

A Study on Culture-Specific Items in light of Skopostheorie: A Case Study of the Vampire Diaries

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Abstract: As a classic television program, *The Vampire Diary* has been widely spread and loved by Chinese audience. The original work contains a large number of culture-specific items, which poses a great challenge to its subtitle translation. The Skopostheorie of translation proposed by Hans J. Vermeer defines the principles of translation activities as Skopos Rule, the Coherence Rule and the Fidelity Rule. By Skopostheorie, the translator should process the information of film and television works according to the specific purpose of the target text, and use translation strategies flexibly according to the characteristics of subtitle translation to transmit the information as comprehensively as possible to the target audience. This thesis takes the subtitle translation of culture-specific items in the American drama *The Vampire Diaries* as the research subject, starting from the related concepts and principles of skopostheorie, and combining the eleven translation strategies for culture-specific items proposed by Aixela, analyzes the subtitle translation strategies of proper nouns in the play, such as person names, place names, etc., as well as idioms and allusions, in order to better explore the principles and approaches that should be followed in the subtitle translation of culture-specific items in film and television works.

Keywords: Skopostheorie; Subtitle translation; Culture-specific items; *The Vampire Diaries*

1. Introduction

With the diversified development of the global economy and culture, and to prompt the American dramas in the Chinese market, various types of film and TV work have been unearthed. As an enduring story, the vampire legend has been handed down by in different versions, from the earliest bloodthirsty and brutal vampire image in *Dracula* to later the vampire image of the famous lover in *Twilight*. In the plot setting of *The Vampire Diaries*, the image of vampire has been changed from evil to human. Therefore, for Chinese audiences to experience the changes in the image of vampires immersively and understand the trend of the plot, subtitle translation becomes particularly important.

As a cross-language cultural communication medium, translation not only embodies language changes but also changes language models. For subtitle translation to be meaningful, in addition to conforming to the local cultural characteristics, synchronization and accuracy are extremely necessary. The subtitle translation should allow Chinese audiences to understand most of the plot and local American vampire culture. However, the hard words that are difficult to translate are mostly related to American history, politics, customs, and local cultural roots, and these problematic words are crucial for the audience's understanding, so the source culture and the culture-specific items in the source language pose great challenges to the translators. Many scholars at home and abroad have put forward different views on the translation of culture-specific items. This concept was first put forward by the Spanish translator Aixelá who classified them into eleven types according to the degree of intercultural manipulation. In order to polish subtitle translation, in addition to applying Aixelá's translation strategies, it is also essential to pay attention to the coherence, commonality, logic, and authenticity of the translation. Under the guidance of skopostheorie, the translator should follow the language customs and cultural norms of the target language and flexibly use various translation strategies according to the characteristics of subtitle translation, to convey the meanings of film and television to the audience.

This thesis takes the subtitle translation of the American TV series *The Vampire Diaries* as an example, and analyzes the translation of culture-specific items from the perspective of the skopostheorie. The paper is organized into five parts. The first part is the introduction, which elaborates on the research background, research purpose, and structure of the thesis. The second part is a literature review, expounding the related theories of subtitle translation and culture-specific items, such as the definition

and characteristics of subtitle translation, and the definition and classification of culture-specific items. The third part is the theoretical framework. This part introduces the origin and development of the three skopostheorie underlying principles of skopostheorie, and expounds the guiding significance of skopostheorie to subtitle translation. The fourth part is the body, from the overview of the American drama *The Vampire Diaries* to the translation purpose of it, and analyzes from the perspective of the translator and audience. The following part uses examples to analyze the subtitles, such as proper nouns, idioms and buzzword. And lastly, the fifth part summarizes the major findings of this article and puts forward suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Related studies on subtitle translation

As we all know, when it comes to subtitle translation, subtitles are the main concern. Subtitles have been defined in different ways. For example, in *The NEW Oxford English-Chinese Dictionary*, subtitles are the “Caption displayed at the bottom of a cinema or television screen that translates or transcribes the dialogue or narrative.” In *Cobuild English-Chinese Dictionary*, “subtitles are the printed translation that you can read at the bottom of the screen when you are watching a foreign film.

