



Analysis of Translation Techniques in Chinese Drama Series Titles: A Study Based on Molina and Albir's 18 Techniques

Leni Cahyati^{1✉}, Andi Filsah Muslimat², Khafifa Fuji Lestari³

Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to identify and categorize the translation techniques utilized in converting Chinese drama series titles into English. Utilizing Molina and Albir's (2002) theoretical framework, which encompasses 18 translation techniques, this research examines 100 Chinese drama series titles available on the iQIYI and WeTV platforms along with their English translations. A descriptive-qualitative method with a content analysis approach was employed. The findings indicate that 12 out of the 18 techniques were identified, with Literal Translation, Modulation, and Discursive Creation emerging as the most frequently employed technique, accounting for 16,67% of the cases, followed by borrowing, adaptation, equivalence, and Amplification. These results demonstrate that translators tend to prioritize semantic accessibility for international audiences while striving to maintain Chinese cultural identity within the translated titles.

✉ Corresponding Author:
E-mail: lenichyt@unhas.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

The global entertainment industry has experienced substantial transformation with the extensive dissemination of audiovisual content from East Asia, particularly Chinese drama series, commonly referred to as C-dramas. This evolution has been expedited by the emergence of digital streaming platforms such as iQIYI, Netflix, WeTV, and Viki, which now cater to audiences in over 190 countries worldwide. Within this context of global distribution, the translation of Chinese drama series titles into English has emerged as a critical issue, both linguistically and culturally. The title of an audiovisual work serves not only as an identity marker but also as the initial gateway introducing viewers to the overarching narrative, themes, and atmosphere of the work itself. In Chinese culture, the naming of drama series frequently incorporates references to classical literature, proverbs, historical figures, philosophical concepts, and even nature imagery imbued with symbolic meaning. This richness of references renders the translation of C-drama titles into English a far more intricate process than the translation of general texts, as the translator must balance faithfulness to the source text with ensuring accessibility for target viewers from fundamentally different cultural backgrounds.

The study of translation techniques in Chinese-language audiovisual contexts has garnered the attention of several researchers in recent years. Ather (2022) analyzed translation techniques in Indonesian subtitles of Chinese short films using Molina and Albir's (2002) framework, identifying 14 out of 18 techniques in use, with literal translation and modulation as the dominant techniques, and concluded that inaccurate technique selection directly impacts the appropriateness of meaning transfer. Larasati and Amri (2021) examined translation techniques in the subtitles of Chinese dramas aired on WeTV, finding diversity in techniques that reflect differing translator orientations between faithfulness to the source language and readability for Indonesian audiences. Chantapan and Jawala (2021) specifically studied techniques used in translating Chinese drama titles into Thai and concluded that translators of historical Chinese dramas tend to adopt strategies that preserve source cultural nuances, even if they have to adjust to the target language's lexical structure. In line with these findings, Wiryamit et al. (2025) analyzed 60 titles of Chinese costume dramas from the WeTV platform (2020–2023) and found that literal translation accounted for only 11% of the data, indicating the immense challenge of directly transferring cultural nuances and the dominance of adaptation approaches in translating C-drama titles into the target language. Furthermore, Fu and Wang (2025) revealed that the transnational distribution of C-dramas via platforms like iQIYI positions translation strategies as a key factor in the success of content penetrating culturally diverse global markets, where the linguistic decision regarding the title constitutes the first point of contact between the work and international audiences.

While previous studies have significantly advanced the understanding of Chinese audiovisual content translation, a notable gap persists in the literature. Firstly, no systematic investigation has comprehensively applied all 18 of Molina and Albir's (2002) techniques to a corpus of English-language

C-drama titles; existing research has predominantly focused on subtitles or translations into languages other than English. Secondly, earlier studies have utilized platforms that do not exclusively emphasize the global distribution of C-dramas, thereby failing to accurately represent the practice of title translation within the ecosystems of iQIYI and WeTV, two of the largest international C-drama distributors. Thirdly, the commercial and strategic ramifications of translation technique choices on the acceptability of titles in English-speaking markets have not been explicitly explored. This study's novelty is threefold: (1) it applies the complete framework of Molina and Albir's 18 techniques to a corpus of C-drama titles from the iQIYI platform, reflecting cutting-edge global distribution; (2) it conducts a comprehensive analysis of 30 title pairs, providing in-depth linguistic and cultural justifications for each instance; and (3) it discusses the strategic implications of translation technique choices for English-language international content distribution platforms.

Based on the aforementioned explanation, this study identifies two primary issues to be addressed. Firstly, the translation of Chinese drama series titles into English presents complex cross-cultural challenges, yet no systematic study has mapped all the techniques employed by translators within the specific context of global streaming platforms. Secondly, it remains unclear which translation technique is most prevalently used and what its implications are for C-drama title translation strategies, thus the translator's orientation, whether it leans toward domestication or foreignization in the context of global distribution, cannot yet be empirically and data-based explained.

This study aims to identify and classify the translation techniques employed in translating 30 Chinese drama series titles from the iQIYI and WeTV platforms into English, based on Molina and Albir's (2002) framework of 18 translation techniques, as well as to elucidate the most dominant technique and its implications for C-drama title translation strategies in the context of global audiovisual content distribution.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive-qualitative methodology, utilizing a content analysis approach. The qualitative approach was selected due to the research's objective of providing an in-depth description and interpretation of the translation phenomenon. This method aligns with the study's descriptive-interpretative aim, which is to systematically map and classify the translation techniques employed within the audiovisual text corpus. Content analysis is applied to systematically identify patterns of translation techniques across data from 30 drama series titles.

The research data comprises 30 Chinese drama series titles and their official English translations, as listed in the metadata of the iQIYI International and WeTV platforms. The criteria for data selection include: (1) the drama series are produced in Mainland China and distributed via iQIYI and WeTV;

(2) the English translations are the official versions from the distribution rights holders; and (3) the series have been or are being aired during the period 2019–2024.

