A Corpus-Based Evaluation of English-Mandarin Cultural References between Fansubbing and Official Subtitling

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Abstract: There has been considerable interest in subtitling strategies in the translation of cultural references. However, there is a lack of studies on subtitling in the Chinese context. The purpose of this study is to compare the subtitling strategies used by fansubbers and official subtitlers when dealing with cultural references in translated Mandarin subtitles. The results showed that 228 cultural references had been found in the two films: *The King's Speech* and *No Country for Old Men*. In addition, fansubbers and official subtitlers did not use three strategies in the selected framework: loan, calque, and compensation. Furthermore, three other strategies were identified in this study that did not fall within the selected framework, namely paraphrase, condensation, and gloss. In addition, the gloss strategy was only found in fansubbing, whereas official subtitlers used omission and lexical-recreation strategies. Some inappropriate or inaccurate subtitling of cultural references can be identified in the fansubbing. Although there was a divergence between the two subtitling groups, the statistical results showed that the differences between these groups in the adoption of subtitling strategies were not statistically significant.

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1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is used to refer to the translation of any audiovisual material, such as films and video games, from one language to the target language (Valdeón, 2022). Although there are some common modes of AVT, subtitling is the most common, in which dialogues/conversations in the source language are presented as written texts on the screen in the target language (Karakanta, 2022; Valdeón, 2022). For the acquisition of cultural knowledge and the development of intercultural literacy, foreign films have been identified as an effective medium (Kim, 2020; Pegrum, 2008). However, the translation of cultural references (CR) in subtitling foreign films has been acknowledged as one of the most challenging tasks for translators because CRs may not have direct equivalents in the target language and culture (Abdelaal, 2019).

Subtitling groups mainly constitute two groups: fansubbing (short for fan subtitling) and official subtitling. The fansubbing group, which usually refers to the subtitling of television dramas and films by networked fan communities, seeks to redress the shortage and cultural insensitivity of commercial translations (Pérez-González, 2014). The first wave of fansubbing came back to the 1980s, when fans followed anime subculture, and the second wave of fansubbing flourished in the golden age of US TV series (Massidda, 2020). Fansubbing, as a newly recognized field in translation studies, has represented "a form of liberation from normative restrictions of mainstream subtitling" (Massidda, 2020, p. 191). It was called to be more creative and idiosyncratic than professional subtitling (Díaz-Cintas, 2009).

Fansubbing groups have been welcomed by Chinese audiences since 2005, when they introduced *Prison Break* to Chinese audiences (Yao, 2021). This phenomenon has been studied in a number of ways, including studies that focused on the impact of fansubbing (e.g., Gao, 2012), as well as studies that examined the originality and authenticity of fansubbing (e.g., Guo & Evans, 2020; Wang & Zhang, 2017). Another line of studies examined the inner structure of fansubber groups, including the distribution of labor and recruitment methods (e.g.,Wang, 2017). Fansubbing has been lauded for its innovative developments or creativity. On the one hand, official subtitling compromises authority censorship when it comes to officially imported foreign films and television series (Gao, 2012; Wang et al., 2020).

Recent years have witnessed considerable attention of researchers to the translation of CRs in subtitles of films (e.g., Abdelaal, 2019; Blayt & Liubinien, 2016; Marco, 2019). Although these studies have produced significant findings that can be useful to translators and subtitlers, most of these studies have been carried out based on European languages, contexts, and cultures (Alfaify & Ramos Pinto, 2021). In other words, studies on the subtitling of CRs into Chinese culture are relatively rare. Wang (2021) analyzed how subtitlers adapt source materials to meet the needs of cross-cultural audiences by balanc-

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-ing covert translation and overt translation in the context of mainland China. However, Wang's study did not address subtitling cultural references. Furthermore, in previous studies in the Chinese context, attention has not been paid to studies of comparative designs that compare subtitling strategies used by fansubbers and official subtitlers. These are the gaps that our study addresses through the analysis of the strategies used by official subtitlers and fansubbers. Few researchers have documented these gaps. For example, Xiao and Peng (2019) have clearly argued that audiovisual translation studies in the Chinese cultural context, including subtitling, are among the least explored areas of translation research.

Taking into account the gaps in previous studies, this study addresses the following three research questions.

1. What are the cultural references in *The King's Speech* and *No Country for Old Men*?

2. What are the subtitling strategies employed by fansubbing and official subtitling groups in the translation of cultural references?

3. How and in what aspects do the subtitling strategies employed by fansubbing and official subtitling groups in the translation of cultural references differ?

