



# Global Journal of Arts and Humanities (ISSN:2637-4765)



## “Language”, “Image” and “Meaning” of the Film Dubbing Art — a Case Study of THE SOUND

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### ABSTRACT

Recently, with the popularity of the TV program THE SOUND and the similar voice competition TV performance, dubbing actors and this industry are coming into the public notice gradually. Dating back to the pre-Qin dynasty, the theory of “Language”, “Image” and “Meaning” has appeared in the traditional Chinese art. For instance, “Language” cannot convey “Meaning” entirely; form “Image” to complete “Meaning”; gain “Meaning” and ignore “Image”. The relationship among them is the dialectical unity. Artists are required to integrate the three things organically in the artistic creation, creating excellent works of art. Film dubbing art is a kind of artistic creation, so this paper will take the TV program THE SOUND as an example to analyze how the dubbing actors use the three aspects of “Language”, “Image” and “Meaning” flexibly.

**Keywords:** Film dubbing; Artistic language; Artistic image; Artistic implication

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### How to cite this article:

Luosha Zhang. “Language”, “Image” and “Meaning” of the Film Dubbing Art— a Case Study of THE SOUND . Global Journal of Arts and Humanities, 2020; 3:15

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As a popular and original voice competition reality shown in Hunan TV, THE SOUND has been broadcast for three seasons since it premiered in 2018. Starting with actor's lines and dubbing, the program invites competitive actors, professional dubbing actors and hosts to compete on the spot for their dubbing ability and speaking skills. The program mainly consists of three parts, including "classic sound", "magic sound" and "voice show". "Voice master" is added in the third season, who collaborates with contestants on a piece to help them compete with other competitors. The format of the program is being innovated constantly and this free creative mode is also excavating the dubbing actors' voice potential incessantly.

"Language", "Image" and "Meaning" occupy an important position in ancient Chinese aesthetics. With the development of the times, the scholars summarize their development as artistic language, artistic image and artistic implication. Dubbing art of film and television refers to a series of artistic creation activities in film and television works, which are specially designed for the dialogue, voice-over, monologue, inner monologue, explanation, crowd voice and the other language.<sup>[1]</sup> That is a creative work in front of the microphone, aiming to shape and perfect the vivid and colorful characters. Excellent film and television dubbing works will infect the audience with moving voice images through skilled pronunciation skills, and create vivid and emotional characters to achieve the integration of voice, images and emotions.

### **1. "Language" — the expression of a visualized image**

Any art has its own unique way and means of expression, using unique material media to create art so that this art has its unique aesthetic and artistic characteristics. This unique way or means of expression is called artistic language.

<sup>[2]</sup> Film and television dubbing art is a three-

gree creation of dubbing. Its material media is the voice of the dubbing actors and the way or means of expression is how the dubbing actors deal with their own voice on the basis of fitting the image of the characters.

The sound modeling of film and television dubbing can shape different roles, including the age, appearance, work and temperament of the characters. Different occupations have completely different speaking styles. For instance, the tone of a policeman contains determined and stiff touch; a teacher may be a little quiet and a farmer may have some simple and honest tone with some local accent and so on. Different ages also have different voice expressions in the aspect of sound modelling. For instance, a child can be astringent and immature; a young person can be sunny and vigorous; a middle-aged person can be experienced and sedate and an old person can be depressed and full of vicissitudes. The impression that the audience stays to the actor Liu Lin is the female character with a fiery personality in "The Story of Minglan", but she tried out three different roles in "THE SOUND". Her first role is a 13-year-old girl in the movie "Red Cherry" called Chu Chu. The 45-year-old actor shocks everyone when she makes a voice. The story takes place in Moscow during the second world war, and the little girl's standard Russian and the childish and naive voice makes the monologue progressive, vivid and moving. The second character is Hu Niu in the movie "Camel Xiangzi", in which Hu Niu quarrels with her father for Xiangzi. Hu Niu is a vixenish and scheming middle-aged woman, so her voice should be a little heavy and sophisticated. Meanwhile she has a masculine personality, so her voice should be blunt, like a Beijing girl. Liu Lin builds up a tough and faithful Hu Niu with a Beijing accent successfully with her stable breath, abundant feelings and solid foundation. The third character is Tang Jing in

