

Text Analysis of The Farewell from a Cultural Linguistic Perspective

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Received: 24- June -2023

Revised: 27- July -2023

Accepted: 21- August -2023

Abstract— With the development of science and technology, the world has entered the era of globalization. The distance between countries, cultures and languages is shrinking, and countries in the world are interdependent and closely connected. However, at the same time, due to the existence of cultural differences such as history, geography and society, the interconnection between countries, cultures and languages is faced with great cultural obstacles. In this context, it is urgent to understand and communicate with each other about culture, and intercultural communication has become another urgent development demand in addition to cross-language communication. This paper examines the text of the film *The Farewell* by Chinese American director Lulu Wang. *The Farewell* opens in theaters in the United States on July 12, 2019, and in mainland China on January 10, 2020. The story of *The Farewell* is about a Chinese family in which a grandmother living in Changchun, China, has cancer, and the relatives in Japan and the United States return to reunite and give the grandmother final farewell. Billi, a granddaughter who grew up in the United States, wants to tell her grandmother the truth, but she is advised by her family not to do so. The cultural conflict of "to tell or not to tell" leads to a discussion of the cultural differences between China and the United States and the dichotomy between concealing and telling is portrayed through the conversations between the characters. This paper will explore the textual characteristics of *The Farewell* from the perspective of cultural linguistics, using linguistic comparison, visual images, and textual analysis, and then discuss the possibility and key factors of "dialogue" between Chinese and Western cultures, and appeal to the importance of intercultural communication for cultural exchange and cultural understanding.

Index Terms—Cultural Linguistic, English language, Intercultural communication, *The Farewell*, Text Analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction of *The Farewell*

The film "*The Farewell*" is a 2019 release directed and written by Lulu Wang, an American-Chinese filmmaker. It generated significant acclaim in North America and received awards for Best Film and Best Supporting Actress at the 35th Independent Spirit Awards. The film depicts the collective efforts of a cross-cultural family facing the dilemma of an elderly family member's terminal illness. The grandmother, living in Changchun, China, is diagnosed with cancer, but the family decides to hide the truth from her to protect her emotional well-being. Family members from the United States and Japan hastily return to Changchun, under the pretext of attending a wedding ceremony for the eldest grandson of the family, in hopes of reuniting and seeing the grandmother for one last time. In the film, the leading role, Billi (portrayed by Awkwafina), is a Chinese-American who moved to the United States with her parents at a young age. Upon learning of her grandmother's illness, her immediate instinct is to inform her grandmother of the truth, as she believes that her grandmother has the right to know, influenced by her upbringing in the American educational system. However, her parents and other relatives, deeply influenced by Chinese culture, strongly discourage her from revealing the truth. The parents forbade Billi from returning to her home country, fearing that she might inadvertently reveal the truth. Billi's life in the United States also became challenging, yet despite such circumstances, she persistently sought ways to reunite with her grandmother.

The film follows Billi's initial realization of the secret and her subsequent confusion, as well as her reunion with family and witnessing the collective efforts made to keep the illness concealed. Ultimately, influenced by Chinese culture, Billi comes to realize that preserving the secret is a way of showing respect for her grandmother.

The film, characterized by Chinese actors and predominantly Chinese dialogue, undergoes a spatial transformation from the United States to China and back to the United States in terms of its narrative and spatial development. The "beginning" of the story takes place in the United States, while the "development" unfold in Changchun, China, ultimately concluding with the leading role's return to the United States. Nevertheless, the film remains conspicuously an "American film." The leading role, Billi, spent her early childhood in China before the age of six, but her primary exposure was to American culture and an American-style education, thus largely representing an American perspective and experience. Additionally, her proficiency in Chinese is significantly inferior to her fluency in English, creating a language barrier that, to some extent, reflects difficulties in cultural comprehension.

In Chinese culture, when faced with a family member suffering from a severe illness, it is customary for individuals to withhold the true extent of the condition, in order to prevent them from experiencing fear and anxiety. It is hoped that by keeping them uninformed about their own ailment, the absence of the stress associated with their illness can potentially slow down the progression of the disease. However, in American culture, the Patients Bill of Rights was enacted in the 1970s, emphasizing the patient's right to "informed consent." In this context, it is illegal for doctors to administer any treatment without the patient's knowledge of their medical condition. Consequently, there is a cultural consideration to inform patients of the truth, enabling them to make decisions about their treatment and the remaining time in their lives.

