

ENGLISH-TO-CHINESE MOVIE TITLE TRANSLATIONS AS VIEWED FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF RECEPTION AESTHETICS



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Abstract

ON MOVIE TITLE TRANSLATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RECEPTION AESTHETICS

Zhang Qiong (Christina)

Under the Supervision of Professor Teresa Burns

Movies are a popular international art form which play an important role in people's leisure time. With the increasing development of the Chinese economy and cross-cultural communication, a quite number of foreign movies have been introduced to China in recent years. For such movies, the title, as the most direct and accessible tool for audience to know about the movie, is a very significant factor in whether or not an audience will want to see the movie. This paper, focusing as it does on movies originally filmed in English which are dubbed or translated to Chinese when shown in China, will show how the cultural differences between Chinese- and English-speaking cultures often cause problems with movie title translations. Such translation issues need to have more attention paid to them by people working in the movie industry. This paper will explore how Reception Aesthetics might provide a better model for translating movie titles.

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Chapter I Introduction

One weekend before beginning this project, I went to the cinema with my friend. When we were searching for the movies on the bulletin, we found several Hollywood movies which captured our attention. She pointed to one movie and expressed her interest in watching it. I saw that the name of the movie was “美少女特攻队” (“Squad of Pretty Girls”). According to the meaning of the direct Chinese translation of this movie title, I guessed it was an action or adventure movie with some pretty girls in the leading roles. The movie poster and the brief introduction of the movie seemed to confirm my supposition. When we watched the movie, we found that it was a story about four girls who formed a squad to fight against some evil men or forces to gain freedom. The name of the movie was equivalent to the theme and the genre of this movie but not a direct translation. What interested me most was the original English movie title, “Sucker Punch,” which means “a surprising blow.” I suppose if the movie title had been translated literally into Chinese, it would not be so attractive or appealing as the version we saw in the cinema. This movie-watching experience made me think about the problem and strategy of movie title translations in China. As the movie title is the very important factor for audience’s decision to watch the movie, it should satisfy the audience’s aesthetic taste and psychological needs as well as what Reception Aesthetics calls the “horizon of expectation.”

Movies are a popular international art form which play an important role in people’s leisure time and which appeal to people from different nations and cultures. In recent years, countries such as China, the United States, India and others have produced movies as a product to export to other countries, thus giving birth to the rise of international cinema. This paper will focus on Hollywood-style movies originally filmed in English then exported to China as a “cultural translation” that also must be linguistically translated either via sub-titles or dubbing over in

Chinese.

For such movies, the title, as the most direct and accessible tool for audience to know about the movie, is very significant factor in whether or not an audience will want to see the movie. A good movie title not only provides some important information about the movie and conveys the distinctive cultures and customs of the people or nation that produced it, but it also catches the audience's eye and arouses their curiosity and ideally makes them desire to see the movie as soon as possible. Therefore, movie title translation is a critical task for the successful introduction of a foreign movie into another culture. It is the first and most critical opportunity to hook an audience with an idea that both signals something about the culture of origin while being relevant to the culture which receives it. When a movie is given a poorly translated or culturally irrelevant title, the movie may fail simply because the title does not induce anyone to want to see it.

Reception aesthetics, as a theory of literary criticism, gives priority to readers' role in literary understanding and interpretation. In terms of translation, such a theory implies that the translator should consider the reaction of the audience about the movie title as much as what a literal translation might be. The translator should seek the same effect as that of the source language of the audience. However, before discussing reception theory in greater detail, let's review why traditional translation theory does not provide a helpful model for movie title translation.

Traditional translation theory puts more emphasis on the important and authoritative status of an original text and author. But this notion cannot satisfy the needs of movie title translation to the largest extent. Movies often do not have only one author, first of all, and often are adaptations of a work even within their own culture. They communicate via image (*i.e.* visual

rhetoric) as much as via language and those images are often very culturally determined. Thus movies are not only a cultural and linguistic product, but also a special sort of multi-authored and multi-media commercial product.