the TV play "The First Half". Tang Jing is an independent office lady and her voice should be point-blank. However, when she meets with emotional problems, she can not control her emotions but tries to control them, so she would have a sobbing tone in this part. Every breath of Liu Lin is tightly closed and the contrast between this sound and the previous two is great, shaping a city office woman who encounters affection injury emotionally.

In the dubbing of animated cartoon, actor Wang Zhi dubs the characters of Ne Zha and his mother in the domestic animation "Ne Zha". The audience who has seen the film knows that the two characters have great contrast both in sound and image. She interprets Ne Zha's naughtiness and his mother's witty tone seamlessly and appropriately with great humor and agility. How to switch from one character's voice state to another one quickly? People must find out what each character's voice is like. Ne Zha's voice is more collapse, deep and loose while his mother's voice is rising and ringing. Dubbing actors catch the tonality of the character, and then the gap among them will be widened when dubbing. Therefore, the voice modeling of characters can bring the audience a more direct and vivid feeling in excellent dubbing works.

## **2. "Image" — the convey of vivifying life**

Both artistic and scientific theories have the same mission to reflect social life, especially for the essence of social life, but they use very different ways. Science reflects life with abstract concepts, while art reflects life with concrete images. <sup>[3]</sup> Film and television dubbing shapes the image of the characters on the screen through the sound. Different figures will have different characters. Character is the core part of a person which can show individual differences. Each character in the film and television works has its own unique personality, so a good dubbing creation can enhance the overall effect

of the film and television works. The audiences can learn about a character's unique personality and remember the character just by his voice.

To grasp the personality of a character, dubbing actors should enter the character's inner world automatically, arise their feelings and perceptions fully, and then become a role and a living image. "To think with the role's thinking, to feel with the role's feeling, to express with the role's means" <sup>[4]</sup> The actor Geng Le grasps the personality of the character accurately when dubbing for the Master Guan acted by Lv Qi in the movie "Farewell My Concubine". At the beginning of the film, Master Guan leaves a strict, selfish and indifferent impression on audiences. Devoted his whole life to Peking Opera, he is full of sincere love for the culture of it in his heart. So when seeing Duan Xiaolou's betrayal of Beijing Opera and his noncooperation with Cheng Dieyi, Master Guan appears and makes them realize their mistakes. His beating of his two disciples shows that he has a deep affection for Peking Opera. When dubbing this warped character, Geng Le not only imitates the tone, pronunciation, breath and pausing patterns of the elderly, but also expresses the rules of the Li garden, the past entanglements and the Master's love and helplessness behind the punishment. The most important thing is that he restores the flavor of the story, the old-style taste of the Li garden, the decaying but still decent face of the sunset, and creates this love-hate character successfully.

As for how to show the character's personality in dubbing, Fu Runsheng, the old dubbing actor of the Shanghai film translation factory says that as the voice of the soul communication and language, the character of the body, as well as foreign actors voice language - the soul, the original characters in the films express their thoughts. Actor's soul is attached to the foreign actor's body by using our language, and then

the soul comes back to life. Liu Mintao dubs for the devil in the movie "The Devil Wears Prada". By the time she stands in front of the microphone, she is in the power of the devil. The devil in the movie "The Devil Wears Prada" is a fashion perfectionist. And she is a non-negotiable person who prefers to give orders rather than talk. In a company, she is a daunting workaholic but she doesn't care. Liu Mintao grasps the tone performance of the character. Although this paragraph of lines has large volume and quick rhythm, Liu Mintao completes the performance calmly and immerses herself in it till the end. It is as if she played the role herself. The final shape is also cool and brings this kind of aura to the audience.

