



A Study on Sichuan Localization Translation of Film Subtitle: A Case Study of Forrest Gump

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Abstract: In the context of global film and television industry, effective localized translation of film and television works has become an important way to increase the local acceptance of film and television works. This paper takes the localized translation of film subtitle of *Forrest Gump* as an example, and studies the strategies adopted for the Sichuan localized translation. The purpose of the research is to explore how to better adapt to the language habits and cultural backgrounds of audiences in Sichuan province while retaining the plot and style of the original film work when translating film and television subtitle for Sichuan localization, so as to promote the exchange and dissemination of film and television works in Sichuan province.

Keywords: Localization translation, Sichuan localization, Translation strategy, *Forrest Gump*

I. Introduction

In the context of globalization, film and television works have become an essential vehicle for cultural exchange, and their ability to cross-culturally communicate is increasingly prominent. How to effectively carry out the localization translation of film and television works so that they can be well received by audiences from different cultural backgrounds has become a topic worthy of in-depth exploration. The Sichuan region, as an important province in western China, provides a rich soil for the localization of film and television works with its unique dialect and culture. This paper aims to analyze the characteristics and cultural connotations of the Sichuan dialect and explores the strategies and practices of localizing translation in Sichuan, taking the classic film *Forrest Gump* as an example.

The Sichuan dialect shows its unique charm with its concise, straightforward, and humorous characteristics from pronunciation, phrases to spoken expressions. For instance, the tonal patterns in Sichuan dialect have a clear

correspondence with Mandarin, but its third and fourth tones are opposite to those in Mandarin. This unique phonetic feature makes the expression of Sichuan dialect in film and television works more vivid and regionally characteristic. In addition, the phrases and colloquial expressions in Sichuan dialect, such as "chui zi" and "o huo," are not only concise and powerful but also contain rich cultural backgrounds and philosophies of life.

In the process of localizing the translation of film and television works, how to retain the original plot and style while adapting to the language habits and cultural background of the Sichuan audience is a challenge. Taking *Forrest Gump* as an example, this film is widely popular worldwide for its profound theme and touching story. However, how to translate the dialogues of this work into the Sichuan dialect, so that it is both faithful to the original and resonates with Sichuan audiences, requires the translator to have a deep linguistic skill and cultural understanding.

This paper starts from the perspective of Skopos Theory to explore the strategies of film and television subtitle translation, especially the translation practice in the Sichuan dialect area. Skopos Theory emphasizes that translation activities should be guided by the purpose of translation, that is, translation should meet the needs and expectations of the target language audience. In the Sichuan dialect translation of *Forrest Gump*, translators need to maintain the spirit of the original work while adopting appropriate translation strategies, such as domestication, foreignization, and free translation, as well as appropriate cultural annotations, to ensure the fluency and cultural conveyance of the translation.

By analyzing the Sichuan dialect translation of *Forrest Gump*, this paper seeks to uncover effective strategies for localizing film and television translations in the Sichuan region, offering valuable guidance and insights for future translation practices in this field. Additionally, it aims to foster the dissemination of Sichuan culture



and bolster the exchange and influence of film and television works within the Sichuan area.

II. The introduction and Analysis of Forrest Gump

2.1 The introduction of *Forrest Gump*

"*Forrest Gump*" is a 1994 American film directed by Robert Zemeckis and starring Tom Hanks. The film offers a view of the historical changes in the United States from the 1950s to the 1990s through the perspective of the intellectually disabled *Forrest Gump*, while also telling his personal growth journey and love story.

Forrest (played by Tom Hanks) is a man with an IQ of only 75, but his life is filled with unexpected successes and discoveries. In the movie, Forrest becomes a college football star, a Vietnam War hero, a table tennis diplomatic envoy, and leaves his mark on several historical events with his pure and unyielding spirit. His philosophy of life is simple yet profound, especially his line "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get," which has become a classic quote.

"*Forrest Gump*" has won the unanimous praise of audiences and critics alike for its unique narrative style and profound themes. It has received several Oscar awards, including Best Picture and Best Actor. The film is not only a highly entertaining work but also an inspiring one, encouraging people to remain optimistic and persistent no matter what difficulties they face.

