Film song translation: Verbal, vocal, and visual dimensions

On the Chinese translation of *Amazing Grace* in the film *Forever Young*

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As films are distributed across the globe, film song translation has become a subject of study, which entails considering multi-modal factors. This paper aims to explore the major dimensions and parameters involved in film song translation. Based on previous research on music and translation, this paper proposes a framework for studying film song translation from verbal, vocal, and visual dimensions. The verbal dimension involves semantic meaning, metaphors, images, mood, and emotion. The vocal dimension includes the number of syllables and musical notes, the length of musical notes, rhyme and parallelism, the rise and fall of the melody, and the segmentation of a line. The visual dimension covers the plot, characters, and background pictures. This paper uses this framework to analyze the Chinese translation of *Amazing Grace* in the film *Forever Young* to demonstrate how film song translation can be flexible in tackling verbal, vocal, and visual restrictions and possibilities.

Keywords: film song, translation, verbal, visual, vocal

Introduction

This research was inspired by the Chinese film *Forever Young*, which was a box office hit in China in 2018 (Wikipedia 2018a). The film has been acclaimed for its socio-cultural implications, historical significance, emotional plots, beautiful pictures, and music as well. The Chinese version of *Amazing Grace*, which is one of the most recognizable songs in the English-speaking world and "without a doubt the most famous of all the folk hymns," is repeatedly played throughout the movie (Wikipedia 2018b). *Amazing Grace* is popular in the Chinese community,

and there is more than one Chinese version; however, the version used in *Forever Young* differs from all other existing ones. It is simpler in wording and structure, yet it matches the pictures and storyline and has been well received by the Chinese audience, which has motivated us to carry out this study. Despite the vital role that music plays in the day-to-day lives of individuals and the development of societies, research on translation and music has been rather neglected until quite recently (Susam-Sarajeva 2008; Franzon 2008). It has been pointed out that one possible reason for such neglect might be the lack of clarity as to the professional identity of those who translate songs; nevertheless, it is a fact that songs are translated in various ways for various purposes (Franzon 2008, 374). The issue of song translation is complicated, as music, which is an integral part of a song, is influenced by a variety of social, cultural, and historical factors (Demorest et al. 2008, 213). It is proposed that translators of songs should have both a linguistic understanding and a musical comprehension (Palmer 2013, 24). The translation of film songs is further complicated by the fact that lyrics do not only need to match the musical rhythm but also the visually moving pictures. In other words, film song translation is semantically, musically, and visually restricted, and this study aims to explore such restrictions or rather possibilities and outline the dimensions and parameters for guiding, analyzing, and assessing film song translation.

1.   Research background

1.1   Logocentrism and musicocentrism

A song consists of music and lyrics, which are designed for a singing performance (Franzon 2008, 376). Song translation entails the consideration of both music and lyrics, which gives rise to the arguments involving logocentrism and musicocentrism. Logocentrisum defends the general dominance of lyrics, while musicocentrism is expressed as "a wordless approach" (Gorlée 2005a, 8). On the one hand, much emphasis has been given to music in discussions regarding song translation. For those who uphold musicocentrism, "music is the absolute ruler [...] dominating the actual outcome of any conflict" (Golomb 2005, 128). It is claimed that song "is not a compromise between poetry and music" and "song is music" (Susanne K. Langer, as cited in Gorlée 2005a, 8). It is stressed that "music swallows words" when words and music come together in a song (Susanne K. Langer, as cited in Gorlée 2005a, 8). On the other hand, the importance of lyrics has also been noted. While song translation is intended for the singing performance where music plays a non-substitutable role, the words in a song have an impact on the singing performance and the audience's reception of the song. It is suggested that

the meaning of lyrics influences the interpretation of musical expressions such as pitch, duration, loudness, and timbre (Gorlée 2005a, 9). In other words, lyrics are "an essential and meaningful attribute of the musical performance" (Gorlée 2005a, 9). Considering that lyrics need to be sung out, strict logocentrism is in a rather weak position within the study of vocal music (Gorlée 2005a, 8). Still, the words of a song "deserve to receive high priority" (Low 2005, 200), which is particularly the case with the Chinese context and therefore highly relevant for English-Chinese song translation.