Li Yunxing believes that there are two main types of subtitles: intra-language subtitles and inter-language subtitles.^[1] Intra-language subtitles are conversions between one languages, The conversion of dialects to Mandarin is based on the foundation of Chinese. inter-language subtitles are conversions between two languages, such as translating Chinese subtitles into English. The latter dominates the domestic dubbing film market, and this thesis focuses on the latter's subtitle translation .^[1]

2.2 Related studies on culture-specific items

2.2.1 Definition and classifications of culture-specific items

As a part of the culture, language is the carrier of culture and a tool for expressing cultural connotations. The difficulty of translation lies in cultural translation, which is mainly manifested in the concept of “culture-specific items” that carry rich cultural connotations. Scholars such as Nord and Newmark all have their own definitions of culture-specific items. Newmark defines cultural terms as classes of entities including persons, objects or processes peculiar to a single ethnic community .^[2] Nord believes a culture-specific phenomenon is one that is found to exist in a particular form or function in only one of two cultures being compared. In 1996, the Spanish translator Aixelá defined the concept of “culture-specific items” in his *Culture-specific Items in Translation* as follows “Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text”^[3]. A definition is directly given for the nature and position of culture-specific items in the text by Aixelá. The description is clear and specific and is suitable for identifying such items in translation practice.

By its definition, scholars also have different understandings of cultural classification. Newmark proposed the classification of CSI: (a) ecology culture, referring to flora, winds, hills, and plains; (b) material culture, including food, clothes, houses and transport; (c) social culture, involving work and leisure; (d) politics, (consisting of organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts), administration, religion and art; (e) gesture and habits^[2]. Eugene Nida proposed five classifications of CSI: namely ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture and linguistic culture^[4]. Aixelá believes that from the perspective of a translator, CSI can be divided into two basic categories: proper nouns and common expressions^[3].

2.2.2 Translation strategies of culture-specific items

In the three Spanish translations of the detective novel *The Maltese Falcon* (Dashiell Hammett), Aixelá observed eleven strategies for dealing with cultural exclusivity, and listed them according to their degree of “cross-cultural manipulation”. And this was mentioned in Aixelá book *Culture-specific Items in Translation*.

2.2.2.1 Repetition

To repeat culture-specific items in the original text means that the translator keeps as many references as possible, i.e., copying the original text. This strategy is adopted mostly when the alienated form of the

item is so essential that any translation would make the target readers even harder to get the inspirational message, and thus the problem of this strategy is that something identical even in its graphic component might have different meanings in its mutual reception .

2.2.2.2 Orthographic adaptation

Orthographic adaptation means to use alphabetic spelling to translate the original culture-specific items into the target language. This strategy includes transcription and transliteration. The characteristic of transliteration is that it is translated based on pronunciation, which is mainly used for original references and target readers.

2.2.2.3 Linguistic (non-cultural) translation

Linguistic translation tries to keep the extended meaning of culture-specific items in the original language and the meaning of the original text as much as possible, and then translates the meaning into the target language. By this strategy, the translator will choose a reference similar to the original text so that the extension of the target language is close to the original translation.

2.2.2.4 Extratextual gloss

It refers to an endnote, footnote, brackets. This translation strategy seeks to preserve the original culture and the function of preserving the source text. It is necessary to explain the meaning of culture-specific items in some cases. However, the translation of this sort could disturb the readers' mind if it's done too frequently.

2.2.2.5 Intratextual gloss

Contrary to extratextual gloss, the translator interprets the meaning of culture-specific items in the text and provides notes for the unclear parts of the text, which is conducive to a better understanding of the text content. The disadvantage is that the text becomes more complicated, which makes reading time a burden. Nevertheless, it is one of the shared characteristics of ambiguity elimination.

2.2.2.6 Synonymy

The purpose is to avoid repetition. Synonyms refer to the alternative translation of culture-specific items by resorting to some parallel quotations or synonyms, that is, translating the same word in different ways to avoid repetition. The diversity of languages corresponds to different expressions. Excessive repetition is unacceptable; hence translators should use synonyms to attract readers.