The analysis is conducted using data cards as instruments, which contain columns for the original title in Chinese, the English translation, drama genre, identification of translation techniques, and analytical justification. The analysis procedure follows these stages: (1) data collection and verification; (2) comparative linguistic analysis; (3) identification of techniques based on the taxonomy of Molina and Albir (2002); (4) frequency tabulation; and (5) interpretation of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the 30 drama titles, the most dominant translation techniques are Literal Translation, Modulation, and Discursive Creation, each appearing 5 times (16.67%). These three techniques demonstrate a balance between approaches that preserve the originality of the text, shift the perspective of meaning, and create entirely new creative equivalents.

Below is a breakdown of the percentage of each translation technique used out of the total 30 data points:

Literal Translation: 16.67% (5 entries) – Used in titles such as *Northward*, *You Are My Glory*, *Beautiful Reborn Flower*, *The Great Ruler*, and *Vows Under the Stars*.

Modulation: 16.67% (5 entries) – Seen in titles *Almost Lover*, *The Eternal Fragrance*, *Our Dazzling Days*, *Flavour it's Yours*, and *A Beautiful Lie*.

Discursive Creation: 16.67% (5 entries) – Applied to titles *Stand or Fall*, *The Best Thing*, *Tears in Heaven*, *Ice Fantasy Destiny*, and *Dt.Appledog's Time*.

Amplification: 10% (3 entries) – Appears in titles *Love Me in Three Days*, *A Moment But Forever*, and *In a Class of Her Own*.

Established Equivalence: 10% (3 entries) – Used in titles *How Dare You?*, *Forever and Ever*, and *Yesterday*.

Adaptation: 6.67% (2 entries) – Found in titles *Mars* and *Fangs of Fortune*.

Borrowing: 6.67% (2 entries) – Seen in titles *Legend of Hao Lan* and *Filter*.

Reduction: 3.33% (1 entry) – Used in the title *A Dream of Splendor*.

Calque: 3.33% (1 entry) – Applied in the title *Guardian*.

Generalization: 3.33% (1 entry) – Appears in the title *Eternal Love*.

Variation: 3.33% (1 entry) – Seen in the title Scarlet Heart.

Transposition: 3.33% (1 entry) – Used in the title Shine on Me.

Overall, the dominance of these three main techniques reflects a highly flexible strategy on the part of the translator. The translator not only focuses on word-for-word accuracy but also pays close attention to aesthetics, cultural context, and marketing appeal to ensure that the drama titles are well-received by international audiences.

The following is a comprehensive analysis of all 30 titles of Chinese drama series that form the corpus of this study, accompanied by the identification of translation techniques and an in-depth linguistic and cultural justification.

Table 1. Analysis of Translation Techniques for 30 Chinese Drama Series Titles into English

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
1	閃耀如她	Stand or Fall	Discursive Creation	The drama title 閃耀如她 (<i>Shǎnyào rú tā</i>) lexically means “shine like her,” which portrays a woman who is inspiring and able to stand out in her life. However, in the English version, the title is translated as <i>Stand or Fall</i>. This shift reflects a significant change in meaning from the source language to the target language. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002), this phenomenon can be categorized as discursive creation, a technique that produces a new equivalent which cannot be directly predicted from the source text.
2	戀人中	Almost Lover	Modulation	The Chinese title 戀人中 (<i>Liànrén zhōng</i>) consists of two elements: 戀人, meaning “lover,” and 中, which means “in” or “in a state of.” Lexically, the phrase 戀人中 can be interpreted as “being in a romantic relationship” or “in the process of becoming lovers.” This meaning reflects an ongoing romantic relationship or a particular stage within that relationship. However, in the English version, the title is translated as <i>Almost Lover</i>. Literally, <i>almost</i> means “nearly,” and <i>lover</i> means “romantic partner.” Therefore, the meaning of the English title is

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				“almost becoming lovers.” This conveys a relationship between two people who have romantic feelings but have not fully developed into a clearly defined romantic relationship. When compared, there is a difference in perspective between the two titles. The Chinese title emphasizes an ongoing state of relationship, while the English title highlights a condition in which the relationship is close to happening but has not yet been realized. This difference indicates a shift in perspective in the translation process. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002), this translation demonstrates the use of modulation, as there is a shift in meaning perspective from “an ongoing relationship” to “a relationship that is about to happen.
3	千香令	The Eternal Modulation Fragrance		The Chinese title 千香令 (<i>Qiān xiāng lìng</i>) consists of three elements: 千, 香, and 令. The word 千 lexically means “thousand,” and in Chinese it is often used to indicate a very large quantity. The word 香 means “fragrant” or “aroma.” Meanwhile, 令 means “order” or “decree.” However, in literary or drama titles, 令 is often used as a stylistic element that conveys a classical or poetic nuance. Literally, the phrase 千香 can be understood as “a thousand fragrances” or “an abundance of aroma.” Thus, the title 千香令 can be interpreted as a poetic expression describing overflowing fragrance or something that carries symbolic value within the story. In the English version, the title is translated as <i>The Eternal Fragrance</i>. The word <i>eternal</i> means “everlasting,” while <i>fragrance</i> means “aroma” or “scent.” Altogether, the title can be interpreted as “an everlasting fragrance.” This title conveys a poetic impression and suggests something whose meaning endures over time. When compared, there is a difference in meaning between the two titles. The Chinese title emphasizes the concept of quantity or abundance of fragrance through the word 千,