Chinese is "a visual character-based logographic language" (Shrum et al. 2012, 12), and Chinese native speakers are more likely to recall information when the visual rather than phonological memory trace is accessed (De Mooij 2004, 189; Carroll and Luna 2007, 224). Such visual information is closely related to the semantic meaning of Chinese characters. A study on English and Chinese brand names, which has revealed the cognitive characteristics of Chinese speakers, can best illustrate this point. It has been found that the sound qualities of brand names enhanced via the use of jingles and onomatopoeia are effective for English native speakers, whereas visually distinct brand name designs that have positive meaning prove to be more effective for Chinese speakers (De Mooij 2004, 189). Similarly, in the case of English-Chinese song translation, using musicocentric approaches and merely providing pleasure of sound will not work for the Chinese audience, for they tend to look for meaning. We understand that there may be exceptions, for example, when the rhythm or melody of a song is attractive enough for the Chinese audience to ignore the inconsistency or unnaturalness of semantic meaning, but our point is that a balance needs to be struck between logocentrism and musicocentrism in English-Chinese song translation to produce a singable and effective version which the Chinese audience will enjoy.

1.2   Criteria of song translation

Lyrics are texts to be sung. For this reason, they are supposed to have such attributes as "brevity, metrical coherence, subjectivity, passion, sensuality, and particularity of image" (Perloff 2009, 6). While there are lyrics "not susceptible to such criteria" (Perloff 2009, 6), those attributes, which cover both the semantic meaning and the musical quality of lyrics, serve the singing performance. To be brief and metrically coherent makes lyrics easier to be understood and to be sung; to be personal and express passion and sensuality help to invoke listeners' emotion; and the particularity of the image provides listeners with aesthetic pleasure. Lyric translation is not merely a matter of textual transfer, and it has to be done in the musical context if the translations are to be sung. We will discuss such attributes as metrical balance, image, and emotion in Sections 3, 4, and 5. Holistic

approaches, in which the music and the text are treated as an indivisible entity, have been favored since the 1990s, when music translation started to be given emphasis (Bosseaux 2011). Various criteria have been proposed for translating songs. For example, the pentathlon principle of song translation is put forward, which includes five criteria of singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme (Low 2005). Among them, singability, rhyme, rhythm, and naturalness are related to music and performance, which must be balanced with the fifth aspect, namely, fidelity to the sense of the source text. As rhyme, rhythm, and naturalness facilitate the singing performance, we believe that the four aspects can boil down to singability, and in this way, the five criteria of the "pentathlon principle" are essentially concerned with singability and the transference of sense or meaning. The two criteria are actually interrelated.

If a song is to be performed in another language, the target text has to be singable (Franzon 2008, 374; Low 2013, 73). Singability means that the translated lyrics are phonetically suitable, and the words are easy to sing to particular note values (Franzon 2008, 374). It entails the consideration of the textual meaning, and it is "the attainment of musico-verbal unity between the text and the composition" (Franzon 2008, 375). It has been suggested that song translation is only adequate when it "manages to render the meaning (the semantic component) of the source text as closely as possible" while making it sound as natural as possible when synchronized with the music (Golomb 2005, 124). In other words, singability is of utmost importance for song translation, but the original semantic meaning should also be taken into account, which is particularly the case with English-Chinese translation, as mentioned in Section 1.1. Apart from the issue of singability and the textual meaning of lyrics, there are other factors involved in film song translation. Verbal, visual, and sonic aspects all need to be taken into account in a media culture (Perloff 2009, 9). Therefore, film song translation calls for a three-dimensional framework covering the verbal, vocal, and visual aspects.

2.   Theoretical framework for film song translation

Translating songs inevitably encounters "a number of severe restrictions," such as the fixed length for each phrase with precisely the right number of syllables and the observation of syllabic prominence where accented vowels or long syllables must match emphasized notes in music (Nida 1964, 177). An optimal song translation is "a second version of a source song that allows the song's essential values of music, lyrics and sung performance to be reproduced in a target language," but this is "an impossible ideal" in practice (Franzon 2008, 376). It must be recognized that musical translation is not precise (Minors 2013b, 114), and "adaptation may

well be the only possible choice" (Franzon 2005, 265). Such adaptation is intended to achieve a match between lyrics and music.

2.1   Match between lyrics and music

This study refers to the model of song translation put forward by Franzon (2008), which "offers a clearer functional categorization than the preceding works in the field" (Franzon 2008, 390). A translation striving to be semantically accurate to the original lyrics may hardly be sung to the music, and a translation following the original music often needs to sacrifice verbal fidelity, so a singable song translation is "inevitably a compromise between fidelity to the music, lyrics and performance" (Franzon 2008, 377). Taking the lyricist's point of view, Franzon (2008) proposes the following three types of match between lyrics and music, which are relevant to both lyricists and song translators.

