features like freer word order, more deictic and focusing devices, and so on, are found also to be shared across languages (cf. Biber 1988; Shegloff 2000; Sidnell 2001).

Moreover, Drieman (1962) found that written texts are shorter, use longer words more frequently, have more attributive adjectives, and have more varied vocabulary. Devito (1966) found that written language has fewer words that refer to the speaker, uses fewer quantifiers and hedges and is of greater abstractness. According to Chafé (1982, 1987), there are spoken features across levels of vocabulary, sentence structure and involvement between the speaker and the hearer. These linguistic similarities are presumably due to the similar social and cognitive constraints responsible for shaping interaction and the grammar of spoke varieties (cf. Biber 1988; Shegloff 2000; Sidnell 2001). Based on those studies, we can safely assume that when spoken spontaneously, English and Chinese should share a number of features. And based on this assumption, how these shared spoken features may be successfully rendered across English and Chinese can thus be investigated through systematic comparison between ST and their dubbed scripts.

By analyzing grammars of spoken English in large, general, and varied corpora of the language, including corpora of spoken discourse, Leech (2000: 676) listed a number of spoken features, they are:

- (a) Loose, relatively unintegrated structure with a very wide-ranging use of independent non-clausal (“fragmentary”) units;
- (b) The inappropriateness of the sentence to the analysis of spoken grammar;
- (c) Simplicity of phrase structure (particularly of noun phrases);
- (d) Repetitive use of a restricted lexicogrammatical repertoire;
- (e) Grammatical features reflecting interactiveness and on-line processing constraints.

However, the above are grammatical analysis rather than specific tokens found in English, and a decade ago, for spoken English, Crystal & Davy (1979 chapter 4) have summarized more typical characteristics, which are:

- (i) (F1) Incomplete sentences, e.g., *Yes? Nothing.*
- (ii) (F2) Informal usages, e.g., *kind of*, or *whatever*, *and then*, etc.
- (iii) (F3) Interjection items like *now*, *well*, *you know*, *you see*, etc.
- (iv) (F4) Hesitations marked by pauses or lip sound like *hmm*, *um*, *em*, etc.
- (v) (F5) Question tags, e.g., *isn't he?* *won't you?* etc.
- (vi) (F6) Using reversed word order or parenthetical expressions at the end of a sentence, e.g., *Believe you me; It's wonderful, darling!*
- (vii) (EF7) Contracted forms, e.g., *I'm*, *he's*, *you're*, etc.

Among them, incomplete sentences and interjection item both fall into a loose, relatively unintegrated structure what Leech (2000) categorized but each has completely

different features in terms of their lexical construction. In this case, the current study will adopt Crystal & Davy (1979)'s typical characteristics to categorized two original English transcripts.

Most of these features are *indeed* found in spoken Chinese. By “spoken Chinese”, it refers to the present day spoken Mandarin Chinese or *Putonghua*. According to Chao (1965: 17-18) and Li (2004: 52), common features in spoken Chinese is characterized by the following:

- (i) (F1) Incomplete sentences, e.g., “去倒杯茶!” ‘Go and bring me a cup of tea’; “腳扭了, 走不動了” ‘My foot was sprained, I can’t walk’;
- (ii) (F2) Short expressions of informal and colloquial style, e.g., “興許” ‘Maybe’; “說閒話” ‘Gossip’; “不買賬” ‘I don’t buy it’; “那可不!” ‘Exactly!’;
- (iii) (F3) Interjection items like “現在” ‘Now’, “我覺得” ‘I think’, “等於說” ‘like’, “比如說” ‘For example’;
- (iv) (F4) Hesitations marked by pauses or lip sound like “嗯” and “唔”;
- (v) (F5) Question tags, e.g., “對不對?” ‘Isn’t it right?’ “好不好?” ‘Isn’t it fine?’;
- (vi) (F6) Using reversed word order or parenthetical expressions at the end of a sentence, e.g., “怎麼了, 夥計?” ‘What happened, dude?’; “可笑極了, 這個人!” ‘Awfully funny, this man!’; “進來吧, 你” ‘Come in, you.’
- (vii) (CF7) Using clause-initial/final propositional particles such as “唉 哦 噢 呃 呢 嗎 吧 啊 呀” at the beginning or the end of a sentence, e.g., “唉, 我又遲到了哦” ‘Ah, I was late again’; “這是怎麼回事啊?” ‘What’s going on here?’

