

To Interpret and Analyze Foreign Film and Subtitle Translation Strategies from a Cross-cultural Perspective

—— Take Coco as an Example

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Abstract: As globalization has become a major trend in today's world, cross-cultural communication between countries has become more and more frequent, among which film, as a medium of various cross-cultural methods, plays a key role. Every movie expresses more or less the right values, such as working together to protect the common home of mankind, or spreading the distinctive culture of their country, so that more and more world viewers can widely understand and respect their culture. This paper studies foreign film translation, focusing on *Coco*, a Pixar movie that won an Oscar. It also discusses translation strategies like domesticating and foreignizing subtitles. The film's paper-cuts, animals, landscapes, and dialects show how cross-cultural communication works in the movie. Moreover, by comparing the official and folk versions, the analysis shows that the official versions are professional and more popular, but some word orders are stiff and lack coherence. While the folk translation is easier to understand, but only compares the audience with the same interest in a certain movie, the grammar and words are a little inappropriate, lack of professionalism.

Keywords: *Coco*, cross-cultural perspective, film subtitle translation, translation strategies, Comparison of official and private subtitles

1. Introduction

1.1. Background Information

In recent years, with the gradual improvement of Chinese people's living standards and the increasingly frequent exchanges with foreign countries, foreign film and television works have become more and more warmly sought after by the vast number of fans. The film is not only a mirror to show social development and the changes of The Times, but also an important element to enrich people's spiritual and cultural life. In the field of translation, film and television translation occupies a position that cannot be ignored. Compared with traditional literary works, film and television subtitles have significant differences in text structure and attributes, which have the characteristics of immediacy, popularity and synchronization. In addition, due to the unique language style and aesthetic value of films, film and television subtitles also have unique aesthetic characteristics, so the

translation of foreign film and television works has attracted the attention of many domestic scholars [1]. With the deepening of globalization, cross-cultural communication and cooperation have gradually become an important topic of discussion in today's world. In this process, the cross-cultural perspective provides a unique tool for people to understand and solve cross-cultural problems. At the same time, many films retain many exotic local elements, which is conducive to overseas people to better understand the culture of multiple countries and promote global cross-cultural friendly exchanges, which is in line with a trend in today's world. Taking "Coco" as an example, this paper analyzes the advantages of its subtitles from a cross-cultural perspective, using various translation strategies such as foreignization and domestication, and analyzes the differences between the two versions by comparing the official subtitles with Chinese folk translations, so as to reflect the different effects and interpret the advantages and disadvantages of the two versions.

1.2. Questions

- (1) What exotic elements are referenced in the film and what is the significance of referencing and preserving these exotic elements?
- (2) What translation strategies are used in the subtitle translation of this film?
- (3) What are the differences in translation strategies between the two Chinese versions? Which of the two translations is better?

2. Method

This paper takes Coco as an example to analyze the cross-cultural elements in the film. Since the inspiration of this American film comes from the Day of the Dead in Mexico, the film retains many local languages and local customs of Mexico, so it is necessary to enumerate the meanings of the Mexican words in the film in English and Chinese respectively. At the same time, the cross-cultural analysis of the film is carried out by focusing on which exotic lines are retained in the official subtitles, what meanings are implied, and the local customs of Mexico in the film. In this paper, a large number of papers and relevant materials related to film translation are consulted and sorted out through the supplementary subject, and then relevant materials related to translation methods are reviewed, the specific methods and advantages of each translation title are analyzed, and the differences between the two versions are carefully analyzed, which aspects of thinking are triggered, and problems in multiple fields can be reflected.

3. Cross-cultural Perspectives in the Movie

3.1. Marigolds, the Flower of Finding Dory

In the movie "Finding Neverland" many scenes have marigold enough to appear. As an important element in Finding Neverland, marigolds comfort the underground dead with their unique forms and colors, and therefore occupy an indispensable position in the Day of the Dead, and a large number of marigolds adorn the streets, buildings, and marketplaces in the film [2]. Mexicans believe that marigolds store the energy of the Sunshine Chapter and are crafted into flower crowns that illuminate the path to the underworld, guiding the departed back to the earthly realm to be reunited with their families.