The ultimate objective of movie is to lure the audience into the cinema to watch and appreciate it in addition to providing cultural information. While communicating cultural information might be a goal on some occasions, profit is the major goal. The aesthetics used in translating the title are not complex because this goal is so simple.

This paper suggests analyzing movie title translation using the Reception Aesthetics theory put forward in the 1960s by Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, a theory based upon earlier theories of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Reception aesthetics, as a theory of literary criticism, gives priority to readers' role in literary understanding and interpretation. By affirming the readers' important position and initiative, reception aesthetics when used as a theory of translation can dramatically transform how one thinks about translation, from the previous traditional idea of trying to maintain the original ideas of one author and one text to one where the audience (those who receive the work of art) becomes primary.

According to reception aesthetics, the horizon of expectation should be taken into consideration when the translation work begins to be done. By "horizon of expectation," we mean what the reader, viewer or listener or can reasonably or likely expect based on the previous cultural norms, assumptions and criteria in the source language of that viewer/listener/reader's culture at a given time. The horizon of expectation may be influenced by such factors as the prevailing traditions, artistic trends or current moral codes. Such "horizons" may change with the passage of time, thus many works of art can be reread and reevaluated by the later generation of readers.

Movie titles, as a special type of text, are also understood and influenced by the audience's horizon of expectation. Chinese audiences, before they decide to watch a movie, naturally harbor a particular cultural horizon of expectation about the movie. They will form their judgment and assumptions about the genre, plot, story, and background first from of movie from the movie title. That horizon of expectation will consequently influence their ultimate decision to watch the movie or not. Hence, in doing the movie title translation, the translator should keep the audience's horizon of expectation in mind and try his utmost to achieve a fusion of that horizon of expectation with that of the movie. In this way, the comparatively satisfactory version is likely to come into being and finally will live up to the audience's expectations.

In this seminar paper, the author will provide a review of literature which includes a review of Reception Aesthetics, a review of factors taken into consideration in movie title translation, a review of the influence of Reception Aesthetics on movie title translation and a review of translation methods employed in movie title translation. Last but not the least, it will conclude with a summary of the author's thesis on the topic and some suggestions and advice to help the reader gain more insight into the factors which might lead to better movie title translations.

Statement of the Problem

The problems to be addressed are:

1. To what extent does Reception Aesthetics influence the translation of titles of commercial internationally marketed movies originally shown in English then translated to Chinese?
2. What would the practical translation methods for movie titles be according to Reception Aesthetics?

Purpose and Significance of the Research

The research is designed for developing an interest in readers in the use of film analysis and translation as a tool for understanding English and Western Culture as expressed in the movie media. It is also hoped to contribute a little to movie title translation practice or the study in this field. That is, the writer will provide examples of current film analysis as well as a review of the literature.

Delimitations of the Research

Secondary research will be conducted in and through the Karmann Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. Primary searches will be conducted via the Internet through EBSCO host with ERIC, Academic Search Elite and Google/Google Scholar as the primary sources. Key search topics included “reception aesthetics”, “movie title translation” and “translation methods.” The author will also draw on her own experience as a Chinese speaker and movie viewer and upon her knowledge of how particular Academy-Award-winning English-language movies were retitled for Chinese audiences and will use the Oscar official website for listings of award-winning English-language movies. Additionally, the author will look at recent thesis topics published in Chinese on this subject in comparison to those in English.

Methodology

The paper will give an overview of how Reception Aesthetics has been used in literary theory and define terms within the text. Following that, a brief review of literature on the studies of movie title translation from the perspective of Reception Aesthetics will be conducted. A documentary analysis will be adopted in this paper. It will look at how movie titles from various successive movies which have won or been nominated for the “Best Picture” Oscar by

the Motion Picture Academy between 1950 and 2012 via the Oscar official website and also look at particular contemporary non-Oscar winning movies which have been translated for Chinese audiences. A detailed analysis of English to Chinese film title translation will be carried out from the perspective of Reception Aesthetics and examples of different translation types will be explained.