The disclosure or non-disclosure of a patient's medical condition in Chinese and American cultures ultimately reflects cultural differences, leading to intercultural conflicts. With the advent of globalization, the intensifying cross-national, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural interactions have made the exploration of identity and cultural affiliation in cross-cultural contexts a significant contemporary issue. The theme of *The Farewell* revolves around the cultural differences within a cross-cultural family and how love for family members can bridge these differences.

The director, Lulu Wang, is a Chinese-American who immigrated to the United States with her parents at a young age, growing up in a cultural environment distinct from her parents'. Throughout this period, she experienced encounters and clashes between cultures, which led to a process of confusion and understanding, prompting her to reexamine her dual identity and form a sense of cross-cultural identity. The film *"The Farewell"* is inspired by Wang's own personal experiences. According to Wang, the purpose of making this film was "Because it is an AMERICAN film, challenging what it means to be American and who gets to claim Americanness." [1].

Through the perspective of the leading role, Billi, the film presents the differences between Chinese and American cultures to the audience, while exploring how to find connections and understanding within these differences. Additionally, the film emphasizes the role of "family" as a bridge between different cultures, illustrating the power of love among family members to transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries, and how familial warmth can dissolve oppositions between different cultures. In this overarching context, different cultures reach a consensus regarding the importance of family ties.

1.2 Cultural and Linguistic Differences in the Film

Culture permeates various aspects of human social life, reflecting the ideas, emotions, values, and other aspects that are closely associated with a particular group. It is transmitted and perpetuated through various cultural symbols. In the film *"The Farewell"* the exploration of cultural differences between China and the United States primarily focuses on concepts related to life and death, family values, filial piety, and culinary culture:

Firstly, perspectives on life and death: Chinese perspectives on life and death are deeply influenced by Confucianism. Confucianism advocates the value of life over natural existence, emphasizing the importance of the social dimension of life. It emphasizes the societal and familial contributions made by individuals, considering the significance of life in terms of the social value it brings. While individual lives may be fleeting, they can expand in breadth through the creation of social value. Individual lives serve for social existence, and recognition and value are achieved through the pursuit of value within society. In contrast, American culture places greater emphasis on the intrinsic value of individual life. The dignity of individual life is seen as the meaning of existence. Influenced by individualism, American culture views individuals as equal and independent beings, advocating for individual responsibility towards one's own life. For example, Billi, influenced by the individualistic perspective ingrained in American culture, advocates for informing her grandmother of her cancer diagnosis based on this individualistic view of life. In contrast, Chinese relatives uphold a collectivist spirit that values the sanctity of life. They aim to help alleviate the emotional burden of illness for the grandmother by concealing the true condition, seeking to collectively face the fear of death alongside her.

Secondly, family values: The family is considered the fundamental ethical unit in society. In Chinese culture, the concept of family is highly valued, and individuals are expected to integrate themselves into the family unit, extending their sense of belonging to a communal destiny encompassing society and the nation. Traditional Chinese festivals, such as the Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, Qingming Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival, are closely associated with family. Important social events revolve around the notion of "family." In the film, Billi returns to China to visit her grandmother who is suffering from cancer. In order to ensure her grandmother can enjoy her remaining days without worry, Billi's family decides not to disclose the fact of her cancer diagnosis to her. This act of familial care reflects the emphasis and concern placed on family in Chinese culture. The family members' rationale is to hold a wedding for the eldest grandson Haohao, which revolves around the fundamental collective concept of the family. In contrast, American culture emphasizes individualism,

respecting the rights and dignity of individuals, while also valuing the notion of family. Unlike Chinese culture, American culture advocates for an individualistically view of family, where individuals are considered the masters of their family, as well as society and the nation. Individuals enjoy equal freedoms and rights. In the film, both Billi and her parents live in the United States, and their parent-child relationship and interactions reflect the characteristics of family relationships in American culture. Parents and children communicate with an attitude of equality and use language expressions that do not excessively intrude into the personal lives of their children. For example, the conversation between Billi and her mother in the kitchen during a meal reflects this characteristic.

Billi's mother: You're broke again? Are you always going to live like this?