The findings of this study are significant for two reasons. First, this study is a response to the need to have subtitles in foreign movies. Subtitles, as an intercultural mediation, are considered a link between the source culture and target audiences (Guillot & Pavesi, 2019; Mansy, 2021). The use of different strategies in subtitling can provide viewers with a variety of cultural experiences. Second, this research intends to fill important gaps in empirical research on English-Mandarin subtitles from a cultural perspective. A comparison and evaluation of translated Chinese subtitles by fansubbers and official subtitlers may provide subtitlers with valuable information.

The remaining sections of this paper are five. First, a section on literature review is given to present the main concepts of this study and review previous related studies. Second, the method section provides a description of the research design of the study and how the corpus was collected and analyzed. This is followed by the third section, which provides the answers to the three research questions. The fourth section is devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the findings. At the end of this paper, the main conclusions and recommendations are presented.

2. Literature Review

This section provides an overview of the main concepts in this research, as well as a review of related studies. One of the major concepts that should be made clear in this research is CRs. To understand how this term is defined and operationalized in this research, the researchers first provide the conceptualization of this term. Further, the taxonomy of cultural references is explained. Subsequently, models of subtitling strategies for cultural references are described and reviewed.

2.1. Cultural References

Cultural references are specific words, phrases, or concepts that are associated with a particular culture or community. A relatively small number of scholars in translation studies, and even fewer in AVT, have proposed systematic definitions of CRs (Ranzato, 2015). However, Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020) proposed that CRs are "items that are tied to a community's culture, history, or geography, and they can pose a serious translation challenge" (p. 221). In this study, the term CRs refers to items used in subtitles that are associated with the English context and need to be translated into the Chinese context.

Regarding CR translation, an issue that has attracted the attention of scholars is the possibility of having a taxonomy to categorize and classify CR. As a result of this, there have been some taxonomies that have been proposed by leading scholars in translation, such as Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Pedersen (2005), and Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020) Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) proposed the term "culture-bound problems" to refer to the phenomena and actions that occur in the source culture. Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) provided a detailed typology of culture-bound problems, which can be divided into four domains: geography, history, society, and culture. However, it appears that her classification is somewhat idealistic, as it is common to find overlaps between domains.

Pedersen (2005) explored factors responsible for the emergence of translation crisis issues in the subtitling process. He used the term Extralinguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs) to refer to these factors. In his classification of ECRs, Pedersen (2005) pointed out that they include objects that exist outside language, such as names of people, places, institutions, foods, and customs. His conceptualization of these references overlaps with the culture-specific items proposed by Aixelá (1996) and the culture-bound problems proposed by Nedergaard-Larsen (1993). However, they do not incorporate "intralinguistic cultural references, such as idioms, proverbs, slang, and dialects" (p. 2).

According to Pedersen (2011) ECRs are classified into twelve major domains, including 'weights and measures; proper names (names of individuals, geographical locations, organizations/brands); professional titles; food and beverages; literature; government; entertainment; education; sports; currency; technical material and other" (pp.59-60). As outlined by Pedersen (2011), these domains should not be considered exhaustive, as they do not constitute a hierarchical structure of concepts emphasizing inclusive and exclusive relationships. However, they are the most commonly used domains available in his corpus. Pedersen (2011) argued that his corpus is representative of the majority of ECRs in most audio-visual source text materials.

Recently, Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020) proposed an extensive taxonomy of cultural references in subtitling. Their taxonomy, which was originally introduced in 2007 and revised in 2014, includes "real-world cultural references" and "intertextual cultural references" (pp. 203-204). It refers to products originating from a particular culture, which is similar to those described in Pedersen (2011). It includes three domains: "geographical references, ethnographic references, and socio-political references" (p. 203). As the name implies, the latter is concerned with the intertextual

relationship that exists between two cultural materials, which can either be overt or covert. Table 1 presents the taxonomy of Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020) of real-world cultural reference in subtitling.

Table 1: Taxonomy of Cultural Reference in Subtitling.

Geographical References	Ethnographic References	Socio-political References
Certain phenomena	Food and drinks	Administrative or territorial units
Physical, general locations	Objects from daily life	Institutions and functions
Physical, unique locations	Work	Socio-political life
Endemic animal and plant species	Art, media, and culture	Military institutions and obligations
	Groups	Personal names and institutional names
	Weights and measures	
	Brand names and personal names	

Source: Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020)

2.2. Subtitling Strategies for Cultural References

Gottlieb (1992) was among the first who proposed translation strategies that were specific to screen translation. His subtitling strategies have both stylistic and semantic perspectives. Based on his own experience as a television subtitler, he proposed some translation strategies: expansion, paraphrase, transfer, transcription (adequate rendering), imitation (equivalent rendering), dislocation (adjusted content), and condensation (concise rendering). In spite of the fact that these types of subtitles often appear to be quantitative or semantic reductions, Gottlieb (1992) asserted that in condensation, the subtitle conveys most of the stylistic content and interpretation of the original. Condensation is typically associated with the loss of redundant oral linguistic features, particularly when dealing with utterances encountered in interviews and other similar situations.