Chapter II

An Overview of Reception Aesthetics Literature as Applied to Movie Titles

As discussed in the introduction, the principles of Receptive Aesthetics suggest that a well-translated movie title should satisfy the audience's aesthetic tastes and psychological needs as well as matching the viewer's horizon of expectation.

After explaining more about Receptive Aesthetics, this literature review will first define the following translation methods of movie title: literal translation, free translation and creative translation.

What is Reception Aesthetics?

Reception aesthetics, also called reception theory, is a theory of literary criticism which challenges traditional text-oriented literary theory. Simply put, it focuses on how a work of art is received rather than on the author's intention or upon the text's production. In doing so, it provided a new perspective for literary research and other fields such as film studies and translation studies as well. Reception Aesthetics was proposed in the 1960s by a German professor who specialized in medieval French literature, Professor Hans Robert Jauss and his colleague Wolfgang Iser, a literary theorist. Their ideas became associated with reader response criticism in the United States, but continued to be broadly used elsewhere because of their focus on cross-cultural construction of meaning, or cross-cultural hermeneutics, rather than on the formal poetics of a text within its own culture.

One recent critic notes that, "[t]he Constance School (of Reception Aesthetics theorists) were against the traditional literary theory [of the 1950s] which was either author-oriented (Romanticism and the 19th), or text-oriented (New Criticism)" (Zhang, 1999, p. 290). K. M.

Newton explains that "a major difference between recent literary theory and earlier critical approaches such as Russian Formalism, the New Criticism, and the first phase of French structuralism is that there has been a shift of emphasis towards the readers in much recent theory" (Newton, 1997, pp. 187). Here, "a shift of emphasis towards the readers" refers to the basic principle of reception aesthetics; for examining movie titles, "reader/viewer" can be substituted.

According to the theory of reception aesthetics, literature and literary activities are not the individual activities of authors but the social and systematic process integrated with different segments of an artistic production in which the readers/viewers must play a vital and inevitable role in making a work mean anything at all, because they, the recipients, are who decides for themselves is and how it is meaningful. The aesthetic and social meaning of any work can only be reflected by the reading practice of readers: a work not read is nothing but a pile of paper with words, symbols, book-binding and layout.

Juass noted that literary history is " a process of aesthetic reception and production in the realization of literary texts on the part of the receptive reader, the reflective critic and the author in his continuing productivity" (1970, page 10). In this monumental 1970 speech, he emphasized the importance of the reader's role and discussed the relationship between the expectation of work upon readers and the expectation of readers on work. His theory of the key concepts of "horizon of expectations, aesthetic distance, the fusion of the horizon, synchronicity and diachronism" when appeared then had by 1983 developed into his well-known work *Towards the Aesthetic of Reception*. In this view of the production of meaning, the combination of creative writers and readers' active response constitute the value of the work. As Wolfgang Iser said, "only when the author inspires the readers' imagination can he make his

readers engrossed and realize the intention of his text” (1971 p. 193). As can be seen, a translator, as a special reader of the author, is supposed to focus on the need to come up with the imaginative version to satisfy the need of the receptors.

While reception aesthetics is no longer frequently used by literary theorists, that may well be because few theorists actually focus on cross-cultural translation and the prediction of meaning. This theory, influenced by philosophers such as Heidegger whose works were devoted to how we know what we know and how we produce meaning, seems ideally suited to a situation where a very small text—a title—carries great signifying weight and where that signifier is intended to evoke a particular response (desire to see the movie) in the target audience. For the philosopher Heidegger, the way that we as humans understand is always determined by the culture and context in which we live.

What Factors Should We Take into Consideration in Movie Title Translation?

Movies are a visual art which use sound and images to tell stories, express feelings and emotions and attract audience through sound and colors. By a “movie title,” we mean the name of the movie which can be named by person, place, object, story, plot or other factors. It has a range of functions such as informative, expressive, aesthetic and vocative functions. As language reflects thought and culture, the movie title, as a special kind of language, can reflect the culture of the specific country. Yet movies that are the product of large companies aiming for world export also must ensure a way to convey the meaning in other cultures.