2.2 Scene Analysis of *Forrest Gump*

This section will conduct a detailed analysis of three important scenes in the film to ensure the use of appropriate dialect language during the translation process. The three scenes are Bubba's sacrifice, Lieutenant Dan's reconciling with himself, and Gump's mother talking to Gump before her death.

Scene 1: In the film *Forrest Gump*, the scene of Bubba's sacrifice is an emotional climax that profoundly depicts the cruelty of war and the deep friendship between comrades.

Sacrifice Scene: During an ambush, Bubba sustains fatal gunshot wounds to his stomach and legs. Forrest drags him to safety, only to watch helplessly as his friend bleeds out. Bubba utters the heart-wrenching last words, "I wanna go home," highlighting Bubba's innocence and youth—he was too young to lose his life in such a nightmare war. His final wish to go home signifies his realization that death is imminent.

Significance of the Scene: Bubba's sacrifice is not just a plot point in the film; it profoundly influences Forrest's life, motivating him to fulfill his promise to his fallen friend. Bubba's death is crucial in defining Forrest's character, shaping him into a loyal, selfless, and driven individual.

In *Forrest Gump*, the language of the dialogue in Bubba's sacrifice scene and other key moments have the following characteristics: First, the dialogue is highly authentic, reflecting the real language style of soldiers during the Vietnam War, including slang and military jargon of the time. Second, it is emotionally rich, capable of conveying the deep friendship and emotions of sacrifice between the characters. At the same time, the dialogue carries the nuances of Southern dialect, reflecting Bubba's personality and background. Bubba's last words, "I wanna go home", are a concise yet profound example; the dialogue express complex emotions in a simple manner. Furthermore, the dialogue reflects the character's personality, especially Bubba's optimism, dreams, and longing for home. The dialogue also have a sense of the era, allowing modern audiences to feel the atmosphere of that time, while being easy to understand to ensure all viewers can grasp its meaning. The dialogue is powerful, touching the audience's emotions, resonating, and becoming iconic language of the film, easy to remember. Finally, the dialogue support the narrative process, advancing the plot while revealing the characters' inner worlds, ensuring that during translation, dialect language is used appropriately to convey the emotions and cultural background of the original text.

Scene 2: In *Forrest Gump*, the scene where Lieutenant Dan reconciles with himself is an emotionally rich and profound turning point in the film. Initially a confident and honor-bound officer from a military family, devoted to his army and country, Lieutenant Dan plunges into deep self-reproach and anger after losing his legs in the Vietnam War, losing hope and direction in life.

Scene of reconciling with himself: During a fierce storm, Lieutenant Dan, aboard Forrest's shrimping boat, shouts at God amidst the thunder and rain, expressing his fury and discontent as if defying fate. This scene symbolizes his internal struggle and marks the beginning of his reconciliation with himself.

As time passes, Lieutenant Dan gradually accepts his situation and starts to reassess his life. He begins to embrace Forrest's friendship and goes into the shrimping business with him. After a series of challenges and successes, Lieutenant Dan



eventually becomes a successful entrepreneur, gets prosthetic legs, and stands up again. His appearance at Forrest's wedding signifies not only his physical but also spiritual rebirth.

Significance of the Scene: Lieutenant Dan's story arc shows how a soldier confronts the cruel blows of fate, experiences struggle and pain, and ultimately finds the courage to reconcile with himself. His transformation is not only personal redemption but also an inspiration to all who have suffered physical and emotional trauma. Through the character of Lieutenant Dan, the film conveys a message: true courage is not about winning on the battlefield, but about standing up again in adversity, accepting oneself, and moving forward.

Lieutenant Dan's reconciliation with himself is depicted through a profound internal transformation reflected in his use of language. During the emotional storm of his catharsis, his words shift from angry and desperate cries ("I'm ready for whatever you've got!") to calm utterances of acceptance and reconciliation. This transition is evident in his dialogue with Forrest, evolving from initial blame to eventual gratitude ("I gotta say, I'm glad it was you who had to take those legs..."). His language becomes concise and potent, mirroring his transition from resistance to acceptance of his physical and destiny circumstances. Lieutenant Dan's dialogue is initially laden with military jargon and direct imperatives, but as the story progresses, his language evolves to become more contemplative and introspective, indicating a reassessment of his role and the meaning of his life.