2.2.2.7 Limited universalization

Because some original culture-specific items do not exist in the target language, sometimes the translator replaces the original culture-specific items with those familiar to the reader. However, due to the sharp differences of different cultures, this strategy is almost practically unapplicable, mostly for the sake of credibility.

2.2.2.8 Absolute universalization

By absolute universalisation, translators use non-culture-specific items to translate culture-specific items. Most of the boundaries of this strategy are not clear. It is to translate culture-specific items more clearly, delete the foreign meaning of culture-specific items, and choose a neutral reference for readers.

2.2.2.9 Naturalization

Bring the culture-specific items into the intertextual corpus felt as specific by the target language culture. Naturalization seeks to use the target language and culture-specific items to translate the language and culture-specific items.

2.2.2.10 Deletion

By deletion, it means to delete or not to translate. Translators sometimes would delete culture-specific items that do not affect the reader's understanding and those unnecessary, culture-specific items that are not helpful to the reader's understanding. The translators would ignore those unessential words no matter it's extratextual gloss or intratextual gloss.

2.2.2.11 Autonomous creation

As the name suggests, for culture-specific items that do not exist in the source text, the translator puts new words into the target language by his understanding. The primary purpose is to attract the reader's attention, but the shortcomings are apparent. There may be a risk of infringement.

3. Theoretical Framework: Skopostheorie

3.1 Origin and development of Skopostheorie

In the 1970s, functionalist translation theories emerged in Germany, which had a considerable impact on the translation world. Representatives of functionalist translation theories were Katharina Reiss, Hans J. Vermeer, Justa Holz Manttari, Justa Holz and Christiane Nord. Skopostheorie first appeared in Reiss's book *Translation Criticism: Possibilities and Limitations*, which was published in 1971. The original text reads, "the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (Skopos) of the overall translation action" [5]. That is to say, the primary task of determining the entire translation process is the purpose of the entire translation activity. In the subsequent translation practice, Reiss proposed the prototype of functionalist translation skopostheorie: combining language functions, text types and translation strategies, and proposed a set of translation criticism models based on the functional relationship between the source language and the target language text [5].

Reiss's student Hans Vermeer inherited Reiss's ideas through studying the research of the predecessors and further developed and modified them according to her research progress on translation skopostheorie. It was Vermeer who first put forward the skopostheorie and then three principles: Skopos rule, coherence rule and fidelity rule in his book *General Translation Theory Framework* where Vermeer mentioned "Translation (including interpretation) is a purposeful act based on the source-language text" [5].

3.2 Three rules of Skopostheorie

3.2.1 Skopos rule

The Skopos rule determines the entire process of translation activities. It is the communicative purpose of the translation, and the formation of various texts should be based on the corresponding purpose and provide services for the realization of this purpose. [6] In general, the purpose of English translation includes the translation environment, the function of the translation and the reasons for the translation. The purpose of translation activities forms the translation process. The purpose of translation determines the act of translation. In short, the purpose of translation determines the translation.

3.2.2 Coherence rule

Coherence rule means that the translation must meet the requirements of intratextual coherence, and can accurately convey the meaning of the original text, make the translation readable and acceptable, enable the target audience to understand the translation and make the communicative context of the translation logical and meaningful. In order to do a better translation, whether to retain the original style or to consider the national culture more, the translation must be accurate and conform to the language habits of the target language so that the reader can understand the translation clearly.

3.2.3 Fidelity rule

Fidelity rule, also known as interlingual coherence, means that the target text must be consistent with the original text and should not deviate from the meaning of the original text. The principle of equivalence between the target text and the original text must be maintained. Nord believes that translators are morally responsible for the recipient of the translation and must explain to them what they have done and the reasons for doing so. It is one aspect of the Fidelity rule, and on the other hand, it requires the translator to be "loyal" to the original author. "The translator should respect the original author and coordinate the target language of the translation with the author's intention". In other words, the Fidelity rule is to follow the relationship with the original author, readers, and translators.