People can get access to a small part of the culture from the movie title and decide whether to watch the movie or not. When we understand the culture from the movie title, we are inclined to be attracted by it and obtain more psychological satisfaction in watching the movie and have better aesthetic reactions about the theme and content of the movie.

If we look more closely at what is meant by “culture,” we could use the work of renowned scholar of cultural translation studies Eugene Nida, who divides culture into five categories : ecological culture, material culture, socio-cultural culture, religious culture and language culture (Newmark, 2001, p 95). All of these cultural aspects can be found in the movie, and will also be reflected at the level of the movie’s title. For example, the 2010 movie *Dear John* and the 2008 *The Other Boleyn Girl* are good examples of titles which reflect certain historical cultures: in English, the first ironically plays upon the meaning of a “Dear John” letter (a letter whose intent is to end a relationship) because the topic is a contemporary soldier who falls in love and waiting for a long time hoping to survive and see his girlfriend; the second plays upon historical knowledge of Queen Anne Bolyne as one of the wives of English King Henry VIII and creates the expectation that there is “another” Bolyne. If we turn to titles which reflect religious culture, it is not difficult to find typical examples such as *Original Sin* (2001), *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), or *Silence of the Lambs* (1999), all of which contain particular words understood to refer to Christian culture. If we move to titles which reflect linguistic cultures, the movie titles *Up* (2009), *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1975), *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966), or *Click* (2006) can serve as representatives. In English, each have catching multiple references. For instance, “One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest” refers to a nursery rhyme but a “cuckoo” can also be someone who is crazy.

In addition to cultural factors, commercial factors should not be ignored in the movie title translation. Movies, as a popular art, must draw audiences into the cinema and the box office sales can also be used as an indicator of a movie’s success or not. Movie titles, as the first step of the audience’s knowledge about the movie, should have the function of attracting viewers. Thus, in the movie title translation process, emphasis on non-commercial cultural aspects is not enough

and due attention should also be given to the movies box-office potential and how it can be enhanced by the title. As an art form, movies that are exported globally as a product to make money must necessarily integrate cultural and commercial factors. It is often key to take the commercial element into consideration when translation of a film title is adopted.

How Does the Theory of Reception Aesthetics influence Movie Title Translation?

According to Reception Aesthetics, special emphasis should be given to readers' horizon of expectation, the aesthetic distance and indeterminacy in the hope of achieving the fusion of horizon of the readers and text. These concepts can be easily applied to movie title translation because they each give priority to the reader/viewer's role and status. When doing translation, the translator should consider the reaction of the audience to the movie title. The translator should seek the same effect as that of the source language of the audience. Doing this as a conscious aesthetic act should bring a better result than simply picking something that grabs a viewers but leaves them disappointed or feeling tricked.

In terms of Reception Aesthetics, a reader is equipped with his own distinctive "horizon of expectation" before he reads a work (or in this case, a title). The horizon of expectation determines the reader's recognition or exclusion of particular parts of the content and style of a work. The horizon of expectation is quite similar to the "pre-understanding" proposed by German hermeneutic philosopher Hans-George Gadamer as well as what cognitive psychologists call "semantic memory" or the encyclopedic knowledge of word meanings a person possesses. As Jauss explains it, at the historic moment of a work's emergence, the horizon of expectation of the first reader is satisfaction and transcendence or disappointment / refutation. The horizon obviously provides a measurement of the aesthetic value of the work. The distance between the horizon of expectation and the work as well as the distance between the familiar previous

aesthetic experience and the shift of horizon to accept the new work determines the artistic nature of literary work (Jauss, 1983, p.23).