Table 1. Match between lyrics and music (Franzon 2008, 390)

A singable lyric achieves	By observing the music's	Which may appear in the text as
1. a prosodic match	melody: music as notated, producing lyrics that are comprehensible and sound natural when sung	syllable count; rhythm; intonation, stress; sounds for easy singing
2. a poetic match	structure: music as performed, producing lyrics that attract the audience' attention and achieve poetic effect	rhyme; segmentation of phrases/lines/stanzas; parallelism and contrast; location of key words
3. a semantic-reflexive match	expression: music perceived as meaningful, producing lyrics that reflect or explain what the music "says"	the story told, mood conveyed, character(s) expressed; description (word-painting); metaphor

This framework acknowledges the premise that music sets the prosody, influences stylistic choices, and adds value to the content of the lyrics (Franzon 2008, 390). As summarized in Table 1, first, it covers the match in terms of prosodic features between a song translation and its original. The translation is supposed to match the original melody as notated on the music sheet and be comprehensible and natural when sung. The singability of the translation is seen in syllable count, rhythm, intonation, and stress, and sounds easy for singing. Second, the poetic match is mostly concerned with the structure of a translation. Translation is supposed to observe the music as performed, being able to attract the audience's

attention and achieve poetic effects. The poetic match can be seen in rhyme, segmentation of lines and stanzas, parallelism and contrast, and location of key words. Third, the semantic-reflexive match refers to the meaning of lyrics and the mood that music expresses. The semantic, symbolic, or metaphoric meaning of the translation is supposed to illustrate the mood of music.

This framework provides translators and researchers with a set of specific parameters of song translation. However, there is a degree of overlap between the three categories. The three types of match outlined here actually cover two aspects, namely, what is heard (in terms of sound) and what is understood (in terms of meaning). We hold that the distinction between the prosodic match and the poetic match is not clear-cut because the prosodic aspect can have a poetic effect, the prosodic aspect influences the poetic one, and they both concern sound. Moreover, the parameters listed in the prosodic and poetic aspects, such as syllable count, rhythm, intonation, stress, rhyme, segmentation of phrases/lines/ stanzas, parallelism and contrast, and location of key words, all have an impact on the singing performance and audience's perception of such performance. There-fore, the prosodic aspect and the poetic aspect are both related to music and the singing performance, while the semantic-reflexive aspect is more about meaning. If taken into a bigger picture with more distinct categorization, the three matches in the framework can be re-categorized into two, namely, the vocal and the verbal ones. In this research on film song translation, more factors other than the vocal and verbal aspects need to be taken into account. Film songs are intended to enhance the emotive effect and match the plot, and such emotional experience usually relies on combined stimuli from different modalities such as the visual and aural ones (Hubscher-Davidson 2018, 74). It can be seen that the framework by Franzon (2008) needs to be further enriched and extended to apply to film song translation.

2.2   Three-dimensional framework for film song translation

It is difficult to isolate the verbal component from the non-verbal ones when it comes to music and film, and the former is only translatable in relation to the latter (Di Giovanni 2008, 298). In this study, we propose a three-dimensional framework covering the verbal, vocal, and visual aspects based on the model of Franzon (2008).

First, a film song translation should follow the original meaning as closely as possible, which is the verbal dimension. As outlined in Section 2.1, the verbal match is analyzed with reference to the storyline, character(s), description, metaphor, and mood conveyed within the model of Franzon (2008). For the convenience of textual analysis, we propose that the presentation of verbal infor-

Table 2. A three-dimensional framework of film song translation

Three dimensions	Focus	Parameters of analysis
Verbal match	Meaning of the lyrics	(1) semantic meaning; (2) metaphors and images; (3) mood or emotion;
Vocal match	Music: number of notes, length of notes, rising tone, falling tone, overall mood	(1) number of syllables matching that of musical notes; (2) words or syllables matching long notes; (3) words and structure easy for singing and understanding, such as rhyme and parallelism; (4) words accompanying rising tones and falling tones; (5) segmentation of lines matching musical phrases; (6) overall mood of translation matching that of the musical melody;
Visual match	Screen: plot, characters, background pictures, emotions conveyed	Whether the semantic meaning, metaphors and images, and emotion or mood of a translation match the screen: (1) plot; (2) characters; (3) background pictures;

mation be discussed on the following three levels: the semantic meaning of key words, which is based on the literal interpretation of lyrics; the metaphors and images established, the interpretation of which is often beyond the literal meaning; and the mood or emotion associated with the words, metaphors, and images. The three levels of analysis cover the parameters listed in the model of Franzon (2008), just in a neater way and more convenient for discourse analysis. It is worth noting that the verbal match does not mean a strictly faithful reproduction of the original meaning. As noted in Section 2.1, song translation can hardly be precise, and the original meaning often needs to be adapted to cater for the musical rhythm or the target audience's cultural background. In other words, some degree of adaptation may be a necessity in song translation. It is particularly the case with film song translation, because the translation needs to be conformed to the plot and visual factors as well.