Chen (1985: 81, 88) listed syntactic features in spoken Mandarin as “incomplete and short sentences, with less attributes”. He explained the simplicity at syntactic level with features like less conjunctions, prepositions, and agglutinants (Chen 1985: 111-169). Markers in hesitations and repetitions are often found in his study (Chen 1985: 170-183). He even further listed propositional particles among eight high frequency lexical items in spoken Mandarin (Chen 1985: 326), which thus echoed Chao (1965) and Li (2004)'s observation. Chen (1991: 38) also reiterated that incomplete sentences is one of the most common spoken features in English, Chinese as well as Russian. Among contemporary studies, Lan & Xing (2007: 228) also echoed the usage of informal words in contemporary spoken Mandarin comparing with written language, which also been listed as one of the prominent features.

As shown above, the current study then adopts Chao (1965) and Li (2004)'s characterization to Mandarin spoken features to English and Chinese do share most of the spoken features and it is believed that there are indeed some language-independent similarities like pauses and hesitation markers as well as informal usages, owing to the

fact that the information integration in spontaneous talk is much (Vaissière 1983: 53-59). Other studies in discourse analysis have also drawn similar conclusions (McCarthy, 1998; Burenhult & Levinson, 2008 amongst others).

According to Crystal & Davy (1979) and Chao (1965) and Li (2004), English and Chinese differ only in that contracted forms (EF7) are frequently used in spoken English and in that clause-initial/final propositional particles at the beginning or the end of a sentence (CF7) are most commonly used in spoken Chinese (cf. Chao 1968; Chen 1985: 326; Guo 1999; Li 2004: 52; Wang 2006). For the current study, I will thus assume that in the context of a spontaneous conversation, the English orality is successfully dubbed into spoken Chinese: i) if the Chinese dubbed scripts share those spoken features in the English original (minus contracted forms); ii) if the Chinese scripts contain, by virtue of Chinese orality, the use of propositional particles. I will assume that only both of those features are present, can we consider the dubbing a successful one.

3. Orality in Chinese Dubbed Scripts

According to Pavesi (2008: 80), there are at least two main requirements that interact in shaping dialogues in dubbed films: representation of orality on the one hand and time-constrained narration on the other. This interaction also distinguishes dubbing from other types of translation. To which extent this is achieved thus deserves in-depth investigation for the study of translation. Pavesi (2008, 2009) herself has carried out a quantitative studies of how English orality in five films (both American and British) is dubbed into spoken Italian. She has found that the percentages at which the major syntactic features of spontaneous spoken Italian (dependent clauses) that occur in dubbed films are actually higher than they occur in natural speeches⁵). Theoretically, this means that the Italian translator is somehow oversensitive in preserving the authenticity of spoken language in the dubbed films.

For the current study, the question to ask is: Is the Chinese translator for dubbing also sensitive enough in preserving the authenticity of spoken language? To answer the question, I will see if the English orality is successfully dubbed into spoken Chinese by two ways, as stated in section 2. I also built parallel English and Chinese texts into two *Databases of Dialogues* (*The Devil Wears Prada*) and (*Atonement*) to help me searching the features. They were segmented into textual units (marked by such punctuations as period, exclamation and question mark, and semi-colon). Each database contains about

5) She compared dubbed Italian with a major corpus of spoken Italian The LIP Corpus.