Billi: Poor but sexy, I hope so.

Billi's mother: Why you not try to save, huh? You should change your expensive lifestyle.

Billi: Mom, if you're gonna give me shit every time I come home, I'm not coming home anymore.

Thirdly, the concept of filial piety: In Chinese culture, the concept of filial piety holds great significance. Filial piety culture occupies a dominant position in traditional Chinese ethical culture, serving as the spiritual foundation for all interpersonal relationships in Chinese society. From an economic perspective, filial piety involves inter-generational economic transfers within the family structure, where parents raise their offspring and later, the offspring support their parents. This reciprocal pattern of giving and receiving between generations maintains a balanced mutual exchange. In the film, the leading role, Billi, returns to China to visit her grandmother who is diagnosed with cancer, aiming to fulfill her filial duty and express her affection and concern for her grandmother. This act of filial piety reflects the importance placed on filial piety in Chinese culture and the concept of respecting and caring for elders. The influence of the notion of respecting elders and fulfilling filial duty has an impact on Billi, despite her upbringing in the United States. Her dual cultural identity shapes her unique cultural perspective, and through resonating with the concept of familial bonds in Chinese culture, Billi achieves recognition and affirmation of her own cultural identity. In American culture, individualism is a significant value, and people often handle the parent-child relationship with a sense of "philanthropy," reflecting the ideals of democracy and equality. Children do not have an obligation to financially support their parents, and parents do not expect their children to be responsible for their old age care. In the film, Billi is a Chinese-American girl who grew up in the United States, and her actions and thoughts are influenced by American culture. For example, she emphasizes independence and the pursuit of personal freedom. When Billi learns about her grandmother's condition, her immediate reaction is to want to disclose the truth:

Billi's mother: Your Nai Nai's dying. She has a stage four lung cancer. The doctor says she has three months. Could be faster, you never know.

Billi: I need to call her.

Billi's father: You can't do that.

Billi: I need to go see her.

Billi's father: Can't do that. She doesn't know. The family thinks it's better not to tell her. So you can't say anything.

Billi: I don't understand. She doesn't have a lot of time left, she should know, right?

Billi's father: There's nothing they can do. So everyone decided it's better not to tell her.

Billi: Why is that better?

Billi's mother: Chinese people have saying: "When people get cancer, they die." It's not the cancer that kills them, it's the fear.

However, under the persuasion of her parents, Billi is able to consider her grandmother's illness from the perspective of Chinese culture. Although she may not fully understand the act of "concealment," Billi still respects the decision of her parents and relatives.

Fourthly, culinary culture: The film "The Farewell" features six scenes that take place at the dining time. The dining table serves as an important setting not only in the lives of Chinese people but also as a significant cultural scene, embodying the culinary culture that serves as a vital medium for interpersonal emotions and intimate relationships. In Chinese culture, dining represents a tradition where family members come together to share meals and exchange emotions. The traditional Chinese round table and Chinese banquets symbolize the Chinese pursuit of reunion and the collective. This reflects the status and importance of Chinese culinary culture within Chinese culture. In contrast, in American culture, culinary culture primarily reflects a sense of social diversity. America is a nation of immigrants, and social diversity is a significant characteristic of its culinary culture. In the film, Billi and

her family are Chinese-American immigrants, and their experiences and feelings of living in America reflect the diversity of American society. For example, in the opening scenes of the film, Billi and her family have dinner with their American friends, and Billi's father tells a subtly teasing joke that showcases the diversity of American culture through dining habits and American-style humor:

So one day, the wife goes out of town. And when she returns, the husband says,
"Honey, the cat is dead."
And she says,
"How can you tell me so abruptly like this?
You have to ease me into bad news.
Like, um, "Honey, the cat...he got on the roof."
And, uh, so...Now...a few months later, the wife goes out of town again.
And she returns and the husband greets her again.
But this time, he learned his lesson.
And as the wife comes through the door, he says,
"Honey, your mom, she got on the roof."

This dining table joke actually foreshadows the development of the subsequent story, hinting at the tactful and restrained attitude adopted by Chinese people when facing their loved ones' illnesses. It also demonstrates that Billi's family, living in America, has assimilated into the local American culture to a significant extent.