3.2. Traditional Mexican Paper Cutting

In China, paper cutting is mainly used to celebrate the Spring Festival and other joyous occasions. In Mexico, however, paper cutting is mainly used for folk rituals, especially on the Day of the Dead. Mexicans believe that paper cutouts symbolize the gods and God's blessings, therefore, in the Day of

the Dead this special day, Mexicans will be colorful paper cutouts hanging or placed in the family altar, in order to create a cheerful atmosphere. In the minds of Mexicans, this is a time to reunite with deceased loved ones and to honor and remember the dead [3]. As it was passed down from one generation to the next, paper-cutting patterns with the theme of skeleton revelry were formed. The biggest theme of Mexican paper cutting is the undead, and the skull is its iconic element. Giving skulls is a traditional way for Mexicans to express their love and blessings on the Day of the Dead. However, Mexican paper cutting is not limited to the theme of skulls and Day of the Dead; it also covers elements such as the sun, corn, flowers, birds, snakes, and even the works of well-known artists can be transformed into the form of paper cutting. When it comes to the sun, Mexicans, like many ethnic groups, worship and revere the sun (God), which is why the sun has become a common creative theme in paper cuttings and other works of art. Corn is not only a staple food in Mexico, it is also seen as a sacred object of worship, closely associated with life, reproduction and power.

3.3. Mexican Hairless Dog

The movie frequently features the Hairless Dog, a breed of dog unique to Mexico. Mexican hairless dog has a very important significance to the Mexican people, and they can not only protect the living but also can lead the soul of the dead through the dangerous underworld into heaven. At the same time, the Mexican Hairless Dog has a long history, its origin can be traced back to about 1500 BC Mayan civilization era.

3.4. Natural Landscapes of Mexico

The Mexican sinkhole, located in Chiapas, is famous for its magnificent natural scenery and rich parrot species. The framing of the movie in which the main character is dropped in a sinkhole originates from this attraction. Sixty-six million years ago, some meteorite fragments crashed into Mexico, creating the sudden appearance of sinkholes. The Mayans considered these bodies of water sacred because they were the only source of fresh water in the jungle. They called them natural passages to the underworld and regarded clean waters like Suytun as sacred places to sacrifice children and jewelry in honor of the gods.

3.5. Mexican Language in Movies

Mexican language appears frequently in movies and blends in with English without any contradiction. For example, *Hola, Mamá Coco*. (Here you are, Julio) is a common greeting language used by Mexican people; *No, gracias*. (That's enough, thank you) is the local language used in Mexico to say thank you; *angelito, perrito, cielito!* (He doesn't want to listen to your harmful music, listen to it.) This Mexican language comes from the mouth of the local grandmother with strong emotional color. This Mexican language comes from the mouth of a local grandmother and has a strong emotional color.

The above Mexican elements presented in the United States animated films, fully embodies the acceptance and recognition of foreign cultures, to promote friendly exchanges around the world, and better let the people of the country to understand foreign cultures.

4. Analysis of Subtitle Translation Strategies

4.1. Naturalization Translation Strategy

The core of the naturalization translation strategy is to minimize the exoticism in the translated text, create a familiar language environment for the audience, and ensure that the content is natural and easy to understand [4]. In the process of subtitle translation of *Nameless*, the translator used a series

of naturalization strategies, such as ideographic and subtractive translation, to make logical adjustments to certain phrases. This not only ensures the fluency of the translation, but also skillfully adopts expressions familiar to the audience, making the content of the movie easier to understand, thus bringing the distance between the movie and the audience closer [5].

Example 1:

Music had torn her family apart.

音乐曾经让她的家族分崩离析。

He and his family would sing and dance.

他和他的家人总是载歌载舞。

I've had enough to ask for consent! don't want to follow the rules.

我受够了征求同意，我不要循规蹈矩。

In the above example sentence, the translator has flexibly treated “tear...apart”（使...分裂）、“sing and dance”（唱歌和跳舞）和“follow the rules”（遵守规则） as four-character idioms such as “分崩离析”“载歌载舞”“循规蹈矩” respectively [6]. The translation strategy of naturalization is adopted here, which is closer to the Chinese audience's reading and word usage, and all of them use four-word idioms, which reflect the symmetry of Chinese characters in terms of the number of characters, as well as the rhythmic beauty of Chinese characters in terms of pronunciation. The number of words reflects the symmetry of Chinese characters, and the pronunciation reflects the rhythmic beauty of Chinese characters. The use of Chinese idioms in subtitle translation is not only a good addition to the subtitle translation, but also enables the Western audience to understand and appreciate the profoundness of Chinese culture, which is of great benefit to cross-cultural communication.

Example 2:

Ay, ay, ay. muchacho!

唉，你这小子！

Hold it, muchacho.

等一等、小朋友。

The word "muchacho" is a Spanish word meaning child, young man, referring to children and teenagers in general. When the translator handles the word "muchacho", which appears many times in the script, he does not translate all the words into the same translation, but translates them into the words "kid, little kid" with different emotional colors according to different interpretation scenes. On the one hand, this way of treatment can more vividly reflect the inner emotional changes of the characters, fully demonstrate the characterization of the linguistic features of the movie subtitles, enable the audience to grasp the character more accurately, and increase the sense of immersion in the plot of the film. On the other hand, it also complies with the principle of performativity in the translation of the movie subtitles.

Example 3:

Thank goodness! We found you in time.