Second, a film song translation should be in harmony with the music, which is the vocal dimension. Lyrics are poetic. While poetry inherently involves the structuring of sound, no other poetic feature is currently as neglected (Perloff 2009, 1). Song translation, including film song translation, entails the consideration of sound or music (Low 2013, 78). Music itself conveys meaning, and the pace, timbre, and pitch are closely linked to emotional states (Bosseaux 2013, 83), which should be taken into account in lyric translation. For example, it has been

suggested that song translators are obliged to use the same number of syllables as the original in accordance with the musical notes and their lengths (Palmer 2013, 23), and vowels in the translations must correspond to sustained sung notes (Page 2013, 44). The prosodic match and poetic match illustrated by Franzon (2008) cover such parameters as the number of syllables, rhythm, rhyme, stress, sound for easy singing, location of key words, segmentation of lines, and parallelism. We agree that analysis of those aspects can reveal the effectiveness of a translation set to music, but we believe that the vocal match cannot be discussed in isolation, because what is sung is lyrics, and lyrics have meaning. Therefore, we propose that the vocal match be studied with reference to the use of words: whether the number of syllables match the musical notes to convey the melody and rhythm of the original; whether the use of words and the design of the inner structure are easy for singing and understanding, such as rhyme and parallelism; whether key words are placed under long notes which receive more emphasis than short ones; what words are matched with the rising tone, which usually denotes rising emotion and intensity, and what words go with the falling tone, which may carry implications different from the rising tone dependent on specific musical contexts; whether the segmentation of lines matches the musical phrases; and whether the overall mood of the translation matches that of the musical melody.

Third, a film song translation should also match the plot or the moving pictures on the screen, which is the visual dimension. Songs are usually used in films to enhance the emotional intensity of a story, to arouse emotional resonance in the audience, to increase the artistic or aesthetic value of the film, or used as the medium to develop the plot as in musical films. Therefore, the translation of a film song must take into account the visual aspect. Ideally, the semantic meaning, metaphors and images, and emotion or mood of the film song translation should match the storyline of the film, including the characters that may be involved and the emotions that are conveyed as well as the background pictures.

Although we have explained the verbal, vocal, and visual dimensions separately for the convenience of discussion, they are actually interrelated. The three dimensions all involve the emotional factor, as emotion can be conveyed via the lyrical meaning, the music, and the visual. In addition, the discussion of one dimension may involve the others. The verbal meaning of lyrics cannot exist alone in film songs; instead, it is sung out following the musical notes, thus involving the vocal match, and in harmony with the story presented on the screen, which is the visual match. Similarly, the vocal performance delivers the verbal meaning in relation to the plot on the screen, and in this way, the vocal aspect is connected with the verbal and visual ones. The application of the verbal and vocal aspects of a song is intended to enhance the visual presentation, and in this sense, the visual

dimension is dependent on the other two to intensify its effect. In the next three sections, we will discuss the Chinese translation of *Amazing Grace* according to the three dimensions outlined here.

3.   Verbal analysis of *Amazing Grace* in *Forever Young*

Amazing Grace, written by the English poet and Anglican clergyman John Newton in the 1770s, records his personal experience of going through countless hardships, committing various sins, and finally believing in God. It is regarded as a sort of "spiritual national anthem," which inspires hope in the wake of tragedy (Wikipedia 2018b).

Source text (ST)

> Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, / That saved a wretch like me.
> I once was lost but now I'm found, / Was blind but now I see.
>
> T'was grace that taught my heart to fear / And grace my fear relieved.
> How precious did that grace appear, / The hour I first believed.
>
> Through many dangers, toils and snares / We have already come.
> T'was grace that brought us safe thus far / And grace will lead us home.
>
> When we've been there ten thousand years / Bright shining as the sun;
> We've no less days to sing God's praise / Than when we first begun.