The notion of a fusion of the horizon of expectation is an idea which originated from Gadamer but is applied by Jauss (2008, p.95). As he describes this dialectic process, the horizon is affected by the historical consciousness of the reader and because of this it is not static but historical and dynamic. Different readers in different times and places have different understandings of the same text according to their horizon of expectations. This kind of understanding is described, in one of Gadamer's most famous expressions, as a fusion of one's own horizon with the historical horizon (Jauss, 1983, p.29). It is not until the fusion of the reader's horizon of expectations and the horizon of the original text that the reader's understanding and reception of a text is accomplished (Jauss, 1983,p.21).

Gadamer holds that a fusion is possible when the textual world (or the author's textual meaning world) is compatible with the world of reader and interpreter in communication, dialogue and interaction. Only when the readers' horizon of expectation has been fused with the original text, can the reception and understanding be achieved (Lu, 2011, p.88). The diversity of reader's understanding and reception can be attributed to historical as well as individual reasons. Besides, the text structure of work literally provides the possibility of open interpretation. When a reader receives a text, he or she will make creative imaginings based on this. Thus, reception is a kind of recreation. Literary work will not become a literary activity until it is read by the readers. In other words, a work's literary spirit or value is determined by the reader's reception. Aesthetic distance refers to the distance between the real text and the text in the horizon of expectation. The reader recreates the work with his reception and imagination. In the process of the recreation, the reader achieves the aesthetic self-fulfillment and improves

his aesthetic ability. That is to say, in recreating the work, the reader reshapes himself.

Have Theorists Have Discussed Movie Title Translation in Terms of Reception Aesthetics?

In recent years, a number of Chinese scholars have suggested applying Reception Aesthetics to foreign movie title translations. In Chinese, several articles and two books have been written on this topic though few have been translated into English. Many particularly focus on the translation of English titles into Chinese, such as You (2010), Jiang (2009) and others. This could suggest that Chinese translators already have these principles in mind. Yet there very few who write in English on this phenomenon, because Reception Aesthetics is apparently considered an old theory or not one used often in translation studies in the United States.

What kind of translation methods can be employed in movie title translation according to Reception Aesthetics?

According to the theory of Reception Aesthetics, the value of any literary work lies in the readers' reception. Therefore the horizon of the source text should integrate with that of the readers' or receptor's during the process of readers' understanding and interpretation of the text. Similarly, the process of movie title translation is also a process of understand and recreation. The translation should aim at the fusion of the audience's horizon and that of the source text. To realize the objective, the following translation methods can be presented as possibilities for movie title translation: literal translation, free translation and creative translation.

As elaborated upon in Reception Aesthetics, the readers' horizon of expectations are composed of their previous reading experience and aesthetic taste which will exert great influence upon readers' reception of the translated work. In other words, readers will bear their "horizon of expectations" when they encounter a text. Holub concludes that it is as "an

inter-subjective system or structure of expectations, a system of references' or a mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text" (1984, p. 59). In accordance with his statement, it can be seen that a reader has harbored a certain world outlook, social experiences, values and thought patterns before he reads a literary work. His consciousness is not empty when he is reading a literary work. And all these elements constitute the reader's horizon of expectations.

Literal translation, usually called word-for-word translation, is retaining the original images and form of the text in the source language so that the target readers can obtain the same feelings and reactions as the source readers have. "It is ideally the segmentation of the SL [source language] text into individual words and TL [target language] rendering of those word-segmented one at a time" (Baker, 2004, p.125). This translation method can be acceptable when the form and meaning of the movie title are nearly identical in both English and Chinese. That is to say, when the Chinese audiences have the same horizon of expectation about the movie title as the English audiences and the fusion of horizon can be achieved in the practice of word-for-word translation. The Chinese audience will not feel strange or uncomfortable when they watch a Chinese version of English movie title. Because of the universality and understandability between different languages and cultures, literal translation can be a good choice for translating some classical movie titles because the words in the title do not have references (historical, cultural, linguistic or otherwise) that do not translate literally. For instance, good examples of movie titles than can be translated this way are *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), *Pearl Harbor* (2001), *Schindler's List* (1993), *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994), and *Out of Africa* (1985). These movies have historical referents but those referents are easily understood when translated word by word.