In the field of subtitle translation, some taxonomies have been proposed by leading scholars (e.g., Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, 2020; Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993; Pedersen, 2005, 2011; Ranzato, 2015). Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) presented an influential classification of translation strategies for extralinguistic culture-bound problems. These strategies are "transfer/loan, direct translation, explication, paraphrases, adaptation to TL culture and omission" (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993, p. 219). These strategies range from direct translation of source language components to adaptation of target language components using culturally neutral techniques or paraphrases.

In his model of translating ECRs for subtitling, Pedersen (2005) drew upon foreignization and domestication strategies of Venuti (1995). However, he substituted "source language (SL) oriented" and "target language (TL) oriented" for the terms proposed by Venuti (1995). Pedersen (2011) presented an elaborate process-oriented model for describing ECR transfer strategies. Recently, Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020) proposed a restructured version of the CR subtitling strategies based on the classification of Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014). Table 2 presents the strategies in the Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020) framework.

Table 2: Subtitling Strategies for Cultural Reference

No.	Subtitling Strategies	Explanation
1	Loan	Words borrowed from SL are incorporated directly into the TL.
2	Literal Translation	This is a special type of loan that transforms SL statements directly into TL statements.
3	Calque	Translation word for word from one language to another, an explanation is needed when the literal translation sounds 'odd'.
4	Explicitation	Making the implicit information in the SL explicit and acceptable in TL.
5	Substitution	A similar reference already exists in the source context or in the target context; may be substituted for the cultural reference in the ST.
6	Transposition	Replacing the cultural concept of the SL with one of the TL.
7	Lexical recreation	The construction of neologisms in the TL.
8	Compensation	Creating something more creative or adding something extra in order to compensate for the translational loss in one exchange.
9	Omission	Due to space-time constraints or the absence of an equivalent term in the TL, this term is commonly used in rapid-fire speech.

Source: Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020)

Additionally, the manner in which subtitlers address cultural references may vary by nation. In other words, local conventions may govern how they handle cultural references, although norms may also change over time. The distinction between Spanish subtitlers who preferred explicitations and Flemish and Dutch subtitlers who preferred loans, from a decade ago, appears to be eroding (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2020). It is worthwhile to investigate the favored strategies used by Chinese subtitlers in translating English films, as these strategies provide guidance to a wide audience, including translators and language learners, as well as reflecting the convention of subtitling over time.

This study is based on the framework of subtitling strategies for cultural references, which was proposed by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020). Using this framework provides the advantage of being both thorough and nimble enough to adequately serve as an analytical tool since superfluous subdivisions have been omitted and well-defined explanations have been included.

3. Methods

This study is a corpus-based qualitative analysis in nature, which aims to explore whether subtitling of cultural references differs between fansubbing and official subtitling, and to what extent and in what aspects the differences exist. The

corpus of this study consists of cultural references from two films: *The King's Speech* and *No Country for Old Men*. Three reasons led to the selection of these two films. First, these two films won Academy Awards for Best Picture in 2010 and 2007, which is representative of the film genres. Second, the researchers are familiar with these two films and have watched them a few times. Third, these two films and their subtitles contain a variety of cultural items and can provide a rich source of material for analysis.

Two types of subtitles were included in the corpus: (1) fansub subtitles and (2) official subtitles. For fansub subtitles, subtitles were compiled from YYeTs, one of the most well-known fansubbing groups in China. The electronic subtitle version of TXT is available on the Internet at https://zimuku.org/. As the downloaded subtitles are raw data, the researchers had to clean them using EmEditor software. As electronic official subtitles are not available on the Internet, the researchers carried out some steps to compile this corpus. First, one of the researchers who is fully proficient in both Mandarin and English watched the films on AIQIYI, a government-approved video broadcast platform. Second, the same researcher noted the differences between the downloaded fansub subtitles and the official subtitles viewed on the platform.

Once the subtitles in these two films were collected, three phases were conducted for data collection and analysis. The first phase involved the annotation of the data using UAM Corpus software (O'Donnell, 2012). The advantage of using UAM Corpus software is that it enables the categorization of each group of CRs into different layers. Additionally, this software allows for the manual annotation of each individual cultural item. Once the corpus was annotated, it was possible for the researchers to extract all cultural elements for each specific group. The analysis was performed based on the taxonomy of CRs and the framework of subtitling strategies for CRs, which were both proposed by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020). The second phase of the research involved a comprehensive analysis of the subtitling strategies used for each cultural element within the corpus. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data, a researcher conducted the annotation and classification of CRs and their corresponding subtitling strategies. Subsequently, the other two researchers conducted a collaborative review. The collaborative review was conducted to address disparities and ambiguities in the annotation and analysis process and to reach a consensus on the results.

