

Abstract

This study investigates how interlingual subtitles interact with other semiotic elements in target audiovisual texts to create multimodal cohesive relations.

With the advent of the digital age, translation studies is undergoing a multimodal turn. Through the introduction of a wide range of semiotic elements, digital technologies transform verbal texts into multimodal ones. Consequently, the research focus of translation studies is shifting towards the transposition of meaning through both verbal and nonverbal means. Interlingual subtitling, in particular, is situated at the forefront of the new trend.

The transposition of meaning through multimodal means requires a systemic approach. Previous studies have noted that interlingual subtitling involves variegated semiotic elements and communicates through multiple sensory channels. It has also been confirmed that certain semantic relations exist between interlingual subtitles and other nonverbal semiotic elements. However, the mechanisms through which interlingual subtitles interact with other elements and henceforth create meaning require further explorations.

This study constructs a tri-layered metafunctional framework which incorporates Systemic Functional Linguistics, multimodal analysis, and multimodal cohesion and coherence. The tri-layered framework focuses on how meanings are realised in interlingual subtitling, because meanings can be realised through verbal means, or nonverbal means, or collaborations between these different elements. The data set used in this study consists of Chinese television programmes and films subtitled into English accessible in public domain.

The findings of the research demonstrate that interlingual subtitles are key to multimodal meaning-making processes in target audiovisual texts. Interlingual

subtitles are, by their nature, multimodal because they possess both verbal and nonverbal dimensions in constructing meaning in a range of ways. For instance, their colour, font, placement, and movement can all be used to make meaning. Interlingual subtitles can further form new cohesive relations with other visual, gestural, and auditory elements, adding new semantic dimensions to target audiovisual texts. Moreover, the creation of these cohesive relations can be patterned and recurrent, gesturing towards new translation norms in interlingual subtitling.

The findings will have implications to further theoretical development in interlingual subtitling as well as to the creation of subtitling, and will also shed light on the design of AVT-related corpora and AI-based machine translation systems.

Key words: *subtitling, multimodal translation, AVT, SFL, metafunction, multimodal cohesive relations, multimodal cohesive chain, multimodal cohesive network, multimodal cohesion, multimodal coherence*