1,000 textual units. These units then categorized by three raters applying six common orality features (F1-F6) and two more individual features (EF7, CF7) in section 2 to avoid subjectivity. Each rater categorized these features dubbed Chinese independently and then discussed to reach the consensus as shown in Table 1 to 3.

With the help of AntConc 3.4.3w (Anthony 2014), it is found that among six shared spoken features between English and Chinese, one feature is overrepresented and five are underrepresented. Figure 1 demonstrates one of the initial propositional particles “噢” at the beginning or the end of a sentence” (CF7) are hit in AntConc.

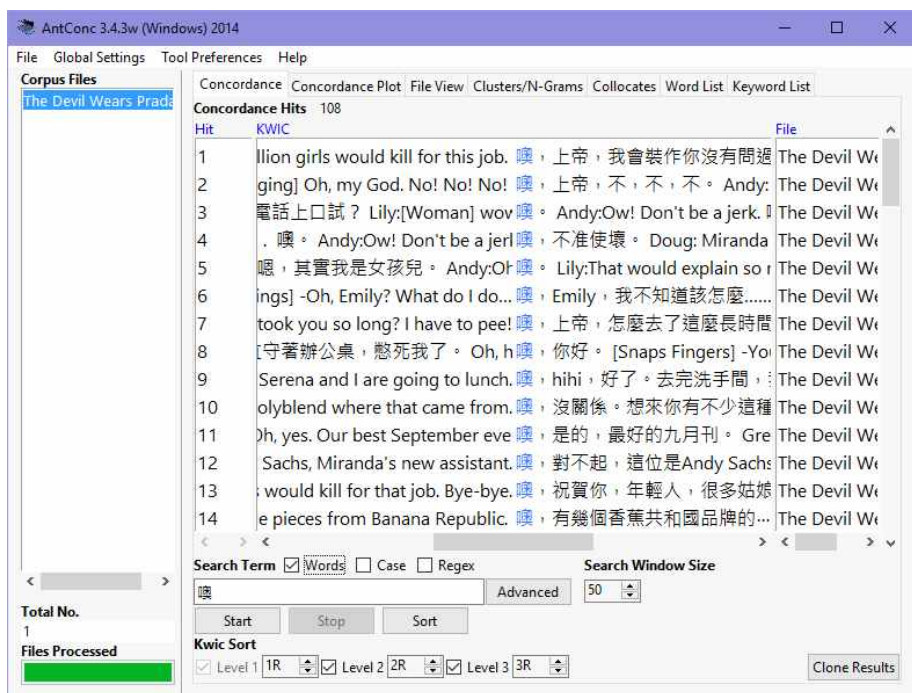


Figure 1. The concordance of particles “噢” in *The Devil Wears Prada*

And the propositional particles appear to be used frequently in both dubbed scripts. I will return to the potential reasons in section four.

3.1. Spoken features in general

Six common spoken features and two language specific features in both English original and Chinese dubbed scripts are presented in following tables⁶).

Table 1. English original compared with dubbed scripts (*Atonement*)

poken Features	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	EF7/CF7	Total
English Original	160	152	46	28	12	24	404	826
Percentage	19.37%	18.40%	5.57%	3.39%	1.45%	2.91%	48.91%	100%
Weights	10.99%	10.44%	3.16%	1.92%	0.83%	1.65%	27.75%	56.73%
Dubbed Chinese	278	99	31	21	19	15	167	630
Percentage	44.13%	15.71%	4.92%	3.33%	3.02%	2.38%	26.51%	100%
Weights	19.09%	6.80%	2.13%	1.44%	1.30%	1.03%	11.47%	43.27%
Total	1382 (textual units)							

From Table 1, it appears that contracted forms (EF7) is the most prominent in the original, whose weight is the highest across all eight features in both English and Chinese spoken features, followed by two other spoken features, incomplete sentences (F1) and informal usages (F2), both weighted about 10%. Comparatively speaking, in dubbed Chinese scripts of *Atonement*, the use of incomplete sentences (F1) overriding the rest of features with its weight as 19.09%, and of propositional particles (CF7) are found to be the second most frequently used. The dubbed Chinese of *The Devil Wears Prada* has also been categorized by the eight features as follows:

Table 2. English original compared with dubbed scripts (*The Devil Wears Prada*)

Spoken Features	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	EF7/CF7	Total
English Original	211	126	75	184	6	18	376	996
Percentage	21.18%	12.65%	7.53%	18.47%	0.60%	1.81%	37.75%	100%
Weights	11.22%	6.70%	3.99%	9.79%	0.32%	0.96%	20.00%	52.98%
Dubbed Chinese	328	86	48	91	13	15	303	884
Percentage	37.10%	9.73%	5.43%	10.29%	1.47%	1.70%	34.28%	100%
Weights	17.45%	4.57%	2.55%	4.84%	0.69%	0.80%	16.12%	47.02%
Total	1096 (textual units)							

It seems that just like what we observed from Table 1, contracted forms (EF7) is also the most prominent in the original, with its weight as 20.00% overriding all features in English and Chinese, followed by the use of incomplete sentences (F1) and hesitation markers (F4), weighted 11.22% and 9.79% respectively. In terms of dubbed Chinese, hesitations marked by pauses or lip sound (F4) are found much more than that in *Atonement*. Not surprisingly, it appears that two spoken features are most prominent in the dubbed Chinese scripts: the use of incomplete sentences (F1) and of propositional particles (CF7). If we take the two dubbed Chinese translations as a whole, we have:

6) F1 to F6 are shared features outlined in section 2, EF7 is English contracted forms, CF7 is Chinese propositional particles.

Table 3. English original compared with dubbed scripts (Two films as a whole)

Spoken Features	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	EF7/CF7	Total
English Original	371	278	121	212	18	42	780	1822
Percentage	20.36%	15.26%	6.64%	11.64%	0.99%	2.31%	42.81%	100%
Weights	11.12%	8.33%	3.63%	6.35%	0.54%	1.26%	23.38%	54.61%
Dubbed Chinese	606	185	79	112	32	30	470	1514
Percentage	40.03%	12.22%	5.22%	7.40%	2.11%	1.98%	31.04%	100%
Weights	18.17%	5.54%	2.37%	3.36%	0.96%	0.90%	14.09%	45.39%
Total	1382 + 1096 = 2478 (textual units)							

From Table 3, we can safely conclude that even if we take two films as a whole, in the original English dialogues, contracted forms (EF7) is still the most prominent features in the original, which follows by incomplete sentences (F1), informal usages (F2) and hesitations marked by pauses or lip sound (F4). In Chinese translations, however, using incomplete sentences (F1), weighted 18.17%, stands out of other features across two films, even overrated than them in the original. Similarly, using question tags (F5) overrode that in the original with its weight as 0.96%. As to the other four features, no matter how they manifest themselves in English originals, both Chinese dubbed scripts seem to underrepresent them in a certain degree.

3.2. Overrepresented features

It seems that “using incomplete sentences” (F1) and “using question tags” (F5) are two shared spoken features being overrepresented in both Chinese dubbed scripts. Besides being translated by incomplete Chinese sentences, English originals with the feature may also be translated by idiomatic Chinese expressions. See examples (1) to (4)7).

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|------------|------------|
| (1) | Not at all. | 不怎麼樣 ° | (A., p.10) |
| (2) | Deal with it. | 隨機應變 ° | (D., p.6) |
| (3) | Plain as day. | 一清二楚 ° | (A., p.39) |
| (4) | Easy there, tiger. | 放鬆點, 小老虎 ° | (D., p.12) |

As shown in Table 1 and 2, the usage of incomplete sentence in Chinese is much more than that in English original. And if we take two dubbed translation as a whole,

7) A. refers to extractions from *Atonement*, and D. refers to *The Devil Wears Prada*.

its weight is about 7% higher than that in the original, which indicated in Table 3. It means there must be more incomplete sentences in Chinese dubbed scripts, even though their counterparts in English are completed sentences.