When translating subtitles, due to the constraints of space and time, the translator needs to follow the three principles of skopostheorie in the translation process, grapple with the constraints of time and space, and determine the most practical and effective translation strategies and methods. The subtitle translation of film and television also has the purpose of cultural transmission, requiring the translator to translate easy-to-understand subtitles that could achieve this purpose. To follow the fidelity rule, and the translation must be "loyal" to the original text, accurately convey the meaning of the original text, and cannot be modified at will. It is also vital to make the translation readable and acceptable to follow the principle of coherence. Under the guidance of skopostheorie, the translator should process the film and television works according to the language and cultural customs of the translation, and use translation

strategies flexibly to transmit the information of the film and television works to the audience as much as possible.

4. Analysis of Subtitle Translation of Culture-Specific Items in The Vampire Diaries in Light of Skopostheorie

4.1 Overview of the Vampire Diaries

4.1.1 A brief introduction to the drama

The American TV series *The Vampire Diaries*, as a TV series from the United States, integrates science fiction, youth, and some horror elements. It has been widely recognized home and abroad since the first season.

This television series is adapted from the novel by the American writer LJ Smith. Until now, there are eight seasons in total. The main plot is about the love triangle between a pair of vampire brothers and a high school girl in the small town of Mystic Falls. The TV series started in 2008 and has all ended as in 2019. Since being aired for the first time, *The Vampire Diaries* has achieved a rating of 4.84 million viewers for the premiere drama on CW. Besides its super-high ratings in the US, its popularity has even spreaded to China. The success of *The Vampire Diaries* should not only be ascribed to its precise understanding of the audience's expectations, but also to its excellent subtitle translation. The translator accurately grasped the language habits Chinese audiences and used concise, accessible, and colloquial language to express the plot accurately, so that Chinese audience can easily and quickly understand the American culture in *The Vampire Diaries*. Some vocabulary and language has been simplified so that the novel and unique themes could attract the attention of countless people and subverted the previous image of vampires in people's eyes.

4.2 The Skopos of subtitling The Vampire Diaries

In terms of language ability, most of the Chinese viewers are not English speakers. Therefore, for audiences to understand American dramas, subtitle translation needs to satisfy the audience's expectations, and it is necessary to analyze the functions that the target language translation must achieve. The success of a film or TV series depends on the audience's recognition and acceptance. The audience, as separate and independent individuals, are so different that their requirements can't be satisfied at the same time. Therefore, in the process of subtitle translation, the needs of the audience are incredibly important because they need to be observed when choosing a language that is easy for the audience to accept and understand. For most young viewers, combined with their own upbringing and knowledge, they are more likely to be interested in vampire romance, and even combining the drama with reality, adding some trendy words that young Chinese viewers like, and then portraying the love more vividly, for the purpose of a translation for young people, would be more appealing to them. For younger audience, they will watch *The Vampire Diaries* and pay more attention to the image of vampires and like to explore the vampire culture, as well as other exotic cultures derived from it. Chinese youth will compare Chinese vampires with Western vampires to understand the characteristics and differences between the two folk cultures. The purpose of the translation of *The Vampire Diaries* is to let the audience who do not know English (original language) understand and appreciate the development and direction of the plot and the vampire culture behind the story through the translation. The translator needs to improve his or her own knowledge, taking into account the ideas and suggestions of the director, the original author, and other relevant authorities in order to meet the needs of the audience, to realize the commercial and aesthetic value of the film, and to attract the maximum audience.

4.3 Case study

4.3.1 Subtitle translation of proper nouns

In *The Vampire Diaries*, the author sorted out the following proper nouns, which are unique to this particular show, including names of people and places. Based on the translation strategy proposed by Aixela, they are organized as follows.

4.3.1.1 Names of people

Table 1: Name of people

<i>Original</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
<i>Lan Chaney junior</i>	<i>(Lon Chaney Jr)</i>	<i>Orthographic adaptation+Extratextual gloss</i>
<i>Enzo</i>	<i>(Lorenzo)</i>	<i>Orthographic adaptation</i>

These are the proprietary translations of the names of people in The Vampire Diaries, As shown in the table 1.

Lan Chaney junior appeared in the third episode of the second season of The Vampire Diaries. When Damon explained Mason Lockwood's image of a werewolf, he quoted the character Lan Chaney junior in the movie to describe Tyler. This kind of translation strategy is to preserve the original culture and the function of the source text. In some cases, it is necessary to explain the meaning of the culture-specific items. At the top of the subtitles, the explanation of Lan Chaney junior is synchronized in brackets: "Lon Chaney Jr".