谢天谢地！我们及时找到你了。

In the West, most people are devout believers in God, whereas in China, we emphasize the harmonious coexistence between human beings and the natural environment, which is a very

significant cultural difference [6]. In English, "goodness" is often used instead of "God" to express strong emotions such as surprise and anger. When translating "Thank goodness" (感谢上帝), the translator skillfully transforms it into "Thank God" (谢天谢地), which takes into account the acceptability of the Chinese audience and is in line with the traditional Chinese culture. In addition, the use of the four-character idiom "谢天谢地" makes the characters' language more vivid and performative.

4.2. Strategies for Alienation

Alienation refers to the significant differences in culture, language and values between the source language and the target language. In the process of translation, in order to retain the cultural connotation of the source language and enrich the expression of the target language, the translator will deliberately retain some mismatches between the source language and the target language. However, this kind of translation has its limitations because it may not take into account the different situations in various cultural contexts in the original language, and thus cannot fully meet people's needs. For works on specific topics, factors such as their literary value and social function also need to be considered, and translators may deliberately break the traditional translation standards and norms in the translation process [7].

Example 4:

But my father, he will never give his permission.

但是，神父是不会允许的。

The word "father" in English means "Dad" and "priest". The translation of "father" into "priest" in the movie is influenced by the long history and culture of western countries, where priest is a religious position and a status and symbol. The subtitle of the film adopts the translation strategy of dissimulation to preserve the unique cultural concepts of the source culture, to let the audience understand and respect the foreign culture, and to broaden their intellectual horizons.

Example 5:

I asked if you would like more tamales !

我问过你要不要再来点玉米面包卷的辣味肉饼。

In Mexico, tamales are chorizo wrapped in cornbread, whereas in China people don't have such food or eating habits. This translation preserves the cultural characteristics of Mexico, gives the Chinese audience an understanding of this dish, and adds to the appeal of the movie.

5. Folk Subtitling Versus Official Subtitling

Table 1 presents the difference between official subtitle groups and private subtitle groups in five aspects. It can be found that the translations translated by official subtitle groups are more professional and easier to be accepted by the public, while the translations translated by folk subtitle groups are more in line with the Chinese people's taste in movie watching.

Table 1: Comparison of folk subtitles and official subtitles [8]

	Official subtitling group	Folk subtitling group
Constituent members	Composed of professional translators and organizational management	A team of amateur translators

Table 1: (continued).

Purpose of production	To meet the distribution and promotion of official movie and television works in the domestic market	To satisfy their own and other enthusiasts' love of a certain work and to practice their foreign language skills.
Scope of work	Mainly for official movie and TV productions	Not only for movies, but also for TV dramas, anime, etc.
Translation Quality	The quality of translation may be higher	The quality of translation may vary depending on the level and experience of the team members.
Distribution channels	Usually released through official channels, such as theaters, TV stations, etc.	Often released through internet platforms, such as video sites, social media, etc.

Example 6

She didn't have time to cry over that walk-away musician.

官方译：她根本没空为那个音乐浪子难过。

民间译：她没时间为爸爸的离开而伤心难过。

After comparison, the official translation of “walk-away musician” as “music prodigal son is more in line with Chinese people's infinite reverie of the word”（音乐浪子），and full of fun, the story of the character's image is better displayed in front of the Chinese people, while the folk translators translate it as “father's departure”（爸爸的离开），the musician refers to her father, although convenient for the audience to understand, but lack of vivid description of the character's image.

Example 7:

But my family still tells her story...every year on Día de los Muertos -- the Day of the Dead...

官方译：可是我们家还是会说起她，就在每年的亡灵节——纪念亡者的节日”

民间译：但是每年亡灵节我们家还是会讲她的故事，这是纪念逝者的节日

In both translations, the content of the folk translation is more in line with the way of communication and expression of the Chinese people, while the semantics in the official translation is not very straightforward for the Chinese audience to understand the meaning of the movie to be expressed, because it is necessary to mention the temporal pronominal phrase in front of it in the traditional Chinese cultural communication, so as to better and accurately understand the meaning of the article.

6. Conclusion

In today's increasingly globalized world, cultural exchanges among countries have become more frequent and in-depth. As an important carrier of cultural exchanges, the influence of film and television works is increasing. As a key element of movie and television works, the quality of subtitles is crucial. When translating subtitles, it is necessary to fully consider various factors, such as the understanding of the cultural background of each country, the mastery of the national language, and

the understanding of the content of the movie and television works, etc. All these factors need to be taken into account in the translation process. In this paper, the author takes the subtitle translation of *The Search for Dreams* as a translation, discusses and thinks about the cross-cultural perspective and two subtitle translation strategies, analyzes the treatment of naturalization and alienation on the lines, compares the differences between the official and private subtitle groups, and hopes to provide some reference for film and television translation work.

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