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|---------|------------|
| (5) | You are right. | 說得對 ° | (A., p.30) |
| (6) | I'm bursting. | 憋死我了 ° | (D., p.8) |
| (7) | Do you think so? | 真要報警? | (A., p.30) |
| (8) | They call them Clackers. | 那幫克拉族 ° | (D., p.12) |

In above examples, complete English originals were delivered into incomplete Chinese sentences. Similar cases are found in both Chinese film scripts. It may indicate, either the translators are oversensitive to the feature, or Chinese spontaneous speeches title to using more incomplete sentences than English, by which the translator's subconscious decisions may be affected.

By "using question tags", the fifth shared feature for the current study, like "using incomplete sentences" (F1), more were found in Chinese dubbed scripts than in the original, indicating that even though there wasn't a question tag in Chinese dubbed scripts like example (9) and (10), while example (11) and (12) retained question tags in the Chinese scripts.

- (9) Of course. Something the matter. 当然, 出什么事了吗? (A. p.21)
- (10) I rarely say this to people who aren't me...but you have got to calm down.
Bloody hell! 知道嗎? 我很少跟別人這樣說, 你現在必須冷靜一下 °真煩人!
(D., p.16)

In (9) and (10), no question tag in the original, unlike (11) and (12) where question tags were retained.

- (11) It was Robbie, wasn't it? 是羅比, 對嗎? (A. p.39)
- (12) She knows what I look like, do you? 她知道我什麼樣, 是嗎? (D., p.7)

3.3. Underrepresented features

As shown in Table 1 and 2, other than "using incomplete sentences" and "using question tags", the rest shared spoken features are underrepresented in the Chinese dubbed scripts.

By "using informal and colloquial expressions", most of them were also rendered into

Chinese colloquial expressions, examples are as follows:

(13) He's quite a good egg. 他這人挺不錯的。 (A., p.27)

(14) Like death warmed up actually. 半條命都快沒了。 (D., p.29)

However, some Chinese dubbed translations are quite formal even though their original English are informal expressions, for example:

(15) Of course, she jumped at it. 傑克林當然趨之若鶩。 (D., p.45)

By “using interjections”, some English interjection items were fully transferred from ST to TT. For example:

(16) How dare you say that? 好啊，你竟敢這麼說。 (A., p.18)

(17) Well, I happen to think... 哦，我怎麼覺得， (D., p.5)

(18) ... and I think... 可是我覺得…… (A., p.89)

(19) You know, just in case. 你知道，以防萬一。 (D., p.27)

In (16), the interjection is expressed by a stress on the word “dare”. And in (18) and (19), both items were rendered literally. A propositional article “哦” were applied to translate the interjection item “well”. However, more than half of interjected “well” and “you know” were omitted:

(20) Well, it's true. 這是真的呀。 (A., p.18)

(21) Well, lucky for me. 還是我好， (D., p.4)

(22) Well, they're not poor little chaps... 他們一點都不可憐…… (A., p.35)

(23) Um, you know, she is in a meeting. 她現在正在開會。 (D., p.6)

Hesitations, which marked by pauses in the original scripts, were rendered into another pauses in Chinese. And some lip sounds were also kept in Chinese.

(24) But in a play it's...可是看戲……就要看人會不會演了。 (A., p. 4)

(25) Miranda missed Lagerfeld...just before he boarded a 17-hour flight to Australia.