In terms of translation strategies, orthographic adaptation would convey the meaning of a person's name. The difference between Enzo and Lorenzo that Lorenzo is an Italian and Spanish masculine given name of Latin origin. It is used in Italy, Spain, and other Spanish-speaking countries. The name was derived from the Roman surname Laurentius, which meant "from Laurentum". Laurentum was an ancient Roman city of Latium situated between Ostia and Lavinium, on the west coast of the Italian peninsula southwest of Rome.

4.3.1.2 Names of places

There are three names of places in this part. Obviously, they are all related to linguistic (non-cultural) translation.

Table2:Name of places

<i>Original</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
<i>Mystic falls</i>	<i>Mystic falls</i>	<i>Linguistic (non-cultural) translation</i>
<i>Wickery Bridge</i>	<i>Wickery Bridge</i>	<i>Orthographic adaptation+Linguistic (non-cultural) translation</i>
<i>Founders' hall</i>	<i>Founders' hall</i>	<i>Linguistic (non-cultural) translation</i>

These are the proprietary translations of place names in The Vampire Diaries, As shown in the table 2.

Different from the Chinese Pinyin translation, this Linguistic (non-cultural) translation better retains the meaning and reference of the original text. The town Mystic falls is where all the stories happen. As the name suggests, this is a town full of mystery. Mystic falls is a picturesque town located in central Virginia with a population of 6,923 people, currently unknown since after its closing and eventual restart. Aside from the town's foundation in 1860 by the Founding Families, the town also has a long history of vampires, witches and werewolves, causing Mystic Falls to be an uncanny village with a dark secret. Many famous historical occurrences have taken place in Mystic Falls. Mystic can be translated into mystery or mystic, and here it refers specifically to this small town. And falls, which means waterfall and fall, modifies mystic and alludes to what will happen in the future. As a proper noun, Mystic Falls refers explicitly to this small town in The Vampire Diaries.

Wickery Bridge is a bridge and road that connects Mystic falls with the outside world. It is best known for being the site of the tragic deaths of Grayson and Miranda Gilbert. The slick roads of the bridge caused them to inadvertently drive off the bridge and into the river below, where they both drowned. Their adopted daughter Elena was the only survivor of the accident, and it also paves the way for the development of the subsequent plot. Similar to mystic falls, they are both linguistic (non-cultural) translations, which retain similarities to the original text during the translation process.

The Mystic Falls Founders' Hall is a place where the founding families and other people from Mystic Falls celebrate the Founders' Day Kick-Off Party and Miss Mystic Falls Pageant. The building contains paintings and other objects from Mystic Falls history. Linguistic (non-cultural) translation strategy was used for the translation, retaining the indicative meaning of the original text. The "founders" here is not just linguistic (non-cultural) translation, but refers to all the people in this town, and everything that happens in Mystic Falls has something to do with the "founders".

4.3.1.3 Names of objects

Table 3: Name of objects

<i>Original</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
<i>Moonstone</i>	<i>Moonstone</i>	<i>Linguistic (non-cultural) translation</i>
<i>vervain</i>	<i>vervain</i>	<i>Linguistic (non-cultural) translation</i>
<i>white oak tree</i>	<i>white oak tree</i>	<i>Linguistic (non-cultural) translation</i>
<i>Doppelganger</i>	<i>Doppelganger</i>	<i>Naturalization</i>

These are the proprietary translations of objects names in The Vampire Diaries, As shown in the table 3.

Moonstone is a translucent, milky-colored, flat ovoid gemstone that was described as being approximate “the size of a hockey puck.” However, it resembled milk quartz more in the show. This word is made up of moonlight and stone. In translation, it’s necessary to choose a reference similar to the original text to preserve the original meaning as much as possible.

Vervain is an herb, whether added to food, drink, a necklace or a ring, can have an effect on vampires that threatens their abilities and makes them less powerful. In translation, the use of Linguistic (non-cultural) translation preserves as much of the indicative meaning of the original text as possible. It increases the comprehensibility of the reference. As a plant, it has folklore meanings such as cross herb and soul enhancer.