II. RESEARCH METHODS IN CULTURAL LINGUISTICS AND THEIR APPLICATION IN FILM TEXT ANALYSIS

2.1 Concept of Cultural Linguistics

In 1996, Garry Palmer published "Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics", introducing the concept of "cultural linguistics" for the first time in the English-speaking world. Palmer provided a systematic exposition of its disciplinary attributes, research paradigms, and is widely regarded as a milestone in the establishment of contemporary Western cultural linguistics. According to Palmer, the generation of language is inseparable from imagery, which, in turn, is determined by culture. Therefore, the core of cultural linguistics lies in the interplay among imagery, language, and culture.[2]

Cultural linguistics is an interdisciplinary field of study that explores the close relationship between language and culture, as well as how language reflects and shapes culture. It investigates how language users employ language within specific cultural contexts, including aspects of grammar, semantics, and pragmatics, to convey cultural concepts, values, and cognitive patterns. Cultural linguistics also examines the mutual influence between language and culture, including how cultural factors affect language structure, language use, and language change, and how linguistic factors impact cultural practices, social identities, and cultural transmission. According to Palmer, language is merely a game of symbolic representations with sounds, and all symbolic representations are based on imagery. Imagination includes various mental images that appear in our minds, as well as experiences obtained through auditory, gustatory, olfactory, and tactile senses, such as Beethoven's music, the taste of mangoes, the scent of perfumes, and walking on a sandy beach.[3]

The research methods employed in cultural linguistics include fieldwork, corpus analysis, cultural analysis, and experimental research, among others. It not only focuses on the role and function of language within culture but also examines how culture is expressed and disseminated through language. Therefore, research in cultural linguistics is of significant importance in deepening our understanding and fostering communication between different cultures. This paper primarily analyzes the influence of Chinese and American cultures on expression, thinking, and communication for individuals in different cultural backgrounds in the film "The Farewell" from a cultural analysis perspective.

2.2 Overview of Research in Cultural Linguistics

Cultural linguistics is an interdisciplinary research field that encompasses disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and others. Both domestically and internationally, research in cultural linguistics covers a wide range of areas, including language structure, language change, language acquisition, language use, and the mutual influence between language and culture.

Foreign Research in Cultural Linguistics: The early theories of American linguistic anthropologist Palmer.G provided the foundation for cultural linguistics. Palmer established connections between cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and the three major traditions of American linguistic anthropology (Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics, and ethnography of communication). According to Palmer, language can be seen as a game of symbolic representation with sound, and all symbolic representations are based on "imagery." The concept

of "imagery" is borrowed from cognitive linguistics and forms the core of Palmer's cultural linguistics. Imagery possesses ethnic and cultural features, and its meaning depends on the cultural context and discourse. It represents a conventionally established worldview imagery constructed through social and cultural interaction, facilitating effective communication. As imagery originates from direct sensory perception, Palmer assumes that "cognition" itself exhibits ethnic and cultural differences. Therefore, understanding "imagery" and linguistic meaning necessitates considering specific cultural worldviews. The United States is one of the most active research areas in cultural linguistics, with linguists such as Dell Hymes pioneering the field. They introduced theories such as pragmatics and speech act theory, emphasizing the connection between language use and socio-cultural contexts, with culture as a central element in language use. Subsequently, research in American cultural linguistics expanded to include cross-cultural communication, intercultural communication, and cross-language education. In 2011, Australian linguist Sherifian provided the first systematic exposition of the theory of "cultural concepts/cultural conceptualization" in his work "Cultural Conceptualizations and Language". Professor Bert Peeters from the Australian National University has offered a precise analysis of "cultural concepts/cultural conceptualization." According to him, cultural cognition gradually takes shape and undergoes constant transformations during the process of cultural conceptualization, ultimately becoming solidified within the linguistic and cultural context of a given ethnic group. [4]

Research on Chinese Cultural Linguistics: In China, research in cultural linguistics has gradually emerged. It was not until 1950 that scholar Luo Changpei consciously combined language and culture into systematic research, resulting in the publication of "Language and Culture" [5]. In the mid-1980s, scholars such as Chen Jianmin, You Rujie, and Zhou Zhenhe embarked on this path and first proposed the idea of establishing "cultural linguistics." Before the 21st century, there was no unified theoretical framework within the discipline. Since the 21st century, scholars have continued to explore the theoretical foundations of cultural linguistics. In his book "Chinese Language and Chinese Culture", Shen Xiaolong once again proposed the theory of the "humanistic nature of the Chinese language" and emphasized the necessity of studying Chinese language from a humanistic perspective, suggesting that there is an inherent formal pattern consistency between the Chinese language and Chinese culture[6]. Over the past few decades, the field of Chinese cultural linguistics has witnessed significant development, with numerous theoretical research works and papers. In recent years, research in this discipline has mainly focused on areas such as place names, intercultural communication, and neologisms in the online context.