In summary, Lieutenant Dan's linguistic evolution in "*Forrest Gump*," from imperative and angry tones to reflective and accepting cadences, unveils his internal journey of reconciliation, portraying a character's emotional arc that transitions from despair to discovering a new purpose and meaning in life. The scene of Lieutenant Dan reconciling with himself, depicted through the authenticity of language, emotional expression, regional dialect characteristics, conciseness, metaphor and symbolism, tone and rhythm, character transformation, and sense of humor, vividly portrays his emotional trajectory from anger and frustration to acceptance and hope. It showcases how a soldier finds the courage to reconcile with himself in the face of adversity. The aforementioned linguistic features are all aspects that must be paid special attention to during the translation process.

Scene 3: Gump's mother said something meaningful to him before she died.

Scene of talking with her son: *Forrest Gump's* mother said one of her most famous last words from her hospital bed: "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what comes next." This sentence not only summed up her views on life, but also became the motto of *Forrest Gump's* later life. Her words are full of philosophy, encouraging *Forrest Gump* to keep an optimistic and positive attitude towards the uncertainty of life. In addition, his mother said to *Forrest Gump*, " You must understand that you are the same as the people around you, no different." This sentence emphasizes equality and self-worth, and has had a profound impact on *Forrest Gump's* self-identity. Her words are concise and powerful, revealing her deep love for *Forrest Gump* and a profound understanding of life.

In this scene, *Forrest Gump's* mother also expressed her view of death: " Death is only a part of life, which we are destined to face." Her attitude of accepting the fate, as well as her encouragement and inspiration for *Forrest Gump*, are fully reflected in this scene. The conversation between *Forrest Gump's* mother and *Forrest Gump* before she died is an emotional and profound scene.

Significance of the Scene: This scene shows the profound inner transformation and emotional transmission of the character through the use of language. In the dialogue before her death, *Forrest Gump's* mother conveyed her positive attitude towards life and hope for the future through concise, profound and philosophical language, and these words became the most important spiritual support in *Forrest Gump's* life.

In the translation of *Forrest Gump* mother's dying dialogue, the following aspects should be ensured that the language style conveys the wisdom of southern women and gentle, dialect characteristics to reflect the role of regional background, express sincere emotion, keep concise and profound, and accurate metaphor and symbolic meaning, control tone and rhythm to reflect the role of peace and firm, show the role of inner change, at the same time, to ensure that the translation is not only faithful to the original, and can touch the target language audience emotion.

III. Linguistic Characteristics reflected in Sichuan Localized Translation of Film Subtitles

Localized translation is adapting products based on the language and culture of a specific country to cater to the unique needs of its language market^{Error! Reference source not found.}. Simply speaking, it means transforming external things and giving them



local characteristics that are in line with the local cultural background, ultimately translating them into a language expression that is popular and well-received by the public. When translating the culture of the source language, the target language should try to use the language form conforming to the expression norms of the target language^[2]. Globalization has brought about unprecedented prosperity to cultural exchanges, and localized translation is in line with this trend. The purpose of it is to break down barriers between different languages and cultures. It not only shows the local charm, attracts foreign exploration and understanding of the local area, but also strengthens the cultural identity among locals and allows them to learn about foreign culture in a relaxed atmosphere.

The dialect reflects the unique cultural characteristics of a region and has appreciative value. Sichuan dialect is diverse and vivid in expression, concise and lively in language, refined and vivid in conveying meaning, and rich in rhythm and melody. It often reflects the summary of the laboring people's production and life experience, and their views on social phenomena, people, things and events around them^{Error! Reference source not found.}. It has a strong local flavor, showcasing the temperament and character of Sichuan people vividly.

3.1 Phrase

The phrases in Sichuan dialect are very concise and have strong generalization. And the same phrase has different meanings in different contexts.

Example 1: Man: Boy, I heard some whoppers in my time, but that tops them all. (01:33:58)

It's translated in Mandarin as “孩子，我听过很多牛皮，这是最大的一个”，while in Sichuan dialect as “锤子，你豁哪个哦”。This is a line spoken by a passerby after listening to the story told by Gump. He doesn't believe that Gump is a millionaire, and the “锤子” in Sichuan dialect can express a dissenting attitude.