### **3. "Meaning" — the enlightenment of the highest implication**

The so-called implication refers to the inherent idea, meaning or significance of artistic works. Clive bell, the British modern art theorist, explains the characteristics of artistic works as significant form, putting the meaning of art works on an important theoretical level.<sup>[5]</sup> From the perspective of implication of art, people not only can understand the topic, theme and other content factors of the works from a new perspective and level, but also understand and grasp the dialectical unity of the content and form of artistic works. Emotion is the experience of people's attitude towards the objective things with which they develop relations and the reaction of the relationship between people's needs and the objective things.<sup>[6]</sup> Therefore, when dubbing actors make the three-times creation, they should put their emotions into the prescribed situation of the role and regard themselves as the characters in the drama, then show the required artistic emotions through the real feelings and achieve a high degree of integration with the figures in the play.

#### **3.1 The use of emotion needs to grasp the ti-**

**mes**

From the perspective of dynastic background, TV dramas of ancient costume have more requirements on characters' lines and etiquette forms. Bian Jiang dubs for the Mu Yunsheng acted by Huan Xuan in the TV play "Tribes and Empires: Storm of Prophecy". The story is set in a fictional setting, but it talks the fights in the imperial palace and the internal affairs of the imperial court. Therefore, most of the lines are simple and concise archaism, and it is necessary to pay attention to the compact language rhythm in the creation of dubbing. And this character itself is a relatively mild character. He has been arrested in the palace since childhood. His father treats him indifferently because of his blood, so he suffers a lot in the heart. This episode shows that Mu Yunsheng knows the truth and explodes in the hall, questioning everyone about his hatred and injustice angrily. Bian Jiang makes the character's relation accurate and brings the imagination to the audience with strong feeling of images.

#### **3.2 The use of emotion needs to grasp the scenes**

In order to fit the emotional state of the characters in the work fully, people must be motivated fully from the inside out.<sup>[7]</sup> Both the external expression of the voice and the emotional changes in the character's heart, as well as the expression, muscles, movements and nerves need to be used actively to create the character through the work. Actor Wu Yue dubs the mother in the movie "Lost, Found". Before the dubbing, her actions as taking off shoes and baring feet are all parts of the preparation for entering the character's mood. When dubbing, Wu Yue's body movements and her expressions are consistent with the characters. When her emotions break out, she goes down on her knees and bursts out crying. Her appropriate performance touches everyone on the spot.

Therefore, when dubbing actors grasp the picture scene, involve emotions and motivate actively from the inside to the outside can make real dubbing art creations which can affect the audience's emotions.<sup>[8]</sup>

As emotion is the backbone of art, the recreation of dubbing actors should make appropriate changes according to the changes of the emotional state of the characters in each period, and then convey it to the audience in the way of voice timely. Only after entering into the scene of the established scene can the feelings of the characters in the play become alive in front of the audience. And then dubbing actors should feel and think with the identity of specific roles to make the audience resonate by touching them with emotions and sound. When the inner emotional changes are combined with the sense of language, the real psychological feelings can be injected into the soul of the characters. Only by restoring the film characters and touching the heart of the audiences, can the meaningful dubbing works be created.

Li Zehou, a famous Chinese philosopher, describes the aesthetics from the three levels of pleasing to the ears and eyes, pleasing to the heart and brain and pleasing to the mind and spirit to analyze the aesthetic pleasure in his book "Four Essays on Aesthetics".<sup>[9]</sup> When excellent dubbing works achieve the unity of "Language", "Image" and "Meaning", use artistic language skillfully, shape artistic image, express artistic implication and enrich artistic expressions, they can expand and enrich the audience's aesthetic feelings greatly and bring the audience pleasure and beauty, achieving pleasing to the ears and eyes, pleasing to the heart and brain and pleasing to the mind and spirit.

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