使她沒有接到拉斐爾德的電話……而拉斐爾德將要飛行十七個小時去澳大利亞。

(D., p.6)

(26) Mm. 嗯。 (A., p. 4)

- (27) I also, um, won a national competition for college journalists with my series on the janitors' union. 嗯,我還, 我對樓房管理員工會的連續報道, 得過全國大學生記者競賽大獎。 (D., p.3)

However, as stated earlier, one of the essential elements of dubbing translation is the time constrained synchronization. Sometimes the hesitations or lip sounds may not appear in the Chinese dubbed scripts if the time limit is not allowed, particularly during a long conversation, just like the following example:

- (28) But so often, they turn out to be... I don't know... disappointing and, um... stupid. 但是她們經常讓我非常失望 °她們很笨。 (D., p.15)

The two interjection items in the original were omitted. More omissions are found in the scripts, especially when the interjection items carry no specific information.

By “using reversed word order”, most of them were delivered intact from ST to TT. Examples are as follows:

- (29) It's stupendous, darling! 棒極了, 親愛的! (A., p.3)
(30) You could get Fellowship now, couldn't you? With you First. 你可以去教書啊 °你是特優生。 (A., p. 11)
(31) It's over here, honey. 沒事, 寶貝。 (D., p.15)

Still, some of reversed word orders in the original dialogues were omitted, like (32) and (33):

- (32) You do know what I'm talking about, don't you?
你知道我在说什么吧? (A., p.18)
(33) We need more, don't we? 可我們需要最好的。 (D., p.10)

Similarly, some of the parenthetical expressions were deleted, like in (34) and (35).

- (34) You could get a fellowship, now. 這樣可以拿到助學金。 (A., p.14)
(35) What am I, four? 你當我是四歲小孩? (D., p.15)

Among the five underrepresented features, it appears that even though not every piece of spoken feature is successfully delivered from ST to TT, more than half of them were preserved in the dubbed scripts.

3.4. A language-specific feature: using propositional particles

As stated in section 2, “using clause initial/final propositions” is a Chinese specific spoken feature. Other than shared spoken features with English, only if it is successfully retained in the dubbed Chinese scripts, can we say that the orality is well preserved in the scripts. Particles “唉 哦 噢 呃 呢 嗎 吧 啊 呀” were searched out in the databases. The results are in Table 4:

Table 4. Propositional particles in dubbed Chinese

Propositional particles	唉	哦	噢	呃	呢	嗎	吧	啊	呀	Total
The Devil Wears Prada	2	7	108	49	17	63	44	21	0	311
Atonement	0	1	43	21	19	33	23	26	4	170

As the table indicated, generally, both dubbed Chinese scripts have a large amount of propositional particles, either at the beginning or the end of a sentence. And one article “噢” stands much higher than its counterparts crossing two dubbed scripts. The possible reason is that in the original script of *The Devil Wears Prada*, the particle “oh” appears extremely frequent, up to 102 times, overriding almost 10 times than that in the film *Atonement* (only 12 times).

However, without comparing them with Chinese natural speeches, it is hard to say whether the dubbed Chinese scripts keep the orality or not. Pavese (2007) once did so by comparing spoken features in five Italian dubbed films with an Italian natural speech corpus. It is the next step of the current study to find a Chinese natural speech corpus to compare the language-specific feature. It is expected that more results could thus be drawn on from that comparison. Just like the fact that even more incomplete sentences have been found in Chinese dubbed scripts, we still cannot safely conclude that it is the spoken feature we can find in dubbed Chinese comparing to its original.

4. Discussions and Conclusion

Theoretically, it is predictable that there will be some features of spoken language which are carried over from the original film to the dubbed scripts irrespective of the language involved. Consequently, in the current study, it is assumed that the English orality is considered to be successfully dubbed into Chinese if the dubbed scripts appear to share a significant degree of similarity with the source text. No matter how the

translator has achieved this, the researcher’s task is to identify which target language features are systematically made to convey the original orality in the target text and what functions they serve (Pavesi, 2005).