Example 2: Driver: Nobody gives a horse's shit who you are, pus ball! (00:31:42)

It's translated in Mandarin as “你叫什么名字，脓包！”，while in Sichuan dialect as “关我锤子事，瓜娃子！”。This is a line spoken by a military driver after hearing Gump introduce himself. The driver doesn't care what he is, and his duty is just to drive, so he feels impatient. The word “锤子” in Sichuan dialect usually express anger.

Example 3: Gump: And Tex was...Well, I don't remember where Tex come from... (00:45:27)

It's translated in Mandarin as“泰克斯是...嗯...我不

记得泰克斯是哪里人了”，while in Sichuan dialect as“哦豁我搞忘了”。This is the line spoken by Gump when he suddenly forget where his comrade-in-arms is from. The word “哦豁” in Sichuan dialect can express regret, sigh and so on.

3.2 Affix

Sichuan dialect often uses affixes to express meaning. The affixes in Sichuan dialect are quite different from those in Mandarin, which is also a unique way of speaking in Sichuan dialect. Sichuan dialect has some unique affixes that are not found in Mandarin^[3].

Example 1: Woman: Well, I thought it was a very lovely story. (01:34:12)

It's translated in Mandarin as“我觉得那是个很有趣的故事”，while in Sichuan dialect as“我觉得这个故事寡趣的”。This is a lady's evaluation of the story told by Gump before a man thought that Gump was bragging and mocked him. Therefore, this lady's lines are not only an evaluation, but also an encouragement. The affix “寡” indicates degree is in Sichuan dialect.

Example 2: Gump: I bet if I think about it real hard. (00:04:32)

It's translated in Mandarin as“如果我仔细想的话”，while in Sichuan dialect as“要是嘿起想的话”。This is what Gump said as he tried to recall the first pair of shoes he had worn. Once the Sichuan dialect is suffixed with“起”，it has the meaning of‘continue’，which is helpful for emotional expression and has a strong local color.

Example 3: Mrs. Gump: Don't ever let anybody tell you they're better than you. (00:06:28)

It's translated in Mandarin as“不要管其他人说他们比你强”，while in Sichuan dialect as“你管个铲铲，么儿雄起”。This is what Gump's mother said to him. When others looked at Gump with strange eyes, his mother said this line to encourage him and make him a confident child. “雄起” in Sichuan dialect has an encouraging meaning.

3.3 Reduplication

Sichuan dialect frequently uses reduplication, which may convey a coquettish meaning in Mandarin, but in Sichuan dialect, it is just a common language usage.

Example 1: Mrs. Gump: It's supper, everyone! (00:10:20)

It's translated in Mandarin as“大家来吃晚饭啦”，while in Sichuan dialect as“吃莽莽了”。This is what Gump's mother told the guests and Gump to eat. “莽莽” seems more cordial and also conforms to the



context in which the mother talks to guests and Gump.

Example 2: Jenny: Just if you're ever in trouble, don't be brave. (00:39:17)

It's translated in Mandarin as “如果你遇到了麻烦，不要逞能”，while in Sichuan dialect as“你要是遇到啥子事，莫当犟拐拐哈”。This is what Jenny told him before she left Gump. She didn't want Gump to get hurt in the war, so she said that. Jenny understands Gump's flaws and character, so she communicates with Gump in a way that he understands. “犟拐拐”can not only make Gump understand, but also reflects Jenny's indulgence in Gump.

3.4 Metaphor

Metaphor in Sichuan dialect are very rich, and they usually express abstract concepts with concrete things, thus forming a unique way of expression. The metaphors in Sichuan dialect are rich and vivid, and they describe the abstract concepts by borrowing the characteristics of concrete things, forming a unique language style. These metaphors cover structure, space, substance, customs, emotional attitudes, body parts, food, animals, and natural phenomena, such as “耙耳朵” to refer to henpecked people, or “二麻二麻” to describe the state of tipsy. These imaginative expressions not only enrich the Chinese language, but also reflect the life wisdom and sense of humor of Sichuan people.

Example 1: Mr.Hancock: We don't want to see anybody left behind. (00:08:46)

It's translated in Mandarin as “我们不想有人拉后腿”，while in Sichuan dialect as “不想要撒火药些拖后腿”。This is what the principal said to Gump's mother. The principal used this to reject Gump's request for enrollment. Therefore,“撒火药”is used here to imply disdain for Gump.