In general, both domestic and foreign research in cultural linguistics has achieved certain results in exploring the relationship between language and culture, the role of culture in language acquisition and use, and how language shapes cultural practices and cognitive patterns. In future research, further deepening the understanding of the interaction between culture and language is necessary, and it is also important to integrate research in cultural linguistics with practical applications to promote intercultural communication and understanding.

2.3 Application of Cultural Linguistics in the Analysis of Film Language Texts

Analyzing language use in films: Cultural linguistics can help us analyze the language and cultural elements in film dialogues in a deeper way. This includes dialects, accents, slang, idioms, and cultural metaphors. By studying these elements, we can better understand the relationships between characters, cultural backgrounds, and the implied meanings in their dialogues. Differences and features in language use can reveal the cultural contexts represented in the film, further enriching our understanding of characters and the storylines.

Revealing the cultural background in films: Films, as cultural products, often reflect values and social practices within specific societies and historical contexts. Cultural linguistics can help us analyze the social and historical backgrounds depicted in films, and reveal the influence of these backgrounds on language use and storylines. Through the analysis of language and cultural elements in films, we can uncover the cultural contexts in which the films are situated and explore the interaction between culture and language. This helps us gain a more comprehensive understanding of the meanings and messages conveyed in films.

Cultural cognition and analysis of cultural symbols: Symbols and imagery in films are closely related to culture. Cultural linguistics enables us to delve into the analysis of symbols, metaphors, and symbolic meanings used in films, and study the meanings and interpretations of these symbols and imagery within specific cultural contexts. Through this analysis, we can gain deeper insights into the cultural cognition, concepts, and themes conveyed in the films. Analyzing cultural symbols enhances our understanding of the artistic techniques and cultural implications present in films.

Research on intercultural communication: As a form of art that transcends borders and cultures, films can be studied using cultural linguistics to compare film works from different cultural backgrounds. By contrasting and analyzing the language and cultural elements in films, we can reveal differences and commonalities between different cultures, thereby promoting cross-cultural understanding and communication. This research contributes to fostering dialogue and mutual understanding between different cultures, while also helping us appreciate and interpret films from diverse cultural backgrounds more effectively.

III. CULTURAL LINGUISTICS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

3.1 Cultural Linguistics and Cultural Identity

Cultural linguistics explores the interrelationships among language, culture, and society. Within this framework, language is considered a crucial component of social and cultural identity. Therefore, cultural linguistics is closely related to the notion of identity.

On one hand, there is a mutual relationship between language and culture. Language and culture are intertwined in various ways. Language reflects cultural values, beliefs, and customs, while also influencing people's perceptions of these values and beliefs. Thus, language plays a pivotal role in the formation and maintenance of a collective cultural identity. People from different regions, countries, and cultural backgrounds use different languages that reflect their cultural identity and affiliation. Furthermore, different dialects and accents within the same language also reflect distinct cultural identities. In the example of the film, the leading role Billi grew up in Changchun, China, and her relatives communicate in Mandarin with a Northeastern accent, which signifies their regional and cultural background.

On the other hand, language influences identity formation. Cultural linguistics investigates how language affects the development and expression of identity. Individuals often use language and dialects associated with their own identity, reflecting their cultural identity and social status. For instance, certain dialects and languages may be perceived as more prestigious or stigmatized, leading individuals to choose specific dialects based on their social status and cultural identity within a particular society and cultural context. Additionally, language use can also express identity, such as through variations in intonation, language style, and vocabulary choices.

Overall, cultural linguistics sheds light on the dynamic relationship between language and cultural identity. It recognizes the role of language as a cultural marker, reflecting individuals' cultural affiliations and social identities.

