

# E-C Movie Subtitle Translation Under Toury's Norms Theory— A Case of *The Shawshank Redemption*

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This paper explores the subtitle translation of *The Shawshank Redemption* through Gideon Toury's translation norms theory, highlighting the influence of translation norms on the film's subtitle adaptation in China. The study applies Toury's framework to examine the initial, preliminary, and operational norms shaping the translation process. The findings reveal that the initial norm led translators to favor strategies that align with the target language culture, enhancing viewer acceptance. The preliminary norm reflects an understanding of the social, cultural, and ideological expectations of the time, ensuring the translation resonated with Chinese audiences. Under operational norms, translators employed techniques, such as omission, rewriting, and transformation to meet language and cultural norms while adhering to target audience reading habits. This research not only sheds light on the subtitling practices of *The Shawshank Redemption*, but also demonstrates the applicability of Toury's theory in film translation, offering valuable insights into the field of translation studies.

*Keywords:* Gideon Toury, Toury's norms theory, subtitle translation, *The Shawshank Redemption*

## Introduction

With the continuous exchange and integration of Eastern and Western cultures, Western films have become a valuable medium for China to explore and comprehend multiculturalism. European scholars, including Dollerup, Gottlieb, and Karamitroglu (Dollerup, 2007), have delved deeply into the realm of subtitle translation. Nevertheless, research on subtitle translation in China is still in its nascent stages, predominantly revolving around traditional translation principles, such as fidelity and reciprocity.

From the late 1970s onward, marked by the cultural turn, traditional translation theory underwent a gradual transformation. Translation ceased to be viewed as a static, isolated linguistic process. Instead, it emerged as a dynamic communicative endeavor embedded within a socio-cultural context. Toury emerged as a prominent figure in this paradigm shift. His theory of descriptive translation norms diverges from providing prescriptive guidelines for future translation activities or evaluating existing translation products (Hermans, 1999). Rather, it embraces translations as they are, scrutinizing their actual manifestations within a broader socio-cultural context. The aim is to discern the multifaceted reasons contributing to the final presentation of the translation, thereby offering a new theoretical framework to elucidate the complexities of the translation phenomenon. There is much to be discovered in the field of subtitle translation since it deals not only with translating text into another language but also with the transmission of culture (Chesterman, 1997).

## Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to comprehensively review previous studies on Toury's translational norms and to identify research gaps in its application to the Chinese subtitle translation of the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*. By clarifying the innovative contribution of this study, it lays the literary foundation for the subsequent chapters.

### Previous Studies on Toury's Translational Norms Abroad

Toury is a professor at Tel Aviv University in Israel and the chief editor of the translation studies magazine *Target*. Edwin Gentzler lists the Polysystem Translation School as one of the five schools of "modern translation theory" (Edwin, 2004), and Toury is considered one of its representative researchers. Everyone acknowledges Toury's contribution to the evolution of translation theory.

Toury's comprehensive research of translational norms began in 1973, when he published "Studies on Hebrew Literature Translation 1930-1945" (1970), building on the theoretical framework of Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. In "The Nature and Roles of Norms in Literary Translation" (1972), a presentation delivered at the International Congress of Culture and Translation in Belgium in 1976, Toury emphasized the relevance and value of translational norms studies. Through his publications "In Search of a Theory of Translation" (1980) and "Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond" (1995), Toury went deeper into the definition, nature, and traits of norms (Zhou, 2014).

### Previous Studies on Toury's Translational Norms in China

The exploration of Toury's translational norms has made significant strides in Western countries, with considerable impact extending to China. Domestic research on Toury's translational norms commenced in 1995, gaining increasing attention over time. Based on articles available on CNKI, research in China on Toury's translational norms can be categorized into several types.