Example 2: Dan: Hey, hey, hey, are you blind? (01:14:35)

It's translated in Mandarin as “嘿，你眼瞎了嘛”，while in Sichuan dialect as “你眼睛被雀儿屎糊住了嘛”。This is a line that Lieutenant Dan yelled at the driver when he crossed the road. Since Lieutenant Dan, who had lost his legs, complained about everything around him, he lost his temper and vented his dissatisfaction on the road. Use the phrase “司机眼睛被糊住了” to describe the driver who didn't see clearly.

3.5 Exaggeration

The use of exaggeration in Sichuan dialect is vivid and expressive, emphasizing the characteristics,

extent, quantity, and time of things to enhance the language's impact. These exaggerated expressions not only make daily conversations more interesting but also reflect the warm and bold personality traits of the people from Sichuan.

Example 1: Mrs. Gump: There must be something can be done. (00:08:38)

It's translated in Mandarin as “一定会有办法解决的”，while in Sichuan dialect as “滴点大的事情”。This is what Gump's mother said to the principal. The mother hoped that the principal would agree to Gump's admission to school. And she compared the five-point difference in his IQ to a small thing like “water droplets” to describe that it could be overcome in order to persuade the principal.

Example 2: Soldier: No matter what happens, never, ever...take your eye off the ball. (00:58:29)

It's translated in Mandarin as “无论发生什么事，永远不要把目光离开球”，while in Sichuan dialect as “就算天塌了都要把球盯紧”。This is what a soldier said when Gump was taught to play table tennis. He believes that it is very important to focus on table tennis with eyes, so he uses the exaggeration of ‘the sky collapsed’ to describe the importance of staring at the ball.

IV. Strategies used in Sichuan Localized Translation

Translation means to translate for a particular recipient in a particular environment for a particular purpose^[5]. This requires the translator to use specific strategies for translation. Because the language and expression of Sichuan dialect have a variety of expressions, translators need to use different translation strategies flexibly.

4.1 Amplification

In the process of translation, it is sometimes necessary to combine the thinking differences and expression habits between English and Chinese, and to express the meaning in the original translation by adding words and short sentences^[6].

Example 1: Gump: Bubba's family knew everything there was to know about the shrimping business. (00:33:06)

It's translated in Mandarin as “布巴家的人了解所有跟捕虾有关的事情”，while in Sichuan dialect as “布巴家的人牛逼的很，关于捞虾那点事他们家说第二，没人敢说第一”。Bubba's family has been fishing shrimp for generations, and they know a lot about shrimp hunting. Therefore, the Sichuan language translation adds a powerful description of the Bubba family to achieve the effect of emphasis.

Example 2: Jenny: A lot of people try to grab me.



(00:37:44)

It's translated in Mandarin as “很多人都想抓我”，while in Sichuan dialect as “想抓我的人排轮子都排不完”。This sentence was what Jenny said to Gump when she saw him fight for her. It contained a little bit of anger and helplessness. In the Sichuan translation, sentences with exaggerated techniques are added to better reflect Jenny's emotions.

4.2 Omission

Because of the differences between English and Chinese in terms of grammatical structure, expression and rhetorical means, some words or sentence elements are indispensable in English, but translation will affect the simplicity and smoothness of translation in Chinese. Therefore, some words need to be omitted in the translation process. In addition, Sichuan dialect can usually summarize the meaning expressed in one word, which is quite concise and interesting.

Example 1: Mrs. Gump: What does normal mean anyway? (00:08:18)

It's translated in Mandarin as “正常水平是什么意思”，while in Sichuan dialect as “你几个意思”。At that time, Gump's mother and principal were talking about Gump's IQ level, so there is no need to repeat the 'normal level' in Sichuan dialect translation here.

Example 2: Mrs. Gump: Did you hear what I said? (00:07:26)

It's translated in Mandarin as “听清楚了没有”，while in Sichuan dialect as“嗯？”。This is what Gump's mother asked him after telling him he was no different from others. Sichuan dialect generally uses “嗯？” Or “安？” to ask someone knows or understands what they mean.

4.3 Domestication

Domestication refers to the adoption of a smooth and easy to understand style to minimize the strangeness of the source text by the target language readers. Accustomed to smooth translation, the source text is imperceptibly endowed with the value of the target language and provides readers with a self-intoxicated experience of understanding their own culture^[7]. Domestication can make the audience better understand the meaning of the film on the basis of their own culture.