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				whereas the English title emphasizes the concept of eternity through the word <i>eternal</i>. This change indicates a shift in perspective in the translation process. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir, this translation can be categorized as modulation. The modulation technique occurs when the translator changes the perspective or the way meaning is conveyed from the source language to the target language. In this case, the concept of “abundance of fragrance” in Chinese is transformed into the concept of “eternal fragrance” in English. Furthermore, modulation is used when the translator adjusts the perspective or mode of expression to better fit the context of the target language.
4	岁月友情时	Our Dazzling Days	Modulation	The Chinese title 岁月友情时 (<i>Suìyuè yǒuqíng shí</i>) consists of three main elements: 岁月, 友情, and 时. The word 岁月 means “the passage of time” or “years gone by,” 友情 means “friendship,” and 时 means “time” or “period.” When combined, the phrase can be understood as “a period of friendship in the passage of time.” This title portrays memories or experiences of friendship that occur within a certain stage of life. In the English version, the title is translated as <i>Our Dazzling Days</i>. The word <i>our</i> means “belonging to us,” <i>dazzling</i> means “brilliant” or “shining,” and <i>days</i> means “days” or “period of time.” Altogether, the title can be interpreted as “our brilliant days,” which conveys a sense of a beautiful and memorable period of life. When compared, there is a difference in focus between the two titles. The Chinese title emphasizes the concept of friendship across the passage of time, whereas the English title highlights a beautiful and memorable phase of life. Thus, there is a shift in the way meaning is conveyed from the source language to the target language. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir, this translation can be categorized as modulation.

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				Modulation occurs when the translator changes the perspective or mode of expression to better suit the target language. In this case, the concept of “friendship in the passage of time” is transformed into “dazzling days.”
5	成何体统	How Dare You?	Established Equivalence	The Chinese title 成何体统 (<i>Chéng hé tǐ tǒng</i>) is an idiomatic expression in Chinese. It is commonly used to reprimand someone whose behavior is considered inappropriate or not in accordance with social norms. Lexically, 成 means “to become,” 何 means “what” or “how,” and 体统 means “etiquette,” “rules,” or “norms.” If translated literally, the expression would mean “what kind of propriety is this becoming.” However, in actual usage, it conveys anger or disapproval toward someone’s behavior. In the English version, the title is translated as <i>How Dare You</i>. This expression is used to convey anger or disbelief at someone’s actions and can generally be interpreted as “how dare you do that.” It is also commonly used to reprimand someone for inappropriate behavior. When compared, both titles share the same communicative function. They are used to express anger or to reprimand someone’s behavior. Although the linguistic forms differ, the pragmatic meaning conveyed remains similar. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir, this translation can be categorized as equivalence. The equivalence technique is used when a translator replaces an expression in the source language with another expression in the target language that has an equivalent function and meaning within the communicative context. In this case, the idiomatic expression 成何体统 is replaced with <i>How Dare You</i>, which carries the same expressive function in English. Thus, the translation of the title 成何体统 (<i>Chéng hé tǐ tǒng</i>) as <i>How Dare You</i> demonstrates that the translator does not

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				render the expression literally, but instead prioritizes its communicative effect.
6	看见味道的你	Flavour Yours	it's Modulation	The Chinese title 看见味道的你 (<i>Kànjiàn wèidào de nǐ</i>) consists of several lexical elements. The word 看见 means “to see,” 味道 means “taste” or “aroma,” the particle 的 functions as a connector within the phrase, and 你 means “you.” Literally, the phrase can be interpreted as “you who can see taste” or “you who can see aroma.” This expression is metaphorical and describes someone who possesses a special ability related to the sense of taste or smell. In the English version, the title is translated as <i>Flavour It's Yours</i>. The word <i>flavour</i> means “taste” or “aroma,” while the phrase <i>it's yours</i> means “it belongs to you.” Overall, the title can be understood as “the flavour is yours” or “the aroma belongs to you.” When compared, there is a difference in how meaning is conveyed between the two titles. The Chinese title emphasizes a person's ability to perceive or “see” taste or aroma, whereas the English title emphasizes a sense of ownership over that taste or aroma. Thus, there is a shift in perspective from the source language to the target language. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir, this translation can be categorized as modulation. The modulation technique is used when the translator changes the perspective or mode of expression to better suit the target language. In this case, the concept of “seeing taste” in Chinese is transformed into “the flavour is yours” in English. Therefore, the translation of the title 看见味道的你 (<i>Kànjiàn wèidào de nǐ</i>) as <i>Flavour It's Yours</i> demonstrates that the translator does not always preserve the literal meaning. Instead, the translator may shift the perspective and simplify linguistic elements to make the title more

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				communicative and appealing to the target audience.
7	爱你	The Best Thing	Best Discursive Creation	.The Chinese title 爱你 (<i>Ài nǐ</i>) consists of two words: 爱 and 你. The word 爱 means “love” or “to love,” while 你 means “you.” When combined, the phrase 爱你 means “love you” or “I love you.” This expression is commonly used to directly convey feelings of love to someone. In the context of a drama title, this expression indicates a theme related to romantic relationships or feelings of love between the characters. However, in the English version, the title is translated as <i>The Best Thing</i>. Lexically, this phrase means “the best thing” or “something most valuable.” The title does not explicitly mention “love,” but instead conveys a more general meaning of something that is considered very important or precious in a person’s life. When compared, there is a difference in meaning between the two titles. The Chinese title directly expresses love through the phrase “love you,” whereas the English title conveys the meaning indirectly through the expression “the best thing.” Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir, this translation can be categorized as discursive creation. This technique is used when the translator creates a new equivalent that cannot be directly predicted from the literal meaning of the source language. In this case, the expression 爱你 is not translated literally as <i>Love You</i> or <i>I Love You</i>, but is instead rendered as <i>The Best Thing</i>. The use of this technique indicates that the translator considers stylistic aspects and the appeal of the title for the target audience. Therefore, the English title is made more poetic and broader in meaning.