Firstly, there are studies that focus on introducing and reviewing translation norms. For instance, in 2001, it was the first essay to present the history, categorization, and contributions of Toury's translational norms when Fu Yonglin's work "Translation Norms: Gideon Toury's Transcendence Over Traditional Studies of Translation" introduced basic ideas (Liu, 2012). In 2008, Shan Weilong published "Gideon Toury and His Translation Theory", emphasizing the three values of descriptive translation studies and highly praising Toury's representative role in this field.

Secondly, research revolves around the application of translation-related theories to explain translation phenomena. Most domestic studies in this field are currently in this stage, exploring various translation norms or rules and their application in interpreting classical book translations based on Toury's translational norms theory.

Thirdly, research focuses on the practical societal application of related theories. Li Dechao (2010) stated, "Toury's normative rules highlight the specific guidance of norms on social behavior and the values shared by specific groups reflected in these norms" (pp. 68-75).

In conclusion, despite notable progress in exploring Toury's translational norms, particularly in their classification and integration with other theories, previous studies represent only the tip of the iceberg. Some existing problems merit further exploration. Research on Toury's translational norms is mainly confined to theoretical aspects and their combination with literary works, while studies on their application in specific audiovisual subtitle translation works are notably lacking or infrequently seen.

### Research Gap

Undeniably, in recent years, there has been some development in research related to film subtitle translation. However, compared to conventional literary works, research on subtitle translation remains insufficient. Regarding the film *The Shawshank Redemption*, there has been some attention and progress in research related to its subtitle translation in the past two years. For instance, in 2023, Guo Cheng published an article titled "Subtitle Translation Strategies of *The Shawshank Redemption*" in the *Chinese Film News*, analyzing the subtitle translation methods of the film from four dimensions: substitution, domestication, literal translation, and adaptation. These four perspectives fall within the categories of traditional translation methods, still primarily based on fidelity and equivalence. Some translators have also analyzed the reasons for the successful adaptation of films from a literary perspective, mostly focusing on narrative structure and audiovisual language. In 2021, Li Mengge and Li Zesheng discussed the impact of translation theory norms on film subtitle translation from the perspective of functional equivalence translation theory, focusing on vocabulary and semantic levels, but consistently lacking analysis from the perspective of target language culture.

Toury's translational norms theory indicates that translation is influenced not only by the source language text and culture, but also by the target language and its culture. To better meet the cultural needs of the target language, it is necessary to create works that resonate with the psychological aspects of the target cultural audience. This is also one of the reasons why the film became popular in China.

### A Case Study of the Subtitle Translation of *The Shawshank Redemption* Under Toury's Translational Norms

The objective of this research is not to evaluate the merits and demerits of the subtitle translation of the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*. Conversely, the main focus of this work is on how translators' decisions and choices when translating the source subtitles are influenced by translational norms. The subtitles of the movie will be thoroughly examined from the standpoints of initial norms, preliminary norms, and operational norms in the parts that follow.

#### Initial Norms in the Subtitle Translation of *The Shawshank Redemption*

Before embarking on the translation process, it is crucial to clarify whether the translator's work is directed towards the audience of the source culture or the target culture. Clearly, the subtitles in *The Shawshank Redemption* are aimed at facilitating the viewing experience for Chinese audiences, thereby overcoming cultural barriers. The translator must navigate constraints from both the source language and the target language, as they also serve as cultural mediators.

In the previous chapter, adequacy and acceptability are two core concepts of initial norms. If the translator chooses to adhere to norms faithful to the source language and culture, they will strive to convey the subtle nuances of the source culture as much as possible. Conversely, if the translator opts for norms faithful to the target language and culture, the translation strategies they employ will determine the degree of acceptability. Adequacy and acceptability are two important issues that translators need to consider before undertaking the translation process.

In order to comprehend the impact of translational norms on the translator's overall perspective prior to translation, the ensuing sections make an effort to assess the adequacy and acceptability of the subtitle translations.