These phases allowed researchers to identify the types of cultural references, as well as the divergent strategies used by both fansubbing and official subtitling groups. In the third phase of the analysis, a Mann-Whitney U-test was run to ascertain whether there were significant differences between the decisions made by the translators. The Mann-Whitney U test is used to compare differences between two independent groups. Unlike the independent samples t-test, the Mann-Whitney U test helped researchers draw different conclusions about the data which were obtained after analyzing the corpus.

4. Results

4.1. RQ1: What are the cultural references to *The King's Speech* and *No Country for Old Men*?

The analysis of the corpus of subtitles revealed that there are 228 cultural elements in the two films (Table 3). While there are 130 cultural references in *The King's Speech* (57%), the research could identify 98 cultural references in *No Country for Old Men* (43%). Furthermore, the table reveals that ethnographic and socio-political references have the same frequency, 105 (46%) each.

Table 3: Cultural References in the Corpus

	Film	Major types of cultural references			Frequency	%
		Geographical references	Ethnographic references	Socio-political references		
1	*The King's Speech*	10	52	68	130	57%
2	*No Country for Old Men*	8	53	37	98	43%
	Frequency	18	105	105	228	100%
	%	8%	46%	46%	100%	

Source: Calculated by the author

As reflected in Table 3, there are 130 cultural references in *The King's Speech*: 68 socio-political references, 52 ethnographic references, and 10 geographical references. However, in *No Country for Old Men*, there are 53 ethnographic references and 8 geographical references, while 37 references belong to the socio-political references. As shown in Table 4, there are a total of 18 geographical references. Most of these subcategories belong to physical locations, endemic animals, and plant species.

Table 4: Geographical References in the Corpus

	Subtypes	The King's Speech	No Country for Old Men	Total
1	Certain phenomena	0	0	0
2	Physical, general locations	0	1	1
3	Physical, unique locations	2	2	4
4	Endemic animal and plant species	8	5	13
	Total	10	8	18

Source: Calculated by the author

As shown in Table 5, *The King's Speech* contains a total of 52 cultural references that fall into the category of ethnographic references. Almost half of these ethnographic references are names of brands and people. Similar results were obtained after the analysis of ethnographic references in *No Country for Old Men*. The researchers detected 24 references that represent brands and personal names. Additionally, 10 cultural references representing weights and measures were identified in *No Country for Old Men*. Examples of cultural references are "*bobs*", "*shillings*", and "*pence*". All of these examples are British measure units.

Table 5: Ethnographic Cultural References in the Corpus

	Subtypes	The King's Speech	No Country for Old Men	Total
1	Food and drinks	3	5	8
2	Objects from daily life	3	9	12
3	Work	5	4	9
4	Art, media, and culture	9	0	9
5	Groups	5	1	6
6	Weights and measures	3	10	13
7	Brand names and personal names	24	24	48
	Total	52	53	105

Source: Calculated by the author

As shown in Table 6, the socio-political references that were identified in *The King's Speech* and *No Country for Old Men* are 105 for each. Most of these references were identified in *The King's Speech*, while 37 socio-political references were reported in *No Country for Old Men*. In *The King's Speech*, socio-political references belong to four subtypes: institutions/functions (17 items), institutional and functions (17 items), military objects (12 items), and personal/institutional names (22 items). On the other hand, the 37 socio-political references in *No Country for Old Men* are distributed across only three subtypes: administrative/territorial (14 items), institutions/functions (02 items), and military objects (21 items).

Table 6: Socio-political Cultural References in the Corpus

	Subtypes	The King's Speech	No Country for Old Men	Total
1	Administrative or territorial units	17	14	31
2	Institutions and functions	17	2	19
3	Socio-politicallife	0	0	0
4	Military institutions and obligations	12	21	33
5	Personal names and institutional names	22	0	22
	Total	68	37	105

Source: Calculated by the author

4.2. RQ2: What are the subtitling strategies employed by fansubbing and official subtitling groups in the translation of cultural references?

To address research question two, the researchers examined the strategies used by the two groups of translators when translating the CRs found within the corpus of subtitles. In this section, the subtitling strategies used to translate the CRs are reported. The answers to this research question are divided into three sub-sections based on the three types of CRs.