“White oak tree”, the Linguistic (non-cultural) translation strategy is used in the translation, with three words corresponding to three Chinese characters, retaining the meaning of the original cultural item and its corresponding epithet in the play, in which it has the power to kill the original vampire.

According to German writer Jean-Paul’s novel Chippendales (1796), Doppel means double life and Gänger means pedestrian or bystander, and this was later introduced into the occult. It is a spirit that looks exactly like a living person, or someone who looks exactly like someone else. the translator draws on German vocabulary, a noun-lexical German word that makes use of the translation strategy of Naturalization, translating linguistic and cultural items with language-specific cultural items, giving the word a mystical meaning that in the play describes the identity of the heroine, referring to the truest desires that lurk in the human heart, shining out like a mirror to two people at once.

4.3.2 Subtitle translation of idioms and allusions

Table 4: Subtitle translation of idioms and allusions

<i>We may as well make the best out of it</i>	<i>Hold Back the Dawn</i>	<i>Autonomous creation</i>
<i>So the black sheep returns</i>	<i>the black sheep returns</i>	<i>Autonomous creation</i>
<i>Head-scratcher</i>	<i>Puzzled and Confused</i>	<i>Autonomous creation</i>
<i>But when life gives you lemons</i>	<i>But if fate is indeed so</i>	<i>Linguistic (non-cultural) translation + Limited universalization</i>
<i>Finger on the wall</i>	<i>Bad omen or Misfortune</i>	<i>Autonomous creation + Extratextual gloss</i>
<i>Cut the Gordian’s knot</i>	<i>Cutting the Gordian Knot</i>	<i>Autonomous creation + Extratextual gloss</i>
<i>Judas’kiss</i>	<i>Judas’kiss</i>	<i>Linguistic (non-cultural) translation</i>

Based on the subtitled translations of idioms and allusions in the table, the following analyses are performed one by one. As shown in the table 4.

In addition to proper nouns, I have also compiled idioms and allusions that are specific to the culture and the vampire diaries. Based on the translation strategy proposed by Aixela, they have been organized as follows.

“We may as well make the best out of it”, this line, which appears in a dialogue where Catherine and Stefan are locked in a vampire tomb together, is literally translated as “Hold Back the Dawn”, which is a bit hollow and pale, as the translator needs to consider where the plot is going and where the hero and heroine are now. So the translator renders it “Hold Back the Dawn”, which is not only linguistically concise, but also translates the meaning of the director and the original author. The translation strategy used in this sentence is autonomous creation, where the translator, through his own understanding, uses

a unique Chinese four-character idiom to substitute the original, in order for the audience to understand it better. This translation is in line with the fidelity rule of Skopostheorie, keeping the coherence and authenticity between the translation and the original text, and presenting the translation to the audience without changing the original structural framework and restoring the meaning of the original text to the greatest extent possible, and expressing the meaning of the sentence precisely under the screen limitations of subtitle translation.

The translation "so the black sheep returns" obviously differs from the original text in literal translation. In *The Vampire Diaries*, "so the black sheep returns" means the return of the werewolf, which is called "the black sheep" in the literal English translation, and also alludes to the later exposure of Mason's identity and the secrets that will be revealed about the Lockwood family. Through the understanding of the cultures of the two countries and their cultural characteristics, the translator adds culture-specific items that do not exist in the source text, but exist in the target language. The purpose of this translation is to attract the audience's attention by integrating the connecting plot, increasing the appeal, and explaining it humorously. With the immediacy and spatiality of the screen, such a translation would better allow the audience to quickly understand the plot and accurately associate it with the next scenes.

"Head-scratcher", is literally translated as "head-scratcher (Puzzled and Confused)." It refers to someone who expresses his emotions by scratching his head. In this translation, the translator uses everyday language in Chinese culture to explain the connotations. The translator chooses to add culture-specific items that do not exist in the source text in the translation to ensure the audience can better understand this sentence.