Target text (TT)

> 奇异恩典，沁入心田，日月山川，同见。也曾气馁，常被试炼，信心带领，向前。
> 历经困顿，跨过艰险，总会再见，晴天。你的恩典，铺满天边，有心人看得见。

Pinyin (PY)

> *qí yì ēn diǎn, qìn rù xīn tián, rì yuè shān chuān, tóng jiàn. yě céng qì něi, cháng bèi shì liàn, xìn xīn dài lǐng, xiàng qián.*

> *lì jīng kùn dùn, kuà guò jiān xiǎn, zǒng huì zài jiàn, qíng tiān. nǐ de ēn diǎn, pū mǎn tiān biān, yǒu xīn rén kàn de jiàn.*

Back translation (BT)

> Amazing grace seeps through the field of heart,
> Which, by the sun, the moon, the mountains and the rivers, is seen.
> I once lost my heart in the frequent trials and tests,
> But confidence leads me, forward.
>
> Going through hardships and dangers,
> We will see again the sunny day.
> Your grace is extended to the end of the sky,
> Which those with an attentive heart can see.

The theme of the lyrics is that God's grace saves me, relieves my fear, brings me safe this far, and will lead me home. The translation of *Amazing Grace* in *Forever Young* is prima facie much shorter and simplified. Adaptation has been made in terms of the parameters outlined in Section 2.2, namely, semantic meaning, metaphors and images, and the general mood or emotion conveyed.

First, a semantic analysis of the translation shows that some information in the original lyrics has been deleted. The original has four stanzas, and the translation has two, which are mostly based on the first and third stanzas. The translation covers two points made in the original, namely, God's amazing grace and the hardships and dangers "I" have been through. Meanwhile, the phrases that have religious implications are deleted. The deletion of information does not mean that the translation is unsuccessful. Incalculability or intangibility lies at the heart of the interart aesthetic (Minors 2013b, 112). It is the same with film song translation, which is flexible, incalculable, or intangible and hard to be assessed according to traditional translation criteria such as equivalence. Such deletion of information is related to the overall mood or theme of the translation, which is to be further analyzed in the following paragraphs.

Second, the translation has added metaphors and images that are not present in the original. Audience's interpretation of musical performances is influenced by their specific historical and cultural backgrounds (Bosseaux 2013, 81). To ensure better reception of a film song translation, the target audience's cultural background needs to be taken into account. For example, in the Chinese version of *Amazing Grace*, there is a metaphor, 心田 (*xīn tián*; field of heart), which means the heart can produce various products like a field. Chinese like to compare the heart to a field, which is attributable to the influence of an agricultural society.

With this metaphor, the amazing grace of God is made concrete and tangible, which seems to be seeping through and nourishing the field of heart. In addition, the Chinese translation presents a series of images of natural objects, such as the sun, the moon, mountains, rivers, and the sky. These images are centered on the core image, the sky because the sun and the moon are high up in the sky, and the mountains and rivers beneath are often seen against the sky. Presenting such images establishes a beautiful picture on the one hand and conveys more implications on the other, which we will discuss next.

Third, as far as the mood and emotion are concerned, there is a discrepancy between the Chinese translation and its English original. Research suggests that the cognitive schemata for understanding musical information are culturally derived (Demorest et al. 2008, 213). *Amazing Grace* is a hymn. Hymn singing has a clear purpose of praising God (Gorlée 2005b, 39). The religious implications of the original, which are embodied in such expressions as "saved a wretch like me," "I once was lost but now I'm found," "Was blind but now I see," and "The hour I first believed," are mostly deleted from the translation. It emphasizes grace but does not specify whose grace it is. The key image is the sky, or the Chinese character 天 (*tiān*; sky or heaven). In Chinese culture, heaven is regarded as a general term referring to gods. Chinese people even hold special rituals to pay tributes to heaven in order to show their respect for gods. When Chinese make an exclamation, they tend to say 我的天 (*wǒ de tiān*; my heaven) instead of "my God." Therefore, presenting the key image of sky is of significance to the Chinese audience. In addition, the translation lays more emphasis on one's fortitude and optimism: 也曾气馁, 常被试炼 (*yě céng qì něi, cháng bèi shì liàn*; I once lost my heart in the frequent trials and tests); 历经困顿, 跨过艰险 (*lì jīng kùn dùn, kuà guò jiān xiǎn*; Going through hardships and dangers); 信心带领, 向前 (*xìn xīn dài lǐng, xiàng qián*; confidence leads me, forward); and 总会再见, 晴天 (*zǒng huì zài jiàn, qíng tiān*; We will see again the sunny day). Therefore, the translation is less religious than the original and lays more emphasis on individual courage and perseverance.