3.2 The Relationship between Language and Cultural Identity in the Film "The Farewell"

"The Farewell" is a film that revolves around the clash of Chinese and American cultures and explores family relationships. In the film, language and culture are intricately intertwined and have a significant impact on the storyline and character development.

Firstly, the language used in the film reflects the cultural identities of the characters. Billi, lived in China until the age of six, and the imprint of Chinese culture is deeply embedded in her memories.

You know, one of the few good memories of my childhood were those summers at Nai Nai's.
They had that garden. Ye Ye and I would catch dragonflies.
And then we just moved to the States.
Everything was different. Everyone was gone.

Despite growing up in the United States and English becoming her native language, those childhood years still deeply influence Billi. Most of her family members predominantly communicate in Chinese. In the film, Chinese and English intertwine, and this language alternation reflects the cultural differences and barriers between Billi and her family members. The various language difficulties that Billi encounters upon returning to China, such as struggling to understand dialects and accents, also highlight the linguistic differences among different regions and cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, the cultural differences in the film are also reflected in the language. For instance, the topics frequently discussed among the leading role's family members and friends include family relationships, traditional customs, and cultural concepts, which hold different meanings in different cultural backgrounds. In Chinese, many words and expressions can convey implied meanings through metaphors and implications. However, Billi, who is not fluent in Chinese, struggles to grasp the underlying meanings when hearing these conversations, relying solely on the literal interpretations. This leads to her confusion with certain terms and vocabulary. For example, in the film, when Billi and her father visit a massage parlor accompanied by her aunt, the Chinese staff addresses her as "Mei nu," a term that perplexes Billi. She raises her question to her father and aunt, and her aunt explains the connotation behind the term, reflecting the issue of the generalized usage of the term "beautiful woman" in recent years.

Attendant: Mei nu, what treatment would you like?
Billi's aunt: Her Chinese isn't great. Give her the full body massage!
Attendant: Cupping too?
Billi's aunt: The whole package.
Attendant: Same for you, Mei nu?

Billi's aunt: I don't need cupping today.

Billi: What is Mei nu?

Billi's father: Uh, it means beauty.

Billi's aunt: Ah. Always "Mei nu, Mei nu." Everyone in China's called "Mei nu". Old or young. Beautiful or ugly. All beauties! So stupid!

From a semantic perspective, the term "Mei nu" reflects changes in popular aesthetics in society. From a pragmatic perspective, such a designation helps to bridge social distance and alleviate unfamiliarity between strangers. Therefore, the lexical and expressive differences manifested in this cultural distinction are well presented in the details of the film.

In the film, there is a direct dialogue that highlights cultural differences: a direct clash between Billi, representing Western culture, and Uncle, representing Eastern culture. Billi attempts to stop her father from smoking, and Uncle suddenly becomes somewhat agitated. He tells Billi, "Don't control him. He is your father... You think one's life belongs to oneself. But that's the difference between the East and the West. In the East, a person's life is part of a whole. You want to tell Nai Nai the truth...because you're afraid to take responsibility for her. Because it's too big of a burden. If you tell her...then you don't have to feel guilty. We're not telling Nai Nai...because it's our duty to carry this emotional burden for her."

Thirdly, the film also reflects the role of culture and language in family relationships. In the film, Billi's family goes together to the cemetery to pay respects to her grandfather, and in this scene, Chinese funeral customs and rituals are portrayed through language. Billi feels both curious and perplexed, but she still follows the practices of her family members and participates in the ritual.

Grandma: Your grandpa loved bananas. Give him some bananas.

Billi's aunt: You have to peel the oranges!

Elderly daughter-in-law: I don't think they need to be peeled.

Grandma: Yes, peel them! Yes, peel them! Otherwise he can't eat them.

Billi : Should I drink it?

Billi's father : Pour, just pour. Yeah, pour, very good.

Grandma: Billi, put these cookies out.

Billi's aunt: You have to open them!

Billi's father : They need to be opened too? Yes, open it!

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Led by grandmother, the family gathers at Billi's grandfather's grave. They busily peel bananas and oranges and place them in front of the tombstone, believing that otherwise "grandfather won't be able to eat." They pour traditional wine in front of the grave, tear open the packaging of the biscuit bags, and scatter flower petals from the flowers they brought. Lastly, Uncle lights a cigarette and tells the father to "just smoke casually," exposing the lie about the grandfather quitting smoking and causing the family to burst into laughter. This cemetery gathering transforms the somber act of paying respects to ancestors into a less sorrowful occasion, providing a comprehensive display of the entire family relationship. With the development of society, Chinese family structures have undergone changes, transitioning from the traditional four generations living under one roof to families scattered far and wide. However, family relationships and family culture have remained largely unchanged, with people still holding deep concern and longing for their family members.