**Adequacy in subtitle translation.** Film subtitle translation possesses characteristics, such as auditory appeal, accessibility, and immediacy, making cultural and emotional considerations intrinsic features of subtitle translation. Consequently, when translators engage in subtitle translation, they should comprehensively consider these traits, striving to achieve optimal conveyance of cultural nuances. The translation standards in the field emphasize that if translators prioritize fidelity to the original text, the translation can adhere to the norms of the source language and culture. This inclination towards the source text and culture is referred to as “adequacy”.

In the process of translating subtitles for a film, translators place significant emphasis on the original cultural context and semantics, aiming to maximally reproduce the English cultural nuances conveyed in the movie. When semantic and cultural considerations cannot be fully reconciled, translators resort to altering the original form of the text or even employing innovative translation methods. This involves transforming the deep structure of English into the surface structure of Chinese, using Chinese vocabulary that is more easily understood to express cultural nuances that may be challenging to grasp in English.

Example 1. A prison inmate in the movie applies for parole and says: “Without a doubt. I can honestly say I’m a changed man. No danger to society here”.

The translator creatively renders the entire sentence as “我真的已经变好，我完全洗心革面了，我不会危害社会”.

The translation of “I’m a changed man” as “洗心革面” stands out. This is a sentence spoken by Red when he is on bail in the prison. If it is translated directly, it is difficult for the audience to understand the meaning of the film dialogue in just a few seconds.

Therefore, in order to highlight the core meaning of the sentence, “changed” is translated as “洗心革面”, which, combined with Red’s situation, will give the audience a more intuitive feeling, aligning with the formal setting within the prison and reflecting adherence to the cultural background of the original text. Simultaneously, it captures a more colloquial expression in Chinese, showcasing the success of bridging both Chinese and English cultures.

To maintain the original flavor and represent the uniqueness of the source language culture, translators should strive to closely adhere to the norms of the source language. Consequently, translators readily align with the norms of the source language, and the maximization of fidelity in translation becomes their pursuit. In this process, adequacy norms emerge as a critical issue. However, as evident from the aforementioned example, it is observed that acceptability takes a central position in the subtitle translation of *The Shawshank Redemption*. The translation’s overall orientation suggests that target culture norms play a major influence in subtitle translation. As a result, the idea of acceptability becomes the main emphasis of this argument. The section that follows offers a thorough examination of how norms affect the subtitle translator’s determination of acceptability.

**Acceptability in subtitle translation.** According to Toury, “If the translator chooses to adhere to the norm of the target language and culture, the according translation will be characterized as acceptable and of high level of acceptability”. In order to achieve a translation that is as reader-friendly as feasible without impairing the viewer’s comprehension, the goal is to allow the audience of the target language to experience the film as nearly as possible to the audience of the source language. Based on this, the translator of *The Shawshank Redemption* subtitles chooses to make the translation as acceptable as possible to the viewers.

One distinctive feature of the source-language subtitles in the film is the use of short and concise verbal expressions, which are both conflictual and witty, predominantly relying on simple sentences. Alongside employing standard language for narration and description, the translator incorporates Chinese-style words and

phrases to convey the plot nuances and vividly portray different characters in the film. This inclusion of necessary Chinese elements aims to better adapt to Chinese expression habits and enhance the appreciation and readability of the translation. This feature is faithfully reproduced in the original text, utilizing expressions that match the plot's atmosphere in the translation. This approach can be attributed to the translator's inclination towards the target language.

In the following section, we will analyze why Chinese translators place greater emphasis on the application of translation norms, illustrating this through several examples. This emphasis is intended to underscore the acceptability norms advocated by Toury.

Example 2. I really don't remember. I was upset.

Chinese subtitle: 我气炸了, 记不清楚。

Example 3. I went to a few bars first.

Chinese subtitle: 我先去酒吧买醉。

These examples are extracted from a conversation between the black-hearted inspector general and Andy and many other cellmates about the trial of crimes in the early stage of Andy's imprisonment. The translator has skillfully designed the simple one or more words in the original sentence to combine with the atmosphere of the specific scene in the play. He employed easily understandable, even common conversational Chinese during the translation process as opposed to transliterating or physically translating non-English phrases into Chinese.