4.2.1. Subtitling Strategies for Geographic References

The analysis of the corpus revealed that only six subtitle strategies were used for the translation of the geographical references in the corpus (refer to Table 7). These strategies are literal translation, explicitation, paraphrase, transposition, substitution, and omission. However, paraphrasing was not included in the framework of subtitling strategies of Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020). When the concept is translated into other strategies that cannot fully express the original meaning, it may be necessary to use a paraphrase strategy. This can be accomplished by modifying a hypernym or by extracting the meaning from the source material (Baker, 2018). In addition, literal translation and explicitation were used more than the other strategies. Furthermore, the corpus analysis showed that there were no major differences in the strategies used by the official subtitling group and the fansubbing group. The fansubbers employed four strategies, while the official subtitlers adopted five strategies.

Table 7: Subtitling of 18 Geographical References

	Strategy	Official Subtitling	Fansubbing
1	Literal translation	10	11
2	Explicitation	5	5
3	Paraphrase	1	1
4	Transposition	1	0
5	Substitution	0	1
6	Omission	1	0

Source: Calculated by the author

4.2.2. Subtitling Strategies for Ethnographic References

In terms of ethnographic references, eight subtitling strategies were applied in the corpus (refer to Table 8). Fansubbing and official subtitling used literal translation as their dominant subtitling strategies. However, fansubbing used literal translation 70 times, while the official subtitling group employed the same strategy 64 times.

Table 8: Subtitling of 105 Ethnographic References

	Strategy	Official Subtitling	Fansubbing
1	Literal translation	64	70
2	Explicitation	13	11
3	Substitution	9	6
4	Transposition	2	2
5	Paraphrase	14	7
6	Condensation	2	1

	Strategy	Official Subtitling	Fansubbing
7	Glosses	0	8
8	Omission	1	0

Source: Calculated by the author

The corpus analysis revealed that three strategies, paraphrase, condensation, and gloss—that are not included in Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2020) the framework, were also identified in the translation of ethnographic references. While the paraphrase strategy was used 14 times by the official subtitling group, it was used 7 times by the fansubbing group. Condensation was not used frequently by the two groups. Additionally, the gloss strategy was found only in fansubbing 8 times. According to Gottlieb (1992), condensation is another translation strategy that is frequently used in subtitling as it "conveys the meaning and most of the stylistic content of the original" (pp.166-167). For example, the personal name "*Mr. Guy Trundle*" was condensed into "*Guy Trundle*" (*盖伊·特兰德尔*). Another example is "*two million dollars*" which was condensed into "*two million*" (*200 万*).

Several examples are typical of a paraphrase. For example, "*geisha girl*" was translated into "*陪聊*" (chatting service) by an official subtitling group, while fansubbing translated it into "*陪聊的艺伎*" (a geisha who provides chatting service). It is obvious that the official translation is more euphemistic. More typical examples are found in the translation of ethnographic references translated by the official subtitles (refer to Table 9). However, these cultural items were translated using other subtitling strategies by the fansubbing group.

Table 9: Examples of Paraphrase in Official Subtitling

Examples	Official Subtitling/Explanation
I don't want to push my **chips** forward.	*我也不想逞英雄* I don't want to be a hero.
Larry Mahans	*牛仔靴* cowboy boots
After a while, you have to try to get a **tourniquet** on it.	*过一阵子你只好认命* After a while, you just have to accept it.

Source: Calculated by the author

A classic example of transposition is the translation of an English tongue twister. Several tongue twisters appear in *The King's Speech*, including the "*thistle sifter*" and "*Jack and Jill*". If translated directly into Mandarin, they would not sound like tongue twisters. So, the transposition strategy was used to convert them into Mandarin tongue twisters. A similar transposition in official subtitling occurs in *No Country for Old Men*, where "*Prednisone*" was translated into "*关节炎药*" (Arthritis drug).

Another phenomenon that can be observed in translating ethnographic references is the use of glosses. Gloss is an extreme case of explicitation, which is rather common in the field of fansubbing (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2020). In this study, gloss is listed individually to illustrate that it is still widely used in Chinese fansubbing. It should be noted that this strategy was also one of the main differences between the translations done by fansubbing and official subtitling groups. As an example, "*90 degrees*" is translated into "*90 度(32 摄氏度)*" in fansubbing, which means 90 degrees (32 degrees Celsius) in English. Due to the fact that the Chinese unit for temperature is degrees Celsius, which differs from the American unit Fahrenheit, the provision of a gloss strategy can make the context clear to the target audiences.

4.2.3. Subtitling Strategies for Socio-political References

Table 10 illustrates nine subtitling strategies for translating socio-political references. The dominant subtitling strategy remains literal translation, and it was used to translate personal names and institution names. As with the subtitling of ethnographic references, paraphrase, condensation, and gloss are also used when translating socio-political references. The condensation strategy was employed once: when translating "*Clapham Junction*" for the two subtitling groups, which is condensed into "*克拉珀姆*" (Clapham).