IV.METAPHOR AND CULTURE

Metaphor and culture are closely intertwined. Metaphors are often established based on concepts and symbols that are collectively understood in a particular culture, and culture determines people's understanding and usage of metaphors. In different cultures, the same metaphor may be interpreted with different meanings, and sometimes it may even be misunderstood or lead to misunderstandings.

The film "The Farewell" presents a cross-cultural story of a Chinese family through six family dining gatherings. Food is an important component of Chinese people's lives, and the film utilizes this significant everyday life setting to construct the story, shape the characters, and advance the plot.

The First Meal	Billi returns to Changchun, China to visit her grandmother, and this time she feels heavyhearted due to her family's concealment.
The	Breakfast at home, where Grandma consumes the "vitamins" brought from Japan by Uncle and

Second Meal	assumes the role of the family controller throughout the family banquet, arranging for the upcoming wedding of her grandson.
The Third Meal	A family gathering that presents a "Chinese-style family banquet" and showcases the subtle and varied cultural differences between China and the United States through constant questioning from relatives.
The Fourth Meal	The conflicts within the family escalate, and Billi's argument with her mother reveals the true cultural reasons for concealing the illness.
The Fifth Meal	A family "picnic" during the ancestral grave worship ceremony, followed by expressing wishes and bowing before the grandfather's tombstone under Grandma's guidance.
The Sixth Meal	The wedding banquet meticulously arranged by Grandma for Haohao. Finally, Billi understands the original intention behind her family's concealment of Grandma's illness through memories of her childhood and the bonds of affection. She makes the same choice as her family, completing the communication and understanding between two different cultures.

The Metaphor of Birds: In the film, Billi sees a bird flying into a room twice, first in an apartment in the United States and second in a hotel room in Changchun. In northern China, the entry of birds into a home is believed to be a sign of an impending death in the family. The film uses this scene twice, metaphorically alluding to both the grandmother's illness and indicating Billi's hardheartedness. In the final scene of the film, Billi, walking on the streets of New York City, suddenly pauses amidst a diverse crowd. She recalls the shouting lesson her grandmother taught her and joyfully exclaims, "Ha!" Meanwhile, in Changchun, China, under her grandmother's apartment, a flock of birds takes flight in alarm. Throughout the entire film, the imagery of birds serves as a symbol of farewell and permanent departure.

The Metaphor of Farewell: The film's title, "The Farewell", indicates its central theme of saying goodbye. However, the metaphor of farewell goes beyond the word itself; it represents the emotions and feelings of family members when faced with death and separation. Through this farewell experience, Billi bids farewell not only to others but also to her own doubts about her cultural heritage and identity. She develops a new understanding and acceptance of her dual cultural identity.

V.CONCLUSION

The film "The Farewell" presents a seemingly binary proposition of revealing the truth versus telling a well-intentioned lie. However, it dissolves this binary opposition through the experiences of the leading role Billi and her process of cultural identity formation. The tender aspects of Chinese culture heal Billi's cultural confusion influenced by American culture. Simultaneously, the communication and collisions between Billi and her family members in Changchun allow her to rediscover the charm of Chinese culture and reevaluate her own cultural identity. Director Lulu Wang presents this film based on her own personal experiences. The brilliance of the film lies in its refusal to provide a definitive answer to the problem, instead portraying cultural differences and Billi's transformative journey. In the final scenes, the vibrant portrayal of the grandmother, based on a real-life figure, adds an emotionally poignant ending, embodying both a miracle in reality and the cultural significance, expressing a vision of Chinese-style goodness. It is noteworthy that the original title of the film was supposed to be "The Farewell", while the Chinese translation changed it to the more implicit and tender title "Don't Tell Her". The translation of the title avoids the directness of the American version, employing a nuanced and delicate approach to imbue the story with hopeful expectations. From this perspective, the film can be regarded as one that places greater emphasis on expressing cultural values.

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