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
8	北上	Northward	Literal Translation	The Chinese title 北上 (Běi shàng) consists of two characters: 北 and 上. The word 北 means “north,” while 上 means “to go up,” “to go,” or “to move toward a direction.” In Chinese, the combination of these two characters is often used to indicate movement toward the northern region. Literally, the phrase 北上 can be interpreted as “going north” or “heading north.” This expression is commonly used to describe a journey or movement toward the northern area. In the English version, the title is translated as <i>Northward</i>. The word <i>northward</i> is derived from <i>north</i>, meaning “north,” and the suffix <i>-ward</i>, which indicates direction or movement toward a place. Therefore, <i>northward</i> means “toward the north.” When compared, the meanings of the two titles are nearly identical. Both in Chinese and English, the title conveys a sense of movement toward the northern region. The main meaning in the source language is preserved in the target language. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir, this translation can be categorized as literal translation. This technique is used when the translator renders words or phrases from the source language into the target language while maintaining the same basic meaning. In this case, 北 is translated as <i>north</i>, while the directional element expressed by 上 is conveyed through the suffix <i>-ward</i> in <i>northward</i>. Thus, the meaning of the source language is preserved without any shift in perspective or addition of new meaning. Therefore, the translation of the title 北上 (Běi shàng) as <i>Northward</i> demonstrates the use of literal translation, as the core meaning of the source language is directly transferred into the target language. This technique allows the main meaning of the title to be clearly understood by the target audience.

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
9	你的谎言也动听	A Beautiful Lie	Beautiful Modulation	The Chinese title 你的谎言也动听 (<i>Nǐ de huǎngyán yě dòngtīng</i>) consists of several lexical elements. The word 你 means “you,” 的 is a particle indicating possession, 谎言 means “lie,” 也 means “also,” and 动听 means “pleasant to hear” or “beautiful to listen to.” Literally, the phrase can be interpreted as “your lie also sounds beautiful.” The meaning of this title is emotional in nature. It describes a situation in which someone realizes that a statement is a lie, yet the lie still feels pleasant or beautiful to hear. This kind of meaning is often found in stories related to romantic relationships or emotional conflicts between characters. In the English version, the title is translated as <i>A Beautiful Lie</i>. This phrase consists of the word <i>beautiful</i>, meaning “attractive” or “pleasing,” and <i>lie</i>, meaning “falsehood.” Overall, the title can be understood as “a beautiful lie.” When compared, there is a difference in form between the two titles. The Chinese title uses a longer sentence structure and explicitly explains that the lie sounds beautiful, whereas the English title conveys a similar meaning in a more concise form. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir, this translation can be analyzed as an example of modulation. The modulation technique is reflected in the shift in how meaning is expressed. In Chinese, the beauty of the lie is conveyed through the word 动听, meaning “pleasant to hear,” while in English, this meaning is generalized into the word <i>beautiful</i>, resulting in a broader interpretation.
10	一生一世	Forever Ever	and Established Equivalence	The Chinese title 一生一世 (<i>Yī shēng yī shì</i>) is an expression commonly used in Chinese to describe something that lasts for a very long time. The phrase consists of two parts: 一生, meaning “one lifetime,” and 一世, meaning “one life period” or “one era of life.” When

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				combined, the meaning refers to something that lasts throughout an entire lifetime. This expression is often used to describe loyalty, commitment, or love that endures for a lifetime. Therefore, in the context of a drama title, it reflects a theme related to romantic relationships and enduring devotion between characters. In the English version, the title is translated as <i>Forever and Ever</i>. This expression means “for eternity” or “for all time.” In English, it is also commonly used to describe something that lasts indefinitely, especially in the context of love or emotional relationships. When compared, the meanings of both titles are essentially the same. The Chinese title emphasizes the concept of a lifelong duration, while the English title highlights the idea of timelessness or eternity. Although the mode of expression differs, both titles convey the notion of enduring love or long-lasting commitment. Based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir, this translation can be categorized as equivalence. The equivalence technique is used when a translator replaces an expression in the source language with another expression in the target language that has an equivalent meaning and communicative function. In this case, 一生一世 is not translated literally as <i>one life, one lifetime</i>. Instead, the translator uses <i>Forever and Ever</i>, which sounds more natural in English and conveys the same meaning of something that lasts eternally. Thus, the translation of the title 一生一世 (<i>Yī shēng yī shì</i>) as <i>Forever and Ever</i> demonstrates the use of equivalence, as the translator chooses a different form of expression that carries a similar meaning in the target language. This technique makes the title more natural while preserving its core meaning.
11	梦华录	A Dream of Reduction Splendor		The drama title 梦华录 (<i>Mèng Huá Lù</i>) lexically consists of three characters: 梦 (<i>mèng</i>) meaning dream, 华 (<i>huá</i>) meaning splendor, magnificence, or beauty, and 录 (<i>lù</i>) meaning

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				record or chronicle. Literally, the title can be interpreted as “The Record of a Splendid Dream” or “A Chronicle of a Beautiful Dream,” which reflects a story about aspirations, life journeys, and the pursuit of a beautiful and prosperous life. However, in the English version, the title is translated as A Dream of Splendor. This change indicates a shift in expression, where the element 录 (lù) meaning record or chronicle is omitted. As a result, the English title focuses more on the core idea of “dream” and “splendor,” which conveys the central theme of the story in a simpler. The translator applies the <i>reduction technique</i> because one lexical element from the source language is not explicitly transferred into the target language, specifically the omission of 录 (lù). This shift shows that the translation of drama titles into English does not only consider literal equivalence, but also readability, attractiveness, and cultural acceptability for the target audience
12	你是我的荣耀	You Are My Glory	Literal translation	The drama title 你是我的荣耀 (Nǐ shì wǒ de róngyào) consists of several lexical elements: 你 (nǐ) meaning you, 是 (shì) meaning are, 我 (wǒ) meaning I / my, 的 (de) as a possessive particle, and 荣耀 (róngyào) meaning glory, honor, or pride. Lexically, the title means “You are my glory” or “You are my pride.” In the English version, the title is translated as You Are My Glory, which conveys the same meaning and message as the original Chinese title. The structure and lexical meaning are maintained, allowing the central emotional idea of the title to be clearly transferred to the target language without significant changes. The translator applies the <i>literal translation</i> technique because the translation is carried out word-for-word from the source language into the target language while still following the grammatical structure of English. Each lexical