4.   Vocal analysis

Music and poetry are not foreign to each other (Gorlée 2005b, 39). Song translation is an imaginative enterprise to bring out "a translated symbiosis of poetic and musical texts" (Gorlée 2005a, 8). The lyrics and melody of *Amazing Grace* are regarded as "marriage made in heaven," as there is a sense of awe and grace in the music where a rise is followed by a corresponding fall (Wikipedia 2018b). While there are differences in musical understanding between cultural "insiders" and

"outsiders" (Demorest et al. 2008, 213), it is "not fixed to the particular" (Minors 2013a, 1). Such universalness of music can be evidenced by the popularity of *Amazing Grace* in the Chinese community. The translated lyrics vary, but the music is retained, and the version in *Forever Young* also follows the original melody. Next, we will discuss the translation with reference to the parameters of the vocal dimension outlined in Section 2.2.

4.1   Syllabic pattern

To address points (1) and (2) of the vocal dimension, we have analyzed the syllabic structure of each line, with "/" standing for a stressed syllable and "×" for an unstressed syllable. Each stanza shows the following pattern.

× /	× /	× /	× /
× /	× /	× /
× /	× /	× /	× /
× /	× /	× /

The syllabic structure of *Amazing Grace* is regular, with the first and third lines in each stanza being iambic tetrameter and the second and fourth lines being iambic trimeter. There are four stanzas; each stanza has 28 syllables. The Chinese version has two stanzas, and in each stanza, there are exactly 28 Chinese characters. As each Chinese character is a separate syllable, the number of syllables in the Chinese translation matches that of the original. Besides, the syllables of the English lyrics match the musical notes, and the Chinese version follows the same pattern.

As shown in Figure 1, half notes and quarter notes mostly appear alternately in the notation, and the longer notes, or the half notes, are matched with stressed syllables in the original lyrics, namely the second, fourth, sixth, or eighth syllables in each line. As mentioned in Section 2.2, stressed syllables or vowels are supposed to match longer musical notes. It does not matter that much with the Chinese version because Chinese characters usually end with a vowel, and in this sense, they all have the potential to match long notes. In the Chinese translation of *Amazing Grace*, most of the Chinese characters matching long notes are rhymed, which will be further discussed in the following section.

4.2   Words and structure

Regarding points (3) and (4), first, the Chinese translation is heavily rhymed, which enhances its rhythm. In the original lyrics, the first and third lines in each stanza are rhymed, and the second and fourth lines are rhymed as well. The

Figure 1. Music Score of Amazing Grace

Chinese version is punctuated at 15 places, and 12 of them are rhymed with the [an] sound via such expressions as 恩典 (*ēn diǎn*; grace), 心田 (*xīn tián*; field of heart), 山川 (*shān chuān*; mountains and rivers), 同见 (*tóng jiàn*; see), 试炼 (*shì liàn*; trial), 向前 (*xiàng qián*; forward), 艰险 (*jiān xiǎn*; danger), and 天边 (*tiān biān*; end of the sky). Sound correspondences can establish semantic threads (Waldrop 2009, 63). In this sense, using those rhymed phrases helps to enhance the central theme of fortitude, hope, and amazing grace. Second, the Chinese version applies the balanced four-character structure abundantly. While syntax motivated by the requirements of rhyme will usually seem unnatural (Stewart 2009, 43), the heavy use of rhyme here has not influenced the syntactic structure of the translation. Altogether, there are eight four-character phrases ending with the same rhyme: 奇异恩典 (*qí yì ēn diǎn*; amazing grace), 沁入心田 (*qìn rù xīn tián*; seeps through the field of heart), 日月山川 (*rì yuè shān chuān*; the sun, the moon, the mountains, and the rivers), 常被试炼 (*cháng bèi shì liàn*; frequent trials and tests), 跨过艰险 (*kuà guò jiān xiǎn*; going through dangers), 总会再见

(*zǒng huì zài jiàn*; will see eventually), 你的恩典 (*nǐ de ēn diǎn*; your grace), and 铺满天边 (*pū mǎn tiān biān*; extended to the end of the sky). The four-character structure is regarded to be "formal and standard" in Chinese (Huang 2006, 126). It enhances the conciseness of a text, as much information is packaged into four characters, and its aesthetic value is increased thanks to the orderly structure and rhythm (Liu and Zhan 2012, 99). Third, in the Chinese translation of *Amazing Grace*, as shown in Figure 1, the segmentation of rhymed four-character expressions corresponds to the musical notes, and each four-character phrase ends with longer notes, which further enhances the translation's rhythm.