"But when life gives you lemons", the word "lemon" here means inferior in American slang, or "unpleasant person". But if it is literally translated into "But when life gives you lemons", the characteristics we might associate with lemons, the target audience would find it really hard to understand. So the translators use the translation strategy of Linguistic (non-cultural) translation plus Limited universalization, the specificity of "lemon" translation is due to the fact that cultural items in the original language do not exist in the target language, the translator replaces cultural items in the original language with items familiar to the reader.

In *The Vampire Diaries*, Klaus' father, Michael, appears to be the only person in the world that Klaus is afraid of, and the phrase "finger on the wall" is quoted to reinforce Klaus' fear of his father. "Finger on the wall", this idiom can be literally translated into "Finger on the wall", but actually it means a sign or warning of impending disaster. Autonomous creation belongs to the translation strategy, because the Chinese audience does not know the content of the Bible, so the translation strategy of extratextual gloss is added, in order to make the translation more simple and clearer to understand.

The literal translation is "Cut the Gordian's knot", which appears in the vampire diary, where Bonnie's grandmother tells Bonnie not to hesitate in the face of vampires, to kill them, not to believe anything they say, and Bonnie finally changes her mind and only kills the bad vampires. This allusion comes from ancient Greek mythology, and the translator uses it here to make a representation of Bonnie's actions. Using the translation strategy of Autonomous creation + Extratextual gloss, the translator is able to place new words into the target language through his or her own understanding of the culture-specific items that do not exist in the source text and that do not exist in the target language. The audience here is mainly Chinese viewers, and the translation of "Cut the Gordian's knot" can attract the audience's attention more. In subtitle translations, such translations make it easier for the audience to understand the plot instead of suddenly stopping to think about the meaning of the allusion, which improves the overall viewing experience and contributes to the simplicity and aesthetics of the screen on a small screen.

"Judas' kiss," about the betrayal of the family of Klaus, the original vampire, is an allusion that the translator uses here to clearly illustrate the betrayal and the betrayer, and the literal translation of "Judas' kiss." It is one of the most important parts of the book. In the biblical story of one of Jesus' twelve disciples selling his teacher, Jesus, to the high priest for thirty silver coins, in the biblical story they signal with a light kiss, and in the vampire diary Rebekah and Elijah end up betraying Klaus in a family ritual, causing him to fall asleep forever. The translators use Linguistic (non-cultural) translation strategy to translate here, but there is a problem here, if not extratextual gloss, the Chinese audience will not be able to understand the meaning immediately due to cultural differences, which is also a small problem in subtitle translation. Under the guidance of the theory of purpose, we must achieve the Coherence rule in subtitle translation, which means that the audience should be the main subject and the experience of the audience should always come first, thus better achieving the purpose of translation.

All in all, in dealing with such culture-specific items translators have mainly used linguistic (non-cultural) translation, naturalization, orthographic adaptation, limited universalization, autonomous creation, orthographic adaptation+linguistic (non-cultural) translation strategies, linguistic (non-cultural) translation+limited universalization and deletion. In order to allow the Chinese audience to better understand the plot, and cater to the expectation of the target audience, it is a good way to watch the movie and synchronize the actors and the plot's expression.

5. Conclusion

With the development of science and technology and the progress of society, more and more American dramas are introduced to us. The runaway of American dramas in China should be attributed not only to the original authors, directors, and actors, but also to the subtitle translators who transform different cultural backgrounds to make the Chinese audience better resonate with the characters. Subtitle translation is different from text translation and is subject to many restrictions, such as space and time. In this thesis, the author analyzes the culture-specific items of subtitle translation in *The Vampire Diaries* from the perspective of skopostheorie. Through the analysis of theory and case, we can better understand the culture-specific items in *The Vampire Diaries*. In the thesis, the author sorts out the whole article from the aspects of translation theory and translation strategy and uses the three essential principles of skopostheorie and Aixelá's translation strategies to analyze examples. The author has discovered that, when translating, the translator needs to have a good understanding and integration of the cultural characteristics of the two countries. Besides, the translation should closely cater to the language habits of the Chinese audience. In terms of space constraints, the subtitle translation of each scene should be arranged clearly and concisely, so that the audience can have a better viewing experience.

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