"Upset" in the first sentence can be directly translated as "生气", while in the translation, the translator makes a judgment according to Andy's emotional level and integrates the characteristics of Chinese colloquialism, which is translated as "气炸了".

In the second sentence, the subtitle translators make a selective substitution of the verb, translating "去'酒吧" into the uniquely Chinese word "买醉", punctuating the fact that Andy's exact state before his plan was carried out was already drunk and unconscious, setting the stage for Andy's difficulty in proving himself in the later episodes because he was already delirious by then.

Example 4. They had sinned.

Chinese subtitle: 他们是有伤风化。

Example 5. I can honestly say that I'm a changed man.

Chinese subtitle: 真的, 我已洗心革面。

Example 6. I'm up for rejection next week.

Chinese subtitle: 我下周也准备吃闭门羹。

Obviously, Chinese people are more inclined to accept texts that adhere to the rules of the Chinese language. In the final three sentences, idioms or Chinese colloquial expressions were respectively chosen for translation, catering to the viewing needs of the target audience. "有伤风化" in China refers to behavior that corrupts or damages social customs and education, indicating actions that have a negative impact on societal norms and education. The translator did not directly translate Andy's wife's actions as "罪行", but rather classified them as this type of behavior containing derogatory connotations, considering the audience's acceptance and understanding. Additionally, in China, another layer of meaning for "吃闭门羹" is "being rejected". The use of these colloquial expressions makes the translation more natural and closer to Chinese readers, evoking sympathy and making it easier for them to emotionally connect. Furthermore, through the process of "translating a word into an expression characteristic of China", the artistic effect of the original work is reproduced (Nida, 2001). Chinese readers can experience the same aesthetic value contained in the original text. The translator strives to

adhere faithfully to the original text while also closely aligning with the tastes of the target readers. Through such application, a similar response is successfully elicited from Chinese viewers. The last three sentences are in the form of Chinese hiatus and words, and the choice of translation is made in the context, which is in line with the acceptance norms of the target language viewers. All these alternations during translating are for adhering to the norms of target culture.

Example 7. "Terrible fucking luck, huh? Crying shame."

Chinese subtitle: 过路财神，真够倒霉。

Andy and his fellow inmates were sent to work, and they unintentionally overheard prison officials complaining about taxes. The translator needs to have a certain understanding of American law. Although the warden received a hefty inheritance, he needed to pay a large amount of taxes. Therefore, the translation is directly rendered as "过路财神，真够倒霉!" This is not only concise and clear but also conveys the sentiment using Chinese language conventions, resonating with Chinese audiences to the fullest extent, naturally enhancing the acceptability of the film's subtitles.

All these alternations during translating are for adhering to the norms of target culture. A subtitle translator sees translation as a way to make a living. Because of this particular profession, he translates the original subtitles in a way that pleases the producer and the viewer in the country where the film was released, so that the viewer enjoys the movie, or at least does not misinterpret the literal meaning of the source language. His goal is to fulfill their needs. What are the producer's requirements? As the original movie version of a best-selling book, *The Shawshank Redemption* is very different from the classic movies that have been popular for a long time. In order to appeal to a wider target audience and generate a huge box office, comprehensibility and readability are the most important factors they look for in judging a bestseller. Therefore, subtitle translators are expected to translate it in an easy-to-understand way.

Based on the study above, it can be concluded that the translator is likely to use the acceptability strategy in order to meet the needs of the target culture and society. In this instance, the destination texts' conventions control the translation, and acceptability is the dominant factor at this point. The aforementioned instances have undoubtedly demonstrated that the subtitle translator does, in fact, place a greater focus on acceptability than on the accuracy of *The Shawshank Redemption* translation. All of the translation activity's subsequent steps are significantly impacted by this general propensity toward acceptance. Therefore, he gives the target culture norms a lot of weight when choosing the original material.