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				element in the source language has a direct equivalent in the target language, and the overall meaning of the title remains unchanged. This indicates that the translator prioritizes semantic equivalence and clarity of meaning, since the original expression can already be naturally understood in English without requiring major modification.
13	美丽重生花	Beautiful Reborn Flower	Literal translation	The drama title 美丽重生花 (Měilì Chóngshēng Huā) lexically consists of several elements: 美丽 (měili) meaning beautiful, 重生 (chóngshēng) meaning reborn or rebirth, and 花 (huā) meaning flower. Literally, the title can be interpreted as “a beautiful reborn flower” or “a beautiful flower that is reborn.” Symbolically, the title represents themes of renewal, transformation, and a new beginning after hardship, where the flower metaphor reflects beauty and resilience. In the English version, the title is translated as Beautiful Reborn Flower, which maintains the main lexical elements of the source language, particularly the concepts of beauty, rebirth, and flower. Although the wording is slightly adjusted to fit English expression, the essential meaning of the original title is preserved. The translator applies the <i>literal translation</i> technique because the translation is carried out by directly transferring the lexical elements from the source language into the target language while still following the grammatical structure of English. Each word in the source language has a close equivalent in the target language, and the overall meaning remains unchanged. This indicates that the translator prioritizes semantic equivalence and clarity of meaning in translating the drama title.
14	大主宰	The Great Ruler	Literal translation	The drama title 大主宰 (Dà Zhǔzǎi) consists of two main lexical elements: 大 (dà) meaning great or grand, and 主宰 (zhǔzǎi) meaning ruler, master, or supreme controller. Lexically, the title can be interpreted as “the great ruler” or “the supreme ruler,” referring to a powerful figure who possesses authority, dominance, or control over others.

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				In the English version, the title is translated as The Great Ruler, which conveys the same core meaning as the original Chinese title. The translation maintains the lexical meaning of each component while adjusting the word order to follow the grammatical structure of English. The translator applies the <i>literal translation</i> technique because the translation is carried out by directly transferring the lexical elements from the source language into the target language while maintaining the equivalent meaning. Each word in the source language has a direct counterpart in English, and the overall meaning of the title remains unchanged. This indicates that the translator prioritizes semantic equivalence and clarity, as the original meaning can be accurately conveyed in English without requiring modification or additional interpretation.
15	戰神	Mars	Adaptation	The drama title 戰神 (Zhàn Shén) lexically consists of two characters: 戰 (zhàn) meaning war or battle, and 神 (shén) meaning god or deity. Literally, the title can be interpreted as “God of War” or “War God.” This expression usually refers to a powerful warrior figure who possesses extraordinary strength, courage, and dominance in battle. However, in the English version the title is translated as MARS, which is the name of the Roman god associated with war. Instead of translating the title literally as God of War, the translator chooses a culturally recognizable equivalent that represents the same concept of a war deity. The translator applies the <i>adaptation technique</i> because the cultural concept in the source language (戰神 – war god) is replaced with a culturally familiar reference in the target language, namely Mars, the Roman god of war. This shift shows that the translation of the drama title does not only focus on literal meaning, but also considers cultural relevance and audience familiarity, making the title more appealing and easily recognizable for international viewers.

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
16	佳期如梦之海上繁花	Tears in Heaven	in Discursive creation	The drama title 佳期如梦之海上繁花 (Jiāqī Rúmèng zhī Hǎishàng Fánhuā) lexically consists of several elements. 佳期如梦 (jiāqī rúmèng) means beautiful moments that feel like a dream, 之 (zhī) functions as a linking particle, and 海上繁花 (hǎishàng fánhuā) literally means flowers blooming on the sea, which metaphorically symbolizes fragile beauty and fleeting happiness. Overall, the original title suggests a romantic yet bittersweet story about love, memories, and beautiful moments that feel like a dream. However, in the English version the title is translated as Tears in Heaven. This translation does not retain the lexical elements of the original title but instead introduces a completely different expression that emphasizes the emotional and tragic tone of the story. The translator applies the <i>discursive creation</i> technique because the target-language title presents an unpredictable and creative equivalent that differs lexically from the source text.
17	让我们恋爱吧	Love Me in Three Days	in Amplification	The drama title 让我们恋爱吧 (Ràng wǒmen liàn'ài ba) lexically consists of several elements: 让 (ràng) meaning let, 我们 (wǒmen) meaning us/we, 恋爱 (liàn'ài) meaning to fall in love or to be in a romantic relationship, and 吧 (ba) which functions as a suggestive particle indicating an invitation or proposal. Literally, the title can be interpreted as "Let's fall in love" or "Let us be in love." However, in the English version the title is translated as Love Me in Three Days, which introduces an additional element "in three days" that does not appear in the source text. This shift changes the focus of the title by emphasizing a specific time frame and a challenge or condition in the romantic storyline. The translator applies the <i>amplification technique</i> because additional information is introduced in the target language that is not explicitly present in the source language. This addition likely aims to make the title more intriguing and dramatic, attracting the