4.1. *Orality in dubbed Chinese*

To answer the question of which target language features are systematically made to convey the original orality, essentially, I have compared the dubbed Chinese scripts with the original film dialogues. Here, two tendencies emerge: DC > EO (F1) and DC < EO (F2, F3, F4, F5 and F6), as shown below:

Table 5. Feature weights in English and Chinese

Features	Weights (EO vs. DC)	
	EO	DC
F1	11.12%	18.17%
F2	8.33%	5.54%
F3	3.63%	2.37%
F4	6.35%	3.36%
F5	0.54%	0.96%
F6	1.26%	0.90%

EO =English Original; DC= Dubbed Chinese;

As we see, “using incomplete sentences” (F1) appears to be the most prominent feature in the dubbed Chinese scripts, not only against that in the English original, but also against other spoken features in the scripts. DC has been weighted about 18% out of all eight spoken features we found in both the original and the dubbed Chinese scripts. “Using question tags” has also been found more in the dubbed Chinese than their originals. Meanwhile, other features, i.e., F2, F3, F4 and F6, in the Chinese scripts are found less than they are in the original. This may suggest that the dubbed Chinese scripts failed to respond to the use of “informal usages”, “interjection items”, “hesitations” and “reversed word order” of the original film.

Based on Table 5, although there are two spoken features that are systematically made to convey the original orality, there are still four features that fall short what the original film represents. As a result, it seems that the dubbed Chinese scripts of both films are failed to serve the function of preserving the orality in original film dialogues and the target film viewers may hard be drawn into the fictional world portrayed on the screen through the dubbing Chinese. Unlike spontaneous language, any translation needs to meet certain standards, as far as translation quality is concerned, so does that of

dubbing. Chaume (2006: 5-12) summarized six standards that dubbing translation need to follow. They are: i) good lip-sync ('good' depending on the degree of tolerance in each dubbing culture; ii) credible spontaneous dialogues (but not too spontaneous, since while the language of dubbing pretends to be spontaneous, it is very normative indeed); iii) coherent translation (coherent as a global text, that is, coherent from a linguistic point of view, but also coherent with the visuals); iv) equivalence to the source text (equivalence as defined by Toury 1995); v) technical rigour, for example, avoiding noises in the recording, hearing clearly audible and distinct voices, etc.; vi) credible acting, i.e., neither overacting, nor underacting. Among them, "credible spontaneous dialogues" has been prioritized by Chaume and it is generally acknowledged that in what degree spoken features in the original being preserved in the translation manifests the degree of a successful spontaneous language in the translation.

4.2. Orality in British and American English

To answer the question of whether there is a difference in terms of orality in British English and American English based on the two films, the comparison of weights of all seven spoken features are as in Table 6:

Table 6. Two English originals

Spoken Features	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	EF7	Total
English Original (A)	160	152	46	28	12	24	404	826
Weights	8.78%	8.34%	2.52%	1.54%	0.66%	1.32%	22.17%	45.33%
English Original (D)	211	126	75	184	6	18	376	996
Weights	11.58%	6.91%	4.12%	10.10%	0.33%	0.99%	20.64%	54.67%

As shown above, among these features, F1, F3 and F4 are found to be overrated in the American film than the British one, and F2, F5, F6 and EF7 tend to be much weighted in the British one. It may not lead us to the genetic difference in spoken British and American English, but by comparing same categories of dubbed Chinese, we may at least see if they have been responded to such a difference we observed in Table 6.

Table 7. Two dubbed Chinese

Spoken Features	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	CF7	Total
Dubbed Chinese (A)	278	99	31	21	19	15	167	630
Weights	18.36%	6.54%	2.05%	1.39%	1.25%	0.99%	11.03%	41.61%
Dubbed Chinese (D)	328	86	48	91	13	15	303	884
Weights	21.67%	5.68%	3.17%	6.01%	0.86%	0.99%	20.01%	58.39%

Table 7 listed weights of seven features in two dubbed Chinese scripts, it indicates that similar trends on weights have been found in these scripts than that of their original. F1, F3 and F4 in the dubbed Chinese scripts of *The Devil Wears Prada* are overriding their counterparts in the Chinese dubbed transcript whilst F2 and F5 are found less. Even though it is far from that we may safely conclude that there are certain kind of difference in British and American spoken features, at least Chinese dubbed scripts followed the distribution of weights in terms of either retaining or overriding each spoken features in the original.