### **Preliminary Norms in the Subtitle Translation of *The Shawshank Redemption***

In the preliminary norms, there are two distinct categories: translation policy and translation directness. If the translator fails to consider translation policies during the translation process, the resulting work may not be fully accepted by the intended audience. Similarly, if the translation lacks the use of a third language as a bridge, it is considered to be direct.

**Translation policy in the selection of the subtitle translation.** Toury contends that translation is a cultural practice subject to conventions. Consequently, the social, cultural, or ideological context of a given era is closely related to the variables influencing the translator's selection of the source material, because the narrative styles and symbols conveyed by written and audio-visual works differ. The logic of audio-visual communication must be followed by a good film, and transformation of textual communication into audio-visual communication is the key to adaptation.

When translators are tasked with translating the original subtitles of *The Shawshank Redemption* into Chinese, they operate within a specific cultural and ideological context. *Rita Hayworth and The Shawshank Redemption* strategically leverages the popularity of the novel, given that it is a bestseller by acclaimed author Stephen King. This popularity establishes a pre-existing consumer base, and the adapted script maintains thematic and stylistic consistency with the original novel. The film aligns with the expectations of both moviegoers and novel readers, as it depicts Andy's unwavering pursuit of freedom despite being wrongly imprisoned. Simultaneously, the translation process is influenced by the dominant political ideology of the time, which emphasizes the translation and introduction of "excellent" and "progressive" foreign literary works. The thematic alignment of the film with the prevailing political ideology makes it a favorable choice for translation by the translators of that era.

Since its release in the United States in 1994, the translator's approach involves interpreting and reinterpreting religious culture and character spirituality, because the movie is realistic with strong religious undertones and love themes. The translator aims to shed light on people's hardships over time and fear of change from the distinct viewpoint of a prison environment. The video presents a timeless work infused with philosophical and religious knowledge, exposing the dark side of the American legal system in a meaningful way.

*The Shawshank Redemption* offers a broad space for audience imagination through its artistic presentation, allowing viewers to experience Western cultural ideas and religious beliefs. Rational argumentation on issues of human nature and faith reflects the cultural and social values embedded in the work.

**Directness of subtitle translation.** The directness of translation describes how direct or indirect the translator's interpretation is. A direct translation is one that is translated straight from the text in the original language, as the name implies. It is critical to comprehend the meaning of indirect translation. When a source language text is translated using a third language as a mediator rather than directly translating it from the destination language, this is known as indirect translation. In the field of translation, this is rather typical. An indirect translation can occur for a variety of reasons, restrictions brought about by societal norms. Because of particular conditions, it was not possible to directly access the source material throughout some historical periods. As a result, in order to translate indirectly, translators had to employ a third language as an intermediate. For instance, several translators were forced to translate their works from Japanese translations due to restrictions in the native context. Roughly, 10% of literary works in English and America have been translated from Japanese. In a similar vein, there are two ways to look at the reasons why the translator of this movie chose to translate directly.

Firstly, with the increasing openness of New China, communication and contact with the outside world have become more frequent, enabling translators to directly obtain the source text and translate it into Chinese for domestic viewers. Secondly, by the late 19th century, China had produced a large number of talented translators. Based on the source text, they no longer needed to use an intermediary language and could directly translate into the target language.

Translation directness is not discussed in this paper because the Chinese subtitles of the movie were translated directly from the English subtitles.

### **Operational Norms in the Subtitle Translation of *The Shawshank Redemption***

Operational norms are more concrete than preliminary and initial norms; they are used during the actual translation process. Matricial norms and textual-linguistic norms are the two categories into which operational

norms fall, based on the analysis presented in the previous chapter. While matricial norms address the text's general structure, textual-linguistic norms focus on the text's textual linguistic style.