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				audience's attention and giving a clearer hint about the plot or conflict of the story.
18	临界天下	Ice Fantasy Destiny	Discursive creation	The drama title 临界天下 (Línjiè Tiānxià) consists of two main elements: 临界 (línjiè) meaning boundary, threshold, or critical point, and 天下 (tiānxià) meaning the world, the realm, or all under heaven. Literally, the title can be interpreted as “The World at the Threshold” or “The Realm at the Critical Boundary.” This expression suggests a world that is on the brink of change, conflict, or transformation. However, the English version of the title is translated as Ice Fantasy Destiny. This translation does not directly correspond to the lexical meaning of the original Chinese title. Instead, it introduces new elements such as “Ice,” “Fantasy,” and “Destiny,” which emphasize the fantasy genre and the theme of fate within the story. The translator applies the <i>discursive creation technique</i> because the target-language title presents a creative and unexpected equivalent that differs significantly from the original lexical meaning.
19	星空下的誓言	Vows Under the Stars	Literal translation	The drama title 星空下的誓言 (Xīngkōng xià de shìyán) lexically consists of several elements: 星空 (xīngkōng) meaning starry sky, 下 (xià) meaning under, 的 (de) as a possessive or descriptive particle, and 誓言 (shìyán) meaning vow or promise. Literally, the title can be interpreted as “vows under the starry sky.” This expression conveys a romantic and poetic atmosphere, often associated with promises of love or commitment made beneath the stars. In the English version, the title is translated as Vows Under the Stars, which conveys the same meaning as the original Chinese title. The translator maintains the key lexical elements and adjusts the structure to fit natural English expression. The translator applies the <i>literal translation technique</i> because the translation is carried out

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				by transferring the lexical elements of the source language directly into the target language while following the grammatical structure of English. Each component in the source language has a close equivalent in the target language, and the overall meaning remains unchanged. This indicates that the translator prioritizes semantic equivalence and clarity of meaning in translating the drama title.
20	我的时代， 你的时代	Dt.Appledog 's Time	Discursive creation	The drama title 我的时代， 你的时代 (Wǒ de shídài, nǐ de shídài) lexically consists of several elements: 我 (wǒ) meaning I or my, 的 (de) as a possessive particle, 时代 (shídài) meaning era or time, 你 (nǐ) meaning you, followed by the same structure 你的时代, which means your era or your time. Literally, the title can be interpreted as “My Era, Your Era” or “My Time, Your Time.” In the English version the title is translated as Dt.Appledog’s Time, which shifts the focus to the names of two main characters in the story, DT and Appledog. The translation no longer reflects the literal structure of the source title but instead emphasizes the relationship and storyline centered around these characters. The translator applies the <i>discursive creation technique</i> because the target-language title presents a creative and unexpected equivalent that differs significantly from the lexical meaning of the source text.
21	昨天	Yesterday	Established Equivalent	昨天 (Zuótiān) lexically consists of two characters: 昨 (zuó), which means "yesterday" in the context of past time, and 天 (tiān), which means "day" or "sky." Altogether, 昨天 is a standard word in Chinese used in everyday language to refer to "yesterday," or more broadly, to the "past." In the context of drama, this title carries nuances of nostalgia, memories that have passed, and themes about things that can no longer be changed. In its English version, the title is translated as Yesterday. This translation does not modify, reduce, or add any elements to the original title.

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				The word Yesterday in English is a lexical equivalent that is universally recognized and used in contexts identical to 昨天, namely referring to the previous day while also carrying emotional resonance and nostalgia. This equivalence is further reinforced by the popularity of the word Yesterday in English-speaking popular culture, one notable example being the legendary song by The Beatles with the same title. The translator applies <i>the established equivalent technique</i>, which refers to the use of terms or expressions that have been officially recognized as equivalents in the target language, whether by dictionary convention or common usage (Molina & Albir, 2002). This technique is appropriate for 昨天 → Yesterday because both words have equivalent grammatical functions, denotative meanings, and emotional connotations in their respective language systems. No cultural or linguistic adaptation is needed because this equivalence is universal and already recognized lexicographically.
22	镇魂	Guardian	Calque	镇魂 consists of two characters: 镇 (zhèn), which means "to calm," "to suppress," or "to control," and 魂 (hún), which means "soul," "spirit," or "essence." Lexically, the combination of these two characters can be interpreted as "Soul Controller" or "Spirit Calmer," referring to a concept in Chinese mythology about a power capable of subduing and managing restless souls. The drama raises supernatural themes between the human world and the spirit world. In its English version, the title is translated as Guardian. This translation process involves translating both the morphological structure and functional meaning of 镇魂 layer by layer: the concept of 镇 (to control/protect) is shifted to the function of "guardian," while 魂 (soul/spirit) becomes the implicit object being guarded. The translator takes the meaningful components from the source language and reconstructs them using the lexical structure of the target language without borrowing original words from the source.

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				The translator applies <i>the technique of calque</i>, i.e., translation carried out by literally replacing source language elements with target language elements, resulting in a new expression that structurally follows the pattern of the source language but uses target language vocabulary (Molina & Albir, 2002). In the case of 镇魂 → Guardian, the semantic elements "controller" (镇) and "soul" (魂) are matched in a single English word that lexically encompasses both functions. The calque technique is chosen because it allows the translator to retain the core functional meaning of the original title while also producing a title that is natural and easily understood by English-speaking audiences.
23	三生三世十里桃花	Eternal Love	Generalization	三生三世十里桃花 is a title that is exceptionally rich in both lexical and cultural meaning. 三生三世 means “three lives, three worlds,” referring to the belief in reincarnation within Chinese Buddhist and Taoist traditions; 十里 means “ten li” (a Chinese unit of distance equal to approximately 5 km); and 桃花 means “peach blossoms,” which in Chinese culture symbolize romantic love, good fortune, and beauty. Altogether, the title evokes a poetic meaning: “Ten Miles of Peach Blossoms in Three Lives, Three Worlds,” describing an eternal love that transcends the boundaries of time, space, and dimension. In its English version, all of this lexical and cultural complexity is generalized into Eternal Love. The far more specific terms—三生三世 (three lives, three worlds), 十里 (ten li), and 桃花 (peach blossoms) are all merged into a single, abstract, and universal concept: “eternal love.” The English title no longer contains the specific Chinese cultural references, but succeeds in capturing the core thematic meaning of the drama in a way that is easily understood across cultures. The translator applies <i>the technique of generalization</i>, that is, replacing more specific terms or expressions in the source language with more general or superordinate terms in the target language (Molina & Albir, 2002). The original