Table 10: Subtitling of 105 socio-political References

	Strategy	Official Subtitling	Fansubbing
1	Literal translation	66	74
2	Explicitation	19	13
3	Substitution	4	5
4	Paraphrase	6	6
5	Condensation	3	3
6	Glosses	0	3
7	Transposition	0	1
8	Omission	6	0
9	Lexical recreation	1	0

Source: Calculated by the author

Cultural items such as "*his family*" were paraphrased into "*大英帝国王室*" (British royal family) and "*皇室家族*" (royal family), respectively. A typical example is '*King of the Colonies*'. It is paraphrased into "*帝王风范*" (regal style) in official subtitling, while in fansubbing, it is literally translated into "*殖民地的国王*" (colonial king). It can be understood that the official subtitling clearly performed better in the context of the film.

Examples of substitution are also typical of subtitling socio-political references. For example, the subtitling of "*jackboots*" and "*the Red Flag*" in the two groups. "*Jackboots*" is translated into "*德国政府*" (German government) and

"*纳粹军队*" (Nazi army), respectively. As can be seen from the two versions of subtitling, both groups have adopted the substitution strategy. However, "*Herr Hitler*" and "*Marshall Stalin*" are substituted with "*德国*" (German) and "*苏联*" (the Soviet Union) in the official subtitling; while in the fansubbing, the two items are literally subtitled into names "*希特勒*" (Hitler) and "*马歇尔·斯大林*" (Marshall Stalin). Table 11 provides some examples of the use of substitution strategies.

Table 11: Examples of Substitution

Examples of substitution	Official Subtitling	Fansubbing
Who will stand between us, the **jackboots** and the proletarian abyss?	*德国政府* German government	*纳粹军队* Nazi army
Is Kinging laying off 80 staff and buying more pearls for Wallis while people march across Europe singing **the Red Flag**?	*共产主义者* Communist	*共产主义者* Communists
Herr Hitler intimidating half of Europe.	*德国* German	*希特勒* Hitler (literal translation)
Marshall Stalin the other half.	*苏联* the Soviet Union	*马歇尔·斯大林* Marshall Stalin (literal translation)

Source: Calculated by the author

While the omission and lexical-recreation strategies were used by only the official subtitling group, the transposition and gloss strategies can only be found in the fansubbing group. For omission, it can be found in subtitling place names or territorial units in the domain of socio-political references (refer to Table 12).

Table 12: Examples of Omission in Official Subtitling

Examples	Official Subtitling/Explanation
There is this boy I sent to the electric chair at **Huntsville** here a while back.	*之前我把一个少年送上电椅。* I sent a teenager to the electric chair a while back.
Temple, **Texas**	*天普市* Temple
Gunned down on his own porch over in **Hudspeth County**.	*他在自己家门口被枪杀。* He was gunned down on his own porch.

Source: Calculated by the author

4.3. RQ3: How and in what aspects do the subtitling strategies employed by fansubbing and official subtitling groups in the translation of cultural references differ?

In question three of the study, the translation strategies adopted by both fansubbers and official subtitlers were compared. The above analysis illustrates the subtitling strategies employed in each of the three main taxonomies proposed by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020), and typical examples are also analyzed in detail. Table 13 provides a general overview of the subtitling strategies used by both groups of translators to translate CRs. The most commonly employed strategy for both groups is literal translation, with the frequency of fansubbing being higher than that of official subtitling. The frequency of explicitation ranks second for both groups, with 37 compared to 29. Strategies with an asterisk (paraphrase, condensation, and gloss) in Table 13 were not found in Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2020) model. However, paraphrase and condensation can be found in both groups, whereas gloss is only found in fansubbing. The omission and lexical-recreation strategies were used in a few examples of official subtitling.

Table 13: Distribution of Translation Strategies Used by Two Groups of Translators

Subtitling Strategies	Official Subtitling		Fansubbing	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Literal Translation	140	61%	155	68%
Explicitation	37	16%	29	13%
*Paraphrase	21	9%	14	6%
Substitution	13	6%	12	5%
*Condensation	5	2%	4	2%
Transposition	3	1%	3	1%
*Gloss	0	0%	11	5%
Omission	8	4%	0	0%
Lexical-recreation	1	0%	0	0%
Total	228	100%	228	100%

Source: Calculated by the author

As shown in Table 13, the distribution of the subtitling strategies for CRs was divergent between the two groups. It remains unclear, however, whether there were statistical significances between the two groups with regard to the adoption of subtitling strategies. To test the statistical differences, a normality test was carried out in the first step. If the data are normally distributed, the independent samples t-test can be conducted. As the data in our study did not meet the requirement of normality distribution, the Mann-Whitney U-test was used as a non-parametric test (McKnight & Najab, 2010). Table 14 shows that the data are not distributed normally ($P<0.001$). Thus, the Mann-Whitney U-test was conducted. In the Mann-Whitney U-test, the p-value (0.894) was more than the standard significance level of 0.05. Hence, there were no statistically significant differences in the use of subtitling strategies between the two groups of translators.