**Matricial norms.** Matricial norms deal with the completeness of the target text. The addition, omission, or rewriting of the target texts may be carried out by design according to the needs of the translator.

***Strategy of omission.***

Example 8. Bottle of brandy to celebrate your kid's high school graduation.

Chinese subtitle: 家有喜事想喝白兰地也可以。

In order to make the linguistic structure of the translated text clear and succinct, omission mostly refers to the translator's removal of some phrases or words in accordance with the linguistic conventions, modes of thought, and forms of expression of the target language. Respecting the conventions of the native tongue and the language of the part of speech is crucial when translating movie subtitles. The translator did not choose to translate every word for word because of constraints on the location, amount of space, and quantity of subtitle characters. Instead, a strategy of word reduction was employed, omitting "your kid's high school graduation", which is simple but not cumbersome. The broader concept of "家有喜事" encompasses a single event in the source language, aligning with the requirement of subtitle simplicity.

***Rewriting strategy.***

Example 9. Red: "That tall drink of water with the silver spoon up his ass."

Chinese subtitle: 那个面带富贵相的大个子

In line with the plot, the translator opted for a reduction approach by directly removing unnecessary parts, namely "drink of water". The core element "tall, silver spoon" was retained. The term "silver spoon" holds cultural connotations in China, symbolizing wealth and prosperity. Therefore, the translator, aligning with Chinese culture, rendered it as "富贵", meaning prosperity.

Example 10. It chills my blood just to look at you.

Chinese subtitle: 看见你就令我齿冷

Example 11. Red: "It happens" (In the conversation between Red and Andy, both of their parole applications end in failure. Consequently, Red says "it happens").

Chinese subtitle: 难兄难弟

Rewriting is the process by which a translator rewords the text to faithfully represent the content of the source text while taking the audience's linguistic preferences, cultural norms, and modes of thought into consideration. This is done to make sure the translated text satisfies the readers' aesthetic preferences in the target language. To comply with the operational standards of subtitle translation, the movie uses rewriting for some of the colloquial expressions in the original subtitles. The audience might become confused if these phrases were translated word for word. Rewriting brings the translated text closer to the source, making it easier for the viewer to understand what is meant to be said right away and improving the subtitles' cultural fit.

***Transformation strategy.*** English is a member of the Indo-European language family, while Chinese is a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family. The discourse language specification requires the subtitle translator to modify the sentence structure and word matching grammar to reflect the sentence's meaning.

Example 12. "Coworkers". That's rich!

Chinese subtitle: 同事? 够新鲜的。



Example 13. What are you jimmies staring at?

Chinese subtitle: 看什么看回去干活。

In essence, when dealing with subtitles that may be considered unacceptable by Chinese viewers, the translator should engage in a process of reconstructing the meaning of the original text, typically through conversion. Converting English interrogative sentences and Chinese declarative sentences to each other at the right time can accurately convey the meaning of the film while aligning with the Chinese audience's habits of expression and thought processes. Without this type of conversion, understanding the malicious nature of the prison guards may prove challenging for the audience. Through this conversion, the subtitles become more fluent and natural, constituting an effective strategy to adhere to operational standardization. This approach ensures that the translated content is not only faithful to the original text, but also resonates seamlessly with the cultural and linguistic expectations of the target audience.

**Textual-linguistic norms.** Textual-linguistic norms are the rules that dictate how translators should behave. In order to create or modify the target text, they entail choosing textual and linguistic resources, such as words, phrases, and sentences. By examining the unique characteristics that are mirrored in the translated text, we can obtain a general idea of the methods and approaches that the translator used to address specific problems, such as sentence structure and word choice within the constraints of textual language.

In the context of film translation, where characters are often incarcerated individuals using coarse and even offensive language, the challenge lies in accurately conveying the speaker's meaning while ensuring the film remains suitable for distribution in China. The following analysis focuses on how translators handle the softening of four-character phrases and the difficult-to-translate sentences found in the original text. It provides insights into how norms influence the translator's choices regarding the stylistic aspects of the translated text.