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				title contains references that are highly specific to Chinese culture, such as the concept of three lives in Chinese cosmology and the symbolism of peach blossoms, which do not have direct equivalents in English-speaking cultures. By generalizing all of these elements into "Eternal Love," the translator effectively conveys the thematic essence of the drama to a global audience without requiring them to possess an in-depth understanding of Chinese culture.
24	步步惊心	Scarlet Heart	Variation	步步惊心 is a four-character idiomatic expression (成语/chéngyǔ): 步步 (bù bù) means "every step" or "step by step"; 惊 (jīng) means "startled," "anxious," or "threatened"; and 心 (xīn) means "heart" or "mind." As a whole, the phrase means "every step makes the heart pound" or "every step is fraught with danger," describing the protagonist's journey as they must navigate dangerous court intrigues in the Qing Dynasty palace with constant vigilance. In its English version, the title is translated as Scarlet Heart, which represents a significant shift in register, tone, and linguistic nuance. The idiom 步步惊心, which is descriptive and narrative (conveying an emotional-situational state), is transformed into a poetic nominal phrase that is more symbolic. "Scarlet" (deep red/blood red) is not an explicit element in the original title, while "Heart" only partially represents 心 (xīn). This change shifts the register of the title from a narrative idiom to a more dramatic and romantic visual image. The translator applies <i>a technique known as variation</i>, that is, the replacement of linguistic or paralinguistic elements to alter linguistic aspects of a text, such as changes in tone, style, social dialect, or register (Molina & Albir, 2002). In this case, the narrative idiom 步步惊心, which has a tense and vigilant tone, is changed to the poetic phrase Scarlet Heart, which carries a dramatic-romantic tone. This shift in register is made to suit the conventions of naming romantic-historical dramas in English-speaking cultures, where titles using poetic visual imagery

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				are generally more appealing to the target audience than literal translations of idioms.
25	骄阳似我	Shine on Me	Transposition	骄阳似我 consists of: 骄阳 (jiāo yáng) meaning "scorching sun" or "blazing sunlight"; 似 (sì), which means "like" or "as if"; and 我 (wǒ), which means "I" or "me." Altogether, this title means "The Scorching Sun Is Like Me" or "I Am Like the Shining Sun," portraying a character who radiates enthusiasm, warmth, and positive energy, much like sunlight itself. In its English version, the title is translated as Shine on Me. There is a significant grammatical shift in this translation process: the original title uses a nominal comparative structure (骄阳似我 "the scorching sun is like me"), whereas the English title adopts a verbal imperative structure (Shine on Me = "shine your light on me"). This is not merely a shift in meaning, but a change in grammatical category from a nominal comparative construction to a verbal imperative one, while also reversing the direction of the metaphor: from "I am like the sun" to "the sun shines on me." The translator uses <i>the technique of transposition</i>, which is the change in grammatical category between the source and target languages without altering the overall message (Molina & Albir, 2002). In this case, the comparative noun phrase 骄阳似我 is transposed into the verbal imperative clause Shine on Me. This transposition is necessary because the comparative structure "the scorching sun is like me," if translated literally into English, would sound awkward and unidiomatic. By employing transposition, the translator successfully retains the core imagery (the sun and the self) while producing a title that sounds natural, dynamic, and musically appealing in English.
26	皓镧传	Legend of Hao Lan	of Borrowing	皓镧传 consists of: 皓镧 (Hào Lán), which is the name of the main female character in the drama a concubine who later becomes the grand empress during the Warring States period; and 传 (zhuàn), which means "biography," "life chronicle," or "life story." This title follows the

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				classic Chinese historical biographical drama naming convention with the pattern [character's name] + 传, meaning "The Biography/Life Story of Hao Lan." In its English version, the title is translated as Legend of Hao Lan. The main character's name 皓镧 (Hào Lán) is borrowed directly from the source language through Pinyin transliteration without any changes, so its original phonetic form is fully retained in the translation. Meanwhile, 传 (zhuàn) is rendered as "Legend of..." which serves as a narrative framing device in English. The element of borrowing is most evident in the name "Hao Lan," which is a direct phonetic representation of 皓镧. The translator applies <i>the borrowing technique</i>, which involves taking a word or expression directly from the source language into the target language, with little to no change except possibly for phonetic aspects (Molina & Albir, 2002). This technique is divided into pure borrowing and naturalized borrowing. In the case of 皓镧 Hao Lan, the translator uses naturalized borrowing by converting the Chinese characters into a Pinyin representation that can be read by English-speaking audiences. This borrowing technique is chosen because historical character names are unique and have no equivalents in the target language; thus, borrowing the original name is the only way to authentically preserve the character's identity.
27	大梦归离	Fangs of Fortune	of Adaptation	大梦归离 consists of: 大 (dà) meaning "great" or "grand"; 梦 (mèng) meaning "dream" or "aspiration"; 归 (guī) meaning "return" or "to come home"; and 离 (lí) meaning "to leave," "separation," or "departure." Overall, this title can be interpreted as "A Grand Dream of Return and Departure" or "The Great Dream Amidst Reunion and Parting," reflecting themes of destiny, hope, and the tense dynamics of relationships. In its English version, the title is translated as Fangs of Fortune, which is a complete departure from the literal meaning of the original title.

