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Translating Culture in Chinese Animated Films

As China plays an increasingly dynamic role in international society, attention to its cultural relevance is also on the increase. This is indicated in the popularity of recent Chinese animated films adapted from Chinese folktale, such as *Monkey King: Hero is back* (2015), *White Snake* (2019) and *Ne Zha* (2019) in the Western market. But while these films offer Western society a new window to access Chinese culture, they also pose challenges presented by their innate Chinese elements which differ significantly from Hollywood's conventional presentation of Chinese culture. Audiovisual programme offers an effective way to help reduce misunderstandings, but it is not perfect as the audience can still decode the information that run counter to the message intended by the producers.

Looking to the performance of the Chinese animated films both at home and abroad, this paper aims to evaluate the relationship between subtitling and the success of a Chinese animated film. Interlingual translation may be the main focus of subtitling, but semiotic items should be taken into consideration from the perspective of multimodality. Since most Chinese animated films are adapted from Chinese folktale which contains rich cultural elements that are highly context – dependant and exclusive to Chinese cultural community, the translation of these cultural items will no doubt affect the delivery of the films and their reception by the target audience. The extent to which cultural translation plays a role in the making of these animated films thus deserves further attention.

Based on a selection of Chinese animated films, this paper will compare the English subtitles with their original Chinese lines to determine how cultural translation can facilitate intercultural communication in the media.