***Treatment of four-character phrase.***

Example 14. "I understand you're a man that knows how to get things."

Chinese subtitle: "听说阁下有求必应"。

Example 15. "I'm known to locate certain things from time to time."

Chinese subtitle: "在下却非浪得虚名"。

Example 16. "Despite a few hitches, the boys came through in fine style."

Chinese subtitle: "错误难免，但众志成城"。

The use of four-character phrases is a highlight in the subtitle translation especially in *The Shawshank Redemption*. The above passage represents a conversation between Red and Andy regarding the free circulation of goods within the prison. While the original text provides a straightforward description, the translator opts to use four-character phrases like "有求必应", "浪得虚名", and "众志成城" whenever possible, replacing simple English words. By incorporating these four-character phrases, the rhythm and aesthetic value of the text are enhanced, resonating with Chinese viewers and elevating the aesthetic appeal of the translation.

***Treatment of difficult-to-translate sentences.***

Example 17. "You're mine now."

Chinese subtitle: "不要敬酒不吃吃罚酒"。

Example 18. "Somethings are best left unsaid."

Chinese subtitle: "此时无声胜有声"。

Example 19. "I don't get it and I go under."

Chinese subtitle: “否则只好喝西北风喽”。

In the original subtitles of *The Shawshank Redemption*, there are some special types of expressions that may be difficult for Chinese viewers to understand logically, even after reading the context. The translator skillfully interpreted the original meanings and transformed these simple sentences into Chinese idioms or colloquialisms, making it easier for viewers to understand.

In the first example, the warden's words are translated as “敬酒不吃吃罚酒”. In China, such expressions often imply a threat or warning, suggesting that the person addressed does not know his place or the consequences of his actions. The warden threatens Andy for secretly playing music in the music hall, and ultimately, Andy is punished with solitary confinement. In the second example, the translator cleverly used a classical Chinese poem to add depth to the subtitle translation. In the third example, the translator utilized a Chinese idiom, “喝西北风”, which is often used to describe a person who has not received what they expected or deserved, feeling disappointed or neglected. This expression also implies that failure to understand or comply may lead to punishment. The translator emphasized the consequences of failure or lack of understanding by using this idiom. These translations enhance the viewers' understanding by providing familiar idioms or expressions.

In the context of economic globalization, the translation of film and television subtitles assumes particular importance. Translation is more than just a language conversion; it has a close relationship with the culture it represents. Instead of approaching translation from a limited or isolated linguistic or literary perspective, it is important to adopt a multifaceted approach. A more comprehensive viewpoint for evaluating and interpreting translation activities is provided by Toury's translation norms. In an effort to advance translation studies, this work employs Toury's theory of translation norms to examine subtitle translation. The topic of film subtitle translation is one that is worth investigating, and this paper makes recommendations for additional study.

## Conclusion

The translational norms played a crucial role in the process of translating the subtitles of the film *The Shawshank Redemption* into Chinese. In terms of overall translation orientation, the translator adopted a strategy that leaned towards accommodating the target language culture, making the subtitles more accessible to the target audience. Throughout the translation process, the norm of acceptability was deemed more significant than that of adequacy, although adequacy was duly adhered to. Regarding the selection of preliminary norms, the translator carefully considered the cultural background and expectations of the Chinese audience. Moreover, due to the translator's approach of directly translating from the original English subtitles of the film, translation of directness was employed. In terms of operational norms, the translator aimed to ensure that the translated text was readily appreciated and accepted by the target audience, aligning with the aesthetic preferences and linguistic habits of Chinese viewers. By adhering to the expressive conventions and thought patterns of the Chinese language system, the translator prioritized the interests and preferences of the Chinese audience (Tian, 2021). This effectively explains why the translated product ultimately received recognition from Chinese viewers and seamlessly integrated into the target culture.

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