4.3   Rising and falling tones

Table 3. Words matching rising and falling tones

	Rises		**Falls**	
	God or God's grace	Personal experience	God or God's grace	Personal experience
English version	16 out of 28 (57%)	9 out of 28 (32%)	3 out of 16 (19%)	8 out of 16 (50%)
Chinese version	4 out of 18 (22%)	11 out of 18 (61%)	2 out of 10 (20%)	8 out of 10 (80%)

To address points (5) and (6), we have analyzed the words matching the rising and falling tones in the two versions. Musical experience involves the mental representation of sounds (Bailes 2009, 41). As noted at the beginning of Section 4, the arrangement of rises and falls in *Amazing Grace* is regular, with each rise followed by a fall. Such rises and falls are closely related to the emotions aroused in the audience. As summarized in Table 3, among the 28 rises in the English original, 16 of them, 57% of the total, are concerned with God or God's grace, such as "amazing," "grace," "saved a wretch," and "precious," and 9 of them, about 32% of the total, are about personal experience, such as "blind" and "my fears." When it comes to the 16 falls, only 3 of them, accounting for 19%, are about God's grace, including "how sweet the sound," "lead me home," and "praise," while 50% of the falls are about the narrator "I," such as "my heart," "I see," and "lost." It can be seen that the majority of the rises in the English lyrics are associated with praise of God's grace, while the majority of the falls are about one's personal experience. It is a different case with the Chinese version. As demonstrated in Table 3, among the 18 rises, only 4 of them, 22% of the total, are about God or God's grace, such as 奇异 (*qí yì*; amazing), 恩典 (*ēn diǎn*; grace), and 你的 (*nǐ de*; Your), while 11 of them, 61% of the total, are about one's experience, such as 历经 (*lì jīng*; through),

困顿 (*kùn dùn*; hardships), and 信心 (*xìn xīn*; confidence). It is the same with the 10 falls, 8 of which are about one's experience, such as 试炼 (*shì liàn*; trials and tests) and 向前 (*xiàng qián*; forward). In a word, in the Chinese version, more emphasis is laid on personal experiences, including the hardships, trials, and dangers one has been through, and the confidence one has. Such emphasis on the human or personal aspect is attributable to the theme of the film *Forever Young*, which depicts wars and people's struggles. In addition, the Chinese version is also connected with the visual pictures on the screen.

5.　Visual analysis

Communicating emotions is a key aspect of intercultural communication (Hubscher-Davidson 2018, 34), and emotions are relevant for the translation of a wide range of texts (Hubscher-Davidson 2018, 36). The Chinese translation of *Amazing Grace* in *Forever Young* has a strong emotive effect. It is played when the pilot Shen Guangyao flies a plane to a poor mountainous village to drop food to orphans. With an overwhelming war going on, the orphans are starving, so Shen is like an angel bringing God's grace to them. Next, we will provide a line-to-line analysis to show how the Chinese translation matches the plot, characters, and background pictures on the screen as outlined in Section 2.2.

ST:　Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
TT:　奇异恩典，沁入心田
PY:　*qí yì ēn diǎn, qìn rù xīn tián*
BT:　Amazing Grace seeps through the field of heart.

When this line is sung, Shen sets off on his way to fly a plane and drop food for the orphans. An orphan is sitting on the top of a straw house, looking up into the sky. Some orphans are singing *Amazing Grace*, their hair messy and their faces dirty but sincere, which shows their belief in hope when life is so hard.

ST:　That saved a wretch like me.
TT:　日月山川，同见
PY:　*rì yuè shān chuān, tóng jiàn*
BT:　Which, by the sun, the moon, the mountains and the rivers, is seen.

When this line is sung, Shen walks across an open field which is surrounded by mountains, and other pilots are chatting among themselves. The images of mountains and sky on the screen match the lyrics.

ST: I once was lost but now I'm found,
TT: 也曾气馁，常被试炼
PY: *yě céng qì něi, cháng bèi shì liàn*
BT: I once lost my heart in the frequent trials and tests.

When this line is sung, the orphans' pitiful faces are shown again, and other pilots on the field are laughing at Shen's "silly" act of flying alone to the mountains. It can be seen that the orphans and the pilot Shen are all going through trials and tests.

ST: Was blind but now I see.
TT: 信心带领，向前
PY: *xìn xīn dài lǐng, xiàng qián*
BT: But confidence leads me, forward.