Free translation, different from literal translation, doesn't aim to hold on to the original words or linguistic structure. Though the audience may hope to get access to the cultural flavor of the original movie title, the translation reality is not all ideal and satisfactory and sometimes word-for-word translation does not work. Due to the obvious and inevitable cultural differences reflected in movie titles, the adoption of free translation is indispensable and a necessary complement to literal translation. The different cultures including historical, religious and language cultures between Chinese speakers in China and English speakers in the United States make the literal translation of Hollywood movie titles into Chinese either too simple and lacking aesthetic sense or difficult and complicated for the target audience to understand and appreciate. For example, the movie *Cleopatra* (1963) is a history movie about the legendary, beautiful and ambitious Egyptian queen Cleopatra. For the sake of her country and her own ambition, she married Julius Caesar, the ruler of Roman Empire. After Caesar died, she turned to the general Mark Anthony both out of desire and love. But in the end, both of them ended up in tragedy because they were ruined and defeated by the new ruler Octavianus. The movie title has a strong and distinctive historical cultural element which poses difficulty for Chinese audience to understand. If the movie title is transliterated directly as 克里奥佩特拉, (Chinese pinyin for sounds in the name "Cleopatra", it has no explicit meaning at all for a Chinese audience and cannot arouse their interest and curiosity to watch the movie. Because in this case the target audience's horizon of expectation is not equivalent to that of source audience, a direct translation fails to achieve fusion of expectation. The sounds in this name are not known well if at all to most audiences in China. The better translation is free translation which is rendered as 埃及艳后 ("The Seductive Queen of Egypt".)

In addition to literal translation and free translation, adaptation is also an efficient way

applied in movie title translation. Due to the fact that literal and free translation at times are both inadequate to convey the accurate implied meaning of the original movie title, adaptation becomes an effective method to remedy the deficiency. When the original movie title is equipped with strong cultural connotations or implicit rhetorical devices, it is more appropriate to change the form and create a brand new title to transfer the real meaning or add some more interesting or commercial elements to allure the audience into the cinema. Take the previously mentioned movie *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* as an example. The movie name comes from the combination of a repeated song in a children's story called the "Three Pigs" (where the repeated line is "who's afraid of the big, bad wolf") and asking who is afraid of "Virginia Woolf," a woman writer who was famous to British and American readers in the mid-20th century. The movie, an adaptation of a play by Edward Albee which is famous in the English-speaking world, tells about the conflict and tragedy of a married couple, George and Marsha. Though they have been married for 23 years, they still cannot tolerate each other and often make fun of each other and get pleasure from abusing each other, and in this case they do it at the expense of a young couple visiting them. The movie title contains several meanings. First, it expresses the sensitivity and sense of humor of intellectuals like the two professors in the play and their well-educated wives. It helps characterize Marsha and the other people because they are all very familiar with the writer Virginia Woolf. Woolf committed suicide out of mental breakdown, which suggested that the couple in the movie cannot stand up to the reality and seek shelter from illusions. The frequent repetition of the song in the movie serves the function of revealing the theme (because in the children's story the pigs are afraid the wolf will eat them.) The almost parodic affect of this movie title creates humor and leaves the original audience adequate space to reflect.

Yet the distinctive cultural and linguistic characteristic of this movie title are not familiar to the Chinese audience at all. Therefore, if the movie title is literally translated as 谁害怕弗吉尼亚伍尔夫, it sounds like a horror or thriller movie which is totally different from the original meaning of the movie. The adaption of the movie title is 灵欲春宵 (*"Flesh and Soul"*) with four Chinese typical characters which reveals the theme of the movie and helps the target audience to better understand the movie thus achieving the commercial purpose.