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				None of the elements in 大梦归离 are explicitly reflected in the English title. "Fangs" bears no correspondence to any component of 大梦归离, and "Fortune" only has a very remote conceptual link to 梦 (dream). The English title appears to be inspired by specific plot elements or visual motifs from the drama, rather than a translation of the original title. The translator employs <i>the technique of adaptation</i>, namely replacing a cultural element from the source language with one that is more familiar or relevant in the target language's culture (Molina & Albir, 2002). The philosophical and poetic concept of 大梦归离 in Chinese literary tradition does not have a direct cultural equivalent in English-speaking contexts. By adapting the title to "Fangs of Fortune," the translator creates a new title that better fits the genre expectations and aesthetic tastes of an international audience, even at the cost of losing the literal connection to the original title's meaning. This adaptation also serves to create a title that is more memorable and has stronger visual appeal in the global market.
28	念无双	A Moment But Forever	Moment Amplification	念无双 consists of: 念 (niàn), which means "to long for," "to remember," or "to yearn for"; and 无双 (wú shuāng), an idiom meaning "peerless," "unparalleled," or "without equal in the world." Taken together, this title can be interpreted as "Longing for the Peerless One" or "An Eternal Remembrance of Someone Unmatched," conveying a sense of deep, irreplaceable love that transcends the limits of time. In its English version, the title is translated as A Moment But Forever, which is an expressive adaptation of the original title's meaning. The English title consists of four words, making it structurally longer and more elaborate than the original three characters. The concept 念 (to remember/to long for) is made explicit as "A Moment," while 无双 (peerless/eternal) is expressed as "Forever." In addition, the conjunction "But" is added to create a dramatic

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				contrast between the two concepts an element not explicitly present in the original title. The translator employs <i>the technique of amplification</i>, that is, adding information that is not present in the source language but is needed to clarify or enrich the meaning in the target language (Molina & Albir, 2002). In this case, the implicit meaning of 念无双, which is semantically dense, is expanded and made explicit through the contrastive structure "A Moment But Forever." This amplification is necessary because the idiom 无双 in Chinese has a high semantic density but lacks a direct idiomatic equivalent in English, requiring the translator to explicate these elements of meaning in order to produce a title that is communicative and expressive for English-speaking audiences.
29	滤镜	Filter	Borrowing	滤镜 consists of: 滤 (lǜ), which means "to filter" or "to screen"; and 镜 (jìng), which means "mirror," "lens," or "glass." Lexically, 滤镜 is a modern technical term in Chinese that refers to a "filter" in the context of digital photography and social media. In this drama, 滤镜 is used metaphorically to describe how modern people tend to present their idealized versions of themselves on social media through various filters, which is in stark contrast to the reality of their actual lives. In its English version, the title is translated as Filter, which returns the word to its original language. It is important to understand that 滤镜 in Chinese itself is a conceptual borrowing of the English word "filter." Thus, the translation 滤镜 = Filter is essentially a process of back-borrowing the term to its original source language. Nothing is added, removed, or changed in this process, as both terms refer to an identical concept both technically and metaphorically. The translator applies <i>the technique of borrowing</i>, specifically in the form of back-borrowing, that is, using a target language word that was originally borrowed into the source language (Molina & Albir, 2002). The word 滤镜 in Chinese is a loanword conceptually derived

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				from “filter” in English. By restoring the term to its original form in English, the translator maintains perfect semantic equivalence between the source title and the target title. This borrowing technique is the most appropriate choice because the term “filter” in the context of social media is universal and immediately understood by English speaking audiences without requiring any adaptation.
30	漂亮书生	In a Class of Her Own (Pretty Scholar)	Amplification	漂亮书生 consists of: 漂亮 (piàoliang), which means "beautiful," "handsome," or "pretty"; and 书生 (shū shēng), which means "scholar," "young intellectual," or "bachelor" in the context of ancient China, referring to someone dedicated to studies and imperial examinations. Altogether, the title means "Beautiful Scholar" or "Handsome Scholar," reflecting the main premise of the drama about a woman who disguises herself as a male scholar in order to pursue an education. In its English version, the title is translated as In a Class of Her Own with the subtitle Pretty Scholar. The main English title contains a significant amplification: the phrase "In a Class of Her Own" is an English idiom with a double meaning referring both literally to "class" as a classroom, and idiomatically to being "unparalleled" or "exceptional." The use of the pronoun "Her" is also an explicit addition that reveals the character's original gender identity, which is not present in the original title. The subtitle "Pretty Scholar" then serves as a more literal translation of 漂亮书生. The translator applies <i>the technique of amplification</i> in a creative and layered way, adding linguistic information that is not explicitly present in the source language title but serves to clarify, enrich, and deepen communication with the target audience (Molina & Albir, 2002). The first amplification is the addition of the idiomatic dimension through "In a Class of Her Own," which creates a double entendre between the academic context and praise for the character. The second amplification is the addition of the pronoun "Her," which explicitly reveals the protagonist's gender information that in the original title is only implicit. This layered amplification

No	Chinese Title	English Translation	Translation Technique	Analysis & Justification
				strategy is highly effective because it results in a semantically rich title while maintaining clarity of information for international audiences.

CONCLUSION

This study elucidates the intricate technical and strategic complexities involved in translating Chinese drama series titles into English on the iQIYI and WeTV platforms. Among the 18 techniques identified in Molina and Albir's (2002) taxonomy, 12 were actively employed, highlighting the nuanced negotiation between maintaining fidelity to the source culture and ensuring accessibility for global audiences. The most dominant translation techniques are Literal Translation, Modulation, and Discursive Creation, each appearing 5 times (16.67%). This trend is particularly evident in titles referencing classical literature, philosophical concepts, and mythology elements that are largely inaccessible to non-Chinese audiences without adaptive mediation. Conversely, the use of borrowing and calque techniques in xianxia genre titles suggests that cultural authenticity is preserved as a unique appeal for international viewers already familiar with the genre's distinctive Chinese fantasy elements.

This study is limited to two platforms (iQIYI and WeTV) and a single target language (English), and thus, the findings may not necessarily represent C-drama translation practices on other platforms or into Southeast Asian languages. Additionally, this study does not incorporate the perspectives of translators or the audience reception of the translated titles. To enhance and expand these findings, further research is recommended to compare translation strategies across platforms (iQIYI, Netflix, WeTV), to examine C-drama title translations into other Southeast Asian languages, and to include audience reception analysis to assess the effectiveness of technique choices in practice.

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