When this line is sung, Shen walks ahead resolutely with confidence, which shows his perseverance.

ST: Through many dangers, toils and snares
TT: 历经困顿, 跨过艰险
PY: *lì jīng kùn dùn, kuà guò jiān xiǎn*
BT: Going through hardships and dangers.

When this line is sung, the orphans sit in a simple shack, their faces looking innocent and expectant, and a foreign priest in shabby clothes kneels in front of them, who later is shown to have lost his legs in the war. They are all going through hardships.

ST: We have already come.
TT: 总会再见，晴天
PY: zǒng huì zài jiàn, qíng tiān
BT: We will see again the sunny day.

When this line is sung, the priest smiles, and there is the sky and sunshine.

ST: T'was grace that brought us safe thus far,
TT: 你的恩典，铺满天边
PY: *nǐ de ēn diǎn, pū mǎn tiān biān*
BT: Your Grace is extended to the end of the sky.

When this line is sung, Shen's plane is flying up high through clouds and into the distance as if bring God's grace to every corner of the earth.

ST: And grace will lead us home.
TT: 有心人看得见
PY: *yǒu xīn rén kàn de jià*
BT: Which those with an attentive heart will see.

When this line is sung, the little boy sitting on the rooftop sees Shen's plane and notifies others, the kids run to the open ground to welcome Shen, and the priest smiles and moves to the door. They all see the plane as well as God's grace.

To summarize, the Chinese translation matches the pictures on the screen. When grace is mentioned, the kind-hearted pilot who is like an angel and the orphans who are waiting for him are shown on the screen; when there are such words as the moon, mountains, and rivers, an open field is presented which is surrounded by mountains under the sky; when hardships, trials, and tests are mentioned, the orphans' faces and other pilots' sneers and contempt are shown; when confidence is mentioned, the pilot Shen is shown to be walking ahead resolutely and the orphans singing energetically and orderly; when the sunny day is mentioned, the priest's smile and the sunshine and sky are shown; when the sky is mentioned, the scene of Shen's plane flying into the distance is shown; and when the lyrics state that those who are attentive will see God's grace, the screen shows that the orphans and the priest have noticed Shen.

Conclusion

To conclude, film song translation is verbally, vocally, and visually restricted and motivated, and the practice, analysis, and assessment of film song translation entails the consideration of the various factors involved, for which the three-dimensional framework presented in this paper and the parameters outlined therein can serve as references. First, film song translation needs to transfer the semantic meaning of the original lyrics, which, however, may need to be adapted to cater to the musical rhythm and the visual on the screen. Such adaptation can be semantic, like the addition of mountains, rivers, the sun, and the moon in the Chinese translation of *Amazing Grace*, and it can be cultural, like the image of sky/heaven in relation to Chinese culture. Second, translated lyrics are supposed to follow the musical melody, particularly in terms of the partitioning of lines and the arrangement of syllables and musical notes. The translation would be more singable if the division of lines were kept with that of the music and stressed syllables were matched with longer notes. Third, since translations are to be used in films, the visual aspect should also be taken into account. The emotive effect and memorability of translations will be increased if the words match the pictures on

the screen. The three-dimensional framework has covered the major dimensions of film song translation, and, in future research, the parameters in the framework can be further specified and substantiated based on the analysis of more film song translations.

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Résumé

Puisque les films sont aujourd'hui distribués dans le monde entier, la traduction de chansons de films est devenue un sujet d'étude qui implique la prise en compte de facteurs multimodaux. Cet article vise à explorer les principales dimensions et les principaux paramètres impliqués dans la traduction de chansons de films. Sur la base de recherches antérieures sur la musique et la traduction, cet article propose un cadre pour étudier la traduction de chansons de films à partir des dimensions verbale, vocale et visuelle. La dimension verbale inclut la signification sémantique, les métaphores, les images, l'humeur et l'émotion. La dimension vocale comprend le nombre de syllabes et de notes de musique, la longueur des notes de musique, la rime et le parallélisme, la montée et la descente de la mélodie, et la segmentation de la ligne. La dimension visuelle couvre l'intrigue, les personnages et les images de fond. Cet article utilise ce cadre pour analyser la traduction chinoise d'*Amazing Grace* dans le film *Forever Young* afin de démontrer comment la traduction de chansons de film peut être flexible en abordant les restrictions et les possibilités verbales, vocales et visuelles.

Mots-clés : chanson de film, traduction de chanson, verbal, vocal, visuel

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