Example 1: Gump: Stupid is as stupid does. (00:14:29)

It's translated in Mandarin as “做傻事的才是傻瓜”，while in Sichuan dialect as “傻人有傻福”。This is what Gump's mother told him. If a literal translation, the audience may not be able to understand the

meaning of the original text, so it should be translated in accordance with the cultural habits of the audience.

Example 2: Jenny's father: You better get back here, girl! (00:18:37)

It's translated in Mandarin as “你最好马上回来，丫头”，while in Sichuan dialect as “老子数到三”。This is what Jenny's father said when he was looking for Jenny. People in Sichuan often use this sentence to express their majesty. Jenny's father was looking for her anxiously at the time, so it was reasonable to use that sentence here.

Example 3: Jenny: How you doin' ? (01:57:08)

It's translated in Mandarin as “你好吗”，whereas in Sichuan dialect, it's expressed as “吃饭没得”。This is what Jenny said when she greeted Gump. This English sentence is a common greeting word in the West, but in Sichuan, people often greet with “吃饭没得”。

4.4 Foreignization

Foreignization refers to the preservation of the culture, style and language characteristics of the source language, requiring the translator to take the source language culture as the destination, to approach the author, to express the content of the original text from the author's perspective, to pay attention to the characteristics of foreign cultures in translation, to fully express the differences between cultures to the target readers, and to make the readers fully feel the cultures of other countries^[8]. The alienation strategy retains the characteristics of the source language and enables the audience to accept the connotation of foreign culture.

Example 1: Jenny: Pray with me. Dear God, make me a bird so I can fly far. (00:18:59)

It's translated in Mandarin as “和我一起祈祷，亲爱的上帝，把我变成一只会飞的鸟吧”，while in Sichuan dialect as “跟我一哈祈祷，上帝啊，把我变成鸟飞走算了”。This is what Jenny prays to avoid her father's search. On the one hand, various religions have formed their own unique 'spirits', 'teachings' and 'precepts' in the process of development, so it is difficult to find corresponding language between different religions. In addition, Chinese audiences are already familiar with the common vocabulary of mainstream religions in the world, especially Christianity^[9]. So religious words do not have to be translated into “天老爷” but continue to use the words of the source language. This translation retains the exotic flavor of the film.

Example 2: Black Panthers: Our purpose here is to protect our black leaders from the racial on slaughter of



the pig who wishes to brutalize our black leaders, rape our women, and destroy our black communities. (01:07:42)

It's translated in Mandarin as “我们在此的目的是保护我们的黑人领袖，免得他们受到白种猪的袭击，他们想要伤害我们的黑人领袖，强奸我们的女人，摧毁我们的黑人社区”， while in Sichuan dialect as “我们是要保护我们的黑人领导，不让白猪儿袭击他们，那些人想害我们的黑人领导，想强奸黑人女娃儿，还想把我们的黑人社区给毁了”。 This is what the Panthers said at a party. The word ‘pig’ in the sentence is an insulting term for blacks, and the word “猪儿” in Sichuan dialect often has a derogatory meaning. Therefore, the translation of ‘pig’ is retained here to make the audience feel the antagonism between races.

V. Conclusion

Taking "*Forrest Gump*" as an example, this paper discusses the strategies for the Sichuan localized translation of film and television works. The research finds that the Sichuan dialect has unique advantages in localized translation. Its concise, vivid and humorous characteristics can better convey the emotions and cultural connotations of film and television works. In the translation process, translators need to consider the needs and expectations of the target language audience according to the Skopos Theory. Specific strategies include amplification, omission, domestication and foreignization, etc. By flexibly applying these strategies, the plot and style of the original film can be retained while adapting to the language habits and cultural background of the Sichuan audience. For example, amplification can emphasize key content, omission can maintain simplicity, domestication makes it easier for the audience to understand, and foreignization retains the exotic cultural characteristics. In addition, the language features of the Sichuan dialect, such as phrases, affixes, reduplication, metaphor and exaggeration, provide rich ways of expression for translation. Future research can further explore how to better apply these strategies to different types of film and television works and how to improve the quality of dubbing to promote the exchange and dissemination of Western film and television works in the Sichuan area.

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