Table 14: Normality Test and Mann-Whitney U-Test

	Statistics	p	
Normality test (Shapiro-Wilk)	0.566	< .001	Note. A low p-value suggests a violation of the assumption of normality
Mann-Whitney U	38.5	0.894	Note. H_a μ 1 $\neq$ μ 2

Source: Calculated by the author

In the current study, there are some instances where official subtitles outperform fan-subbed versions. Furthermore, several cultural references translated by fansubbers were inaccurate. As shown in Table 15, three examples translated by fansubbers turned out to be inaccurate. One is the word "bridge". It appears twice in *The King's Speech*. One is in the dialogue of '*Did you pick mum up from **the bridge?'**,* while the other is in '*Myrtle's at **the bridge'**.* As it appears, the phrase has the meaning of "桥牌室" (cardroom), and the translation of "桥那边" (across the bridge) is incorrect. Another example is the translation of "petunias". '*These are some ripe **petunias**",* said one of the sheriffs when he and another arrived at the scene of a drug shooting. Depending on the context of the films, *"petunias"* represents dead bodies. However, it was translated literally by the fansubbers into "*成熟的牵牛花*" (ripe petunias), which may make the audience confused as "*牵牛花*" (petunias) is irrelevant to the crime scene in the film.

Some inappropriate translations of CRs translated by fansubbers can also be identified. A typical example is the translation of "*Scotland Yard*". According to Britannica, Scotland Yard is the headquarters of the London Metropolitan Police, a term often used to describe the police force. In *The King's Speech*, "*Scotland Yard*" is literally translated into "苏格兰场" (Scotland Yard) by fansubbing, which may be unfamiliar to the Chinese audience. In contrast, the official subtitling "*伦敦警察厅*" (the police force of London) is more accurate in the context and would not pose comprehension problems for the target audience. "*Guardian*" (*国家议会*), "*doctor*" (*博士*), and "*Dallas*" (*达拉斯州*) in Table 15 might be the same cases, even though the subtitled meaning does not interfere with the understanding of the audience.

Table 15: Examples of Fansubbing Errors in the Corpus

Examples	Official Subtitling	Fansubbing
Did you pick mum up from **bridge**?	桥牌室 Cardroom	桥那边 across the bridge
These are some ripe **petunias**.	这些尸体腐烂到不行 These bodies are so decomposed.	这是些成熟的牵牛花 These are ripe petunias.
According to **Scotland Yard**, the King does not always possess exclusive rights to Mrs. Simpson's favors and affections.	伦敦警察厅 the police force of London	苏格兰场 Scotland Yard
His Majesty King George the Fifth did constitute order and declare that there should be a **guardian of what is** going on here.	国家监护 Guardianship of the state	国家议会 National Parliament
Doctor? Doctor? You cannot help your brother with the washing.	医生 doctor	博士 doctor degree
Well, I saw you were from **Dallas**.	达拉斯 Dallas	达拉斯州 Dallas state

Source: Calculated by the author

5. Discussion

Previous studies (e.g., Abdelaal, 2019; Alfaify & Ramos Pinto, 2021; Altahri, 2013; Simanjuntak & Basari, 2016) on subtitling CRs have predominantly concentrated on the selected CRs rather than examining the complete distribution of CRs within a film. However, this study sought to identify and analyze all pertinent CRs throughout the film. In *The King's Speech*, the researchers could identify 130 cultural references. The majority of these cultural references belong to the socio-political references, which are 68 terms. This high percentage of socio-political references in *The King's Speech* can be attributed to many reasons, as explained below. First, *The King's Speech* is a film that belongs to the historical genre. This made the film rich with cultural references that reflect different aspects of British culture. Second, this film is based on the true story of King George VI of Britain and his struggles with a speech impediment. Third, the film is set in the 1930s and early 1940s, during a crucial period in British history when the country was on the brink of war with Germany. Fourth, the film is a story about the royal family and its cultural significance in British society. Many of the administrative or territorial units in the film are relevant to the theme of the film, including *Great Britain, Ireland, Harley Street*, and *York. The Council for the State, the Church of England,* and *Westminster Abbey* serve as cultural references for viewers to gain an understanding of British political institutions. In view of the fact that the story takes place during the Second World War, some military references can be found, including references to *the Navy, Bolsheviks,* and *jackboots,* as well as references to political figures, including *Richard III, Hitle*r, and *George III.*

