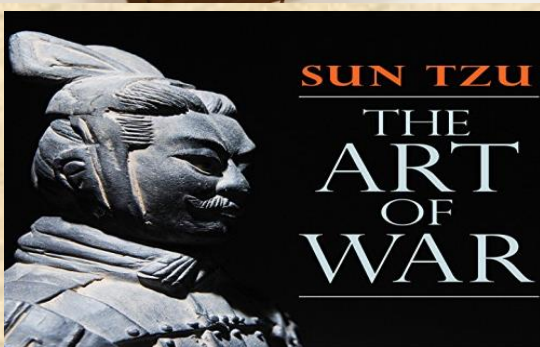


# CHINA IN THE CLASSICS

## Soft Power through Subtitles: Decoding the *Art of War* for the West

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### Introduction:

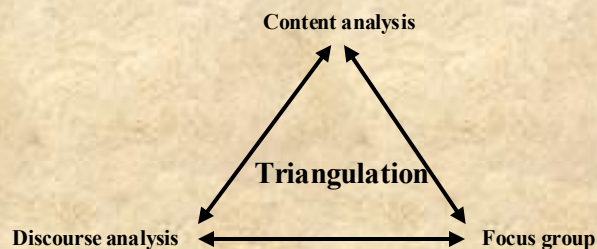
- Effort to adapt classical Chinese texts, such as *The Art of War* into accessible audiovisual formats.
- Yet China's cultural concepts in media often fail to resonate internationally for "cultural discount."<sup>1</sup>
- Existing subtitling models primarily tailored to European languages and contexts<sup>2</sup>.

### Research Goals:

- To empirically evaluate the reception of the English-subtitled *The Art of War* in the TV show *China in the Classics*
1. To identify the subtitling strategies for the cultural references (CRs) or culture-specific concepts in the show, and investigate the rationale behind the strategies
  2. To explore how specific strategies impact the Anglophone viewers' interpretation of the CRs
  3. To explore how the viewers perceive the subtitling quality

### Methods:

The triangulation of the three methods: the content analysis using Cintas and Remael's (2021) model<sup>3</sup>, the discourse analysis with Pedersen's (2011) models<sup>4</sup> and the reception study using focus group and Likert scale.



### Results and Findings:

1. Complementing existing CR taxonomy model:
  - Ethnographic references to historical periodization: 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Period), 宋朝 (Song Dynasty)
  - Ethnographic references to philosophical concepts: 道 (the Way/Dao),
2. Complementing existing subtitling strategy model:
  - Transcription: 孫武 (Sun Wu), 殷 (Yin),
  - Association: 葬 (tomb),
3. Viewers generally prefer subtitling strategies that lean towards foreignization along the Venutian scale:
  - Foreignisation: Specification (Completion) (4.33), Specification (Hyponym) (4.10), and Direct Translation (3.90)
  - Domestication: Generalization (3.95), Association (3.86), Poetic License (3.66), and Substitution (3.61)
  - Omission (2.10)

### Research impact:

- To inform best subtitling practices and provide insights for subtitlers
- To foster cross-cultural communication between Western audiences and China
- To bring about a more cohesive, culturally diverse and globally responsible world

### References:

1. Hoskins, C., & Mirus, R. (1988). Reasons for the US dominance of the international trade in television programmes. *Media, Culture & Society*, 10(4), 499–515. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344388010004006>
2. Alfaify, A., & Ramos Pinto, S. (2022). Cultural references in films: An audience reception study of subtitling into Arabic. *The Translator*, 28(1), 112–131.
3. Díaz-Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2021). *Subtitling: Concepts and practices (First edition)*. Routledge.
4. Pedersen, J. (2011). *Subtitling Norms for Television*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

### Further information:

Scan the QR code to view the TV show: *China in the Classics*



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### Poster Presenter:

Liang Yuan, doctoral candidate at the University of Wales, Trinity St David. My main research interests are in audiovisual translation, interpreting, literary translation and EFL. Welcome to contact me for further collaboration!