Summary

According to Reception Theory Aesthetics, when the audience reads the film title, a certain distance exists between the horizon of the title and the audience's horizon of expectation. Furthermore, any film title is an open system. Once finished (that is, once it is read), it is free to be rendered into different versions based on the imaginings of the reader or viewer. It may be translated differently against distinctive historical backgrounds. Therefore, more than one version of a film title should be encouraged. However, the best and most excellent one is the one that caters to the needs of certain group of potential movie viewers during a specific period of time. It is effective and reasonable for the translators to adopt different translation strategies to meet the needs of target readers' flavor. The author brings forward the opinion that the translators should provide the audiences with qualified translations of film titles in the form of note following his or her own translation, as the final purpose of the translation of film titles is after all to attract and please the local audiences.

Chapter III Conclusions and Recommendations

Movies play a significant role in people's spiritual lives as well as providing entertainment and relaxation. In order to appreciate the excellent foreign movies introduced to China, the translation of movie titles is not an issue which can afford to be neglected. Because a movie title possesses the informative, expressive, aesthetic and vocative functions, the psychological needs of the audience should be taken into consideration when translators do the movie title translation work. Reception aesthetics, as a theory to put emphasis on the readers or receptor's role and status in literary understanding and acceptance, can be naturally applied to movie title translation.

Reception Aesthetics, also called reception theory, is a theory of literary criticism which challenges the traditional text-oriented literary theory and provides a new perspective for literary research and other fields such as film studies and translation studies as well. As this paper has discussed, Reception Aesthetics was proposed in the 1960s by the Constance School Professor Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser based on phenomenology and hermeneutics. It remains relevant to this day. According to the theory, literature and literary activities are not the individual activities of authors but the social and systematic process integrated with different segments in which the readers are the inevitable part making the meaning of work meaningful.

In movie title translation, before the translator commences his work, he has to take the audience's horizon of expectation into consideration. The translator obviously must also have a deep understanding of the many references the title has in the source language. In my original example of *Girl's Squad*, it appears that a translator decided upon a literal translation which in that case was not appropriate because it created a faulty horizon of expectations. That horizon,

as discussed, is intrinsically composed of the audience's previous reading or viewing experiences and aesthetic values, norms and tastes as determined by their own time period, culture, and experiences. When the receptor is exposed to a new movie title, his horizon of expectation will subconsciously influence his decision to accept or reject the new title.

If the new movie title conforms to his own cultural or linguistic cognition, he will feel inclined to accept it. However, if the new title is totally different from or unfamiliar to his own aesthetic experience, he will be reluctant to be convinced to watch the new movie. Therefore, the translator has to, in the light of Reception Aesthetics, try his utmost to consider the audience's horizon of expectation and achieve the fusion of horizon to achieve the goal of attracting the audience into the cinema. Similarly he must be able to achieve an understanding of the horizon of expectation that many in the original English speaking audience had when they received the title.

As a result, this paper has suggested three main translation methods to tentatively solve the problems in movie title translation in the hope of fulfilling the objective of satisfying the audience's needs. The three methods can be classified as literal translation, free translation and adaptation. When the audience's horizon of expectation is similar to that of the potential receptor in the source culture, literal translation can be adopted to convey the content and culture of the movie title. However, when the audience's horizon of expectation does not conform to or is incompatible with the original one, free translation and adaptation should be conducted to complement the literal translation and remedy the deficit in movie title translation. Whatever translation methods are adopted in practice, the ultimate objective is to achieve the vocative function of movie title, which means arousing the audience's interest and convincing them to walk into the cinema.

Studies of Reception Aesthetics as a mode of understanding movie title translation are not unusual in China, as discussed before. However, a search of EBSCO host and other English language databases showed no such frequency of analysis English speaking countries, despite the fact that this method of analyzing titles uses a theory of aesthetics and literary analysis which was once used often in English speaking countries. Hopefully the horizon of understanding of how movies title translation can be viewed in China will have fused with the horizon of understanding of American readers.

The work reported here is a tentative study on movie title translation from the reception aesthetics point of view. Translation can be viewed from different angles, and hopefully this paper will be of some value in suggesting some ideas and methods of movie title translation. In the teaching and research about the movie title translation, this paper is also hoped to make somewhat contributions to it.

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