In *No Country for Old Men*, the researchers could identify 98 cultural references. Almost half of these cultural references belong to ethnographic references. There can be an explanation for this by the fact that *No Country for Old Men* is a neo-Western crime thriller film — released in 2007 — set in a particular cultural context in the American Southwest, particularly Texas. Hence, there are some ethnographic references that relate to the lives of people, such as *trailer, welder,* and *quarter*. In addition, there is a close correlation between the distribution of cultural references and the genre of the films. For example, some cultural references describe the neo-Western scene, such as *the desert, the wolves, coyotes, Larry Mahan,* and *the shoulders*. There are also a number of cultural references related to crime that can illustrate this theme, such as *dope runners, guns, pistols, DEA, air guns,* and *rods*.

The translation strategies employed by the two subtitling groups differ from one group to another. However, there are instances of similarities in the corpus of the study. For example, in the translation of English CRs to Chinese, literal

translation is the dominant strategy for, perhaps, two reasons. First, translators using this translation strategy prioritize the maintenance of the original wording and structure in the source text. Second, literal translation can be useful when accuracy is the priority. The explicitation strategy is second. It was achieved through techniques of addition, generalization, and specification, as proposed by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020). Adopting the explicitation strategy can convey the essence of the original text and can help the target audience understand the intended meaning. Three strategies cannot be found in Díaz-Cintas and Remael's model, namely loan, calque, and compensation. It is common that the adopted model of subtitling strategies cannot be fully appropriate. Other studies have reported similar issues. For example, Abdelaal (2019) investigated the subtitling strategies of cultural elements in the American film named "The American Pai". Abdelaal found two new subtitling strategies that were not in his adopted framework: the use of euphemistic expressions and formal language in subtitling informal expressions.

Bittner (2011) points out that a good translation should be appropriate to the context in which it is used. Except for similar subtitling strategies employed by the two subtitling groups, some inappropriate or inaccurate subtitling can be identified in the version of fansubbing. It is due to the fact that the two groups have adopted different translation strategies to translate some cultural references. In addition, one of these problems can be attributed to the comprehension of the original films. Furthermore, this can be attributed to a lack of adherence to strict examinations and verifications. As noted by Khakshour Forutan and Modarresi (2018), nonprofessional translations are free to transfer the cultural items because of their unregistered careers. Furthermore, the lack of translation competence may be another reason for inappropriate translation. Additionally, even though the distribution of translation strategies used by the two groups of translators is divergent, the variances between the two groups in adopting subtitling strategies do not show statistically significant differences.

6. Conclusions

This study presents some empirical evidence regarding the handling of cultural references by fansubbing and official subtitling groups. The exploration commenced by identifying cultural items in two film genres. These CRs are diversified into different genres of films, and the classification of CRs in each film has been fully discussed. From the further examination of the subtitling strategies to these CRs, it was found that the subtitling strategies adopted by both fansubbing and official subtitling vary (refer to Table 13), underscoring the cultural ideologies of both groups (examples of Table 11). A significant finding was the occurrence of inappropriate or inaccurate fansubbing, as shown in Table 15, particularly noteworthy within the Chinese context.

This study can have several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretical contributions are related to the investigation of subtitling strategies in the English-Mandarin context within Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2020) framework. This study introduces some new subtitling strategies- Paraphrase, condensation, and gloss, expanding the existing framework. On a practical level, this study highlights that training subtitlers can be effective in the production of optimal translations of cultural terms. As subtitles for films aim to globally disseminate cultural content, challenges related to culture and language could result in inadvertent loss or misinterpretation of the cultural essence of a film (Sanatifar & Ayob, 2022). Therefore, it is important to emphasize subtitling groups that possess intercultural competence to overcome language and cultural barriers, preventing loss or distortion of cultural content in films. In addition, strict examinations and verifications are also needed for subtitling groups, particularly fansubbing groups. Furthermore, a comprehensive discussion of CRs in each film genre illuminates how cultural learners watching a particular genre of films can benefit from intercultural communication by acquiring specific cultural references associated with that genre.

There are two limitations to this study. One involves the subjective factor in the analysis process. Despite efforts to minimize subjectivity in qualitative analysis procedures, it cannot be completely ignored. Another limitation is the number of films analyzed in this study. Therefore, future researchers can consider the use of the Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2020) the taxonomy of CR by broadening the range of films and assessing its applicability in diverse genres. Investigating more film genres would yield a more comprehensive framework for subtitling strategies of cultural references in English-Mandarin subtitling.

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