4.3. Orality in dubbing Chinese vs. spontaneous Chinese

Only by comparing these features with spontaneous Chinese speech, can we draw safer conclusion about the delivering of orality from two English films to the Chinese audience over dubbing. “Media Language Corpus” (MLC) is an online corpus 34,039 broadcasting and TV programs from 2008 to 2013 with a transcription of 241,316,530 characters⁸⁾. I specifically confined the search with dialogues and conversations, with a total of 47 texts and 472,055 words. Table 8 compares the dubbed Chinese scripts with the natural media language, the results are as follows:

Table 8. Orality in dubbing Chinese vs. spontaneous Chinese⁹⁾

Spoken Features	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	CF7	Total
Dubbed Chinese	606	185	79	112	32	30	470	1514
Percentage	40.03%	12.22%	5.22%	7.40%	2.11%	1.98%	31.04%	100%
Total	1382 + 1096 = 2478 (textual units)							
Spontaneous Chinese	1452	963	841	494	331	111	2696	6888
Percentage	21.08%	13.98%	12.21%	7.17%	4.81%	1.61%	39.14%	100%
Total	124,461 (textual units)							

From Table 8, it turns out that F1 (using incomplete sentence) in the dubbed Chinese scripts even largely overriding that in the natural speech, followed by a very close

8) <http://ling.cuc.edu.cn/RawPub/>

9) Without any tagging in the spontaneous natural speech corpus, I tried to imitate the process when we categorized the dubbed Chinese scripts by searching the MLC by following rules: F1: any sentence without a subject or object; F2: any sentence less than five characters; F3: any sentence less than three characters; F4: only one character between any two punctuations; F5: any three characters between any punctuation and a question mark; F6: any subject pronouns after any verb; CF7: the total number of 9 propositional particles;

representation found in F4 and F6. The rest features are still found underrepresented in the dubbed Chinese than in spontaneous speech. As to using propositional particles, the nine particles are found in Table 9:

Table 9. Propositional particles in dubbed Chinese

Propositional particles	唉	哦	噢	呃	呢	嗎	吧	啊	呀	Total
Two dubbed Chinese	2	8	151	70	36	96	67	47	4	481
Spontaneous Chinese	4	47	6	0	1020	637	637	115	230	2696

By only comparing the frequency of these propositional particles, “噢” and “呃” appear to be much more overrated in the dubbed Chinese script, even outnumbered by the spontaneous Chinese speech we compare.

4.4. Concluding remarks

Methodologically, drawing on the results of the current study, further research will be aimed at the implementation of more sophisticated statistical tools and corpus management tools in order to collect more systematic and quantitative data from the corpus, and to increase the precision of results driven by a series of contrastive analysis, and provide a more accurate description of trends identifying the spoken features in dubbed Chinese translations from English original, and more dubbed scripts from films and TV series will be collected in the future.

Theoretically, the translator may be more sensitive over certain spoken features while less so on others. This may in turn be related to a number of things: the particular film to be dubbed, the code-switching ability to more natural spoken language, the influence of language-specific features, and so on. Moreover, there are indeed some lexical and syntactic differences between English and Chinese natural speeches, unlike what Pavarsi (2008) had done in her research comparing orality in English original and Italian dubbing scripts. By comparing the Chinese dubbed scripts with a corpus of Chinese natural speeches, it turns out that “using incomplete sentences” has been overrepresented not only in comparison with the original films but also the natural speeches. It may help us to further identify the over/underrepresentation of the spoken feature is that we may compare. And it is the next stage of the current study. And further studies are also needed, based on more systematic data from larger corpora containing dubbed films over a period, like in recent ten to twenty years.

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