

The Application of Subtitle Translation Characteristic Culture in Journey to the West from the Skopos Theory

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Abstract: In the current era, cross-cultural communication has become an important issue in today's society. Film art communication is one of the effective ways of cross-cultural communication, such as the Hollywood movies, India's Bollywood films and so on. It not only attracted the attention of the world for the film itself; but more importantly it attracts the attention of the national culture around the world. In the communication of film art, subtitle translation builds a bridge between different languages and countries so subtitle translation plays a very important role in the communication of film art. This paper uses the movie *Journey to the West* as an example and analyzes the full application of Skopos theory and translation strategies in the subtitle translation of this film. Film of Chinese culture subtitles translation is mainly reflected in the local dialect, literary classics and some contemporary cultural vocabulary. The analysis of this paper shows that subtitle translation plays an important role in film culture.

Keywords: Cross-cultural communication, the Skopos theory, Translation strategy

1. Introduction

Film art has always been a popular art form and has been welcomed all over the world, so film art is a very useful tool for cross-cultural communication. Many countries have made more people in the world know about their own culture through film art, which has played a positive role in cross-cultural communication. In recent years, Chinese film and television art has been in a period of vigorous development, while the demand of high-quality domestic films for cross-cultural communication is increasing. These high-quality films need to "go out" to be seen by the world, so that Chinese characteristic culture and Chinese people's thoughts can be seen by more people in the world [1]. The film "Journey to the West" is a very innovative film in the genre. The film raises philosophical questions about humanity and the universe. This film shows another possibility of Chinese film, which has sufficient value for external communication. This film deserves to be seen by a wider audience around the world, and subtitle translation is very important as a bridge between countries with different languages, so subtitle translation is an important medium for the cross-cultural communication of domestic films. The translator in line with the "Integrity, expertise, elegance" general requirements at the same time, also pays attention to the face of Chinese characteristic cultural vocabulary and the unique situation, teleology theory can solve this problem [2]. Only when the subtitle translation can be accepted by the target language audience, can the audience feel the elegance

of other countries' cultures, thus arousing the audience's interest in other cultures. From the perspective of Skopos theory, subtitle translation can be better accepted by the target language audience. This paper analyzes the function of Skopos theory through the application of Skopos theory in the subtitle translation of the film "Journey to the West".

It mainly studies the following two questions. The first question is how the Skopos theory helps to spread the culture with Chinese characteristics in the subtitle translation. The second question is how is the Skopos theory embodied in the film Journey to the West.

2. Introduction to Journey to the West

The film mainly introduces the story of the chief editor and finance of the declining cosmic exploration editorial department, a Sichuan boy suffering from mental illness and the otherworldly protagonists searching for aliens in western Sichuan. It has three value meanings, namely, "literature + film" is a new possibility for the development of domestic films, which triggers people's in-depth thinking about philosophy. The second point is the "pseudo-documentary" film, which aims to break the fourth wall and engage the audience through the shaking lens [3]. The third point is the unique absurdity of the whole film, which allows the audience to think deeply about the relationship between human beings and the universe from the perspective of the skeptical spirit [4].

3. Theory

3.1. The Skopos Theory

In the 1970s, German translation theorist *Hans Vermeer* put forward the foundation theory of the functional translation school — The Skopos Theory. The Skopos theory holds that translation is a kind of cross-cultural exchange based on source language [5]. In the Skopos theory, subtitle translation serves the target language audience. In order to realize the two purposes of "the target language audience can better understand the film content and the culture with Chinese characteristics can be spread", different translation strategies can be used to help realize the purpose of subtitle translation [6]. The three principles of the Skopos theory can be divided into three principles: Fidelity Rule. First of all, the Fidelity Rule requires that subtitle translation should be faithful to the original text, and the translator should understand the content of the original text as completely and accurately as possible, and improve the degree of subtitle faithfulness to the original text from the specific purpose of translation [5]. The Coherence Rule means that the subtitle translation should meet the standard of internal coherence, and the target audience should better grasp the development of the plot and better understand and accept it [4]. The Skopos Rule means that the subtitle translation should conform to the language environment of the target language masses, and eliminate the understanding deviation caused by cultural differences [5].

3.2. Translation Strategy

The following four translation strategies are mainly used in this paper. The first is the literal translation, which refers to the literal translation of the film content into the translated language, to achieve the true effect of the dissemination of the original content [7]. The second is Free translation, which means that sometimes it is difficult for the masses to understand the meaning of the target language, and at this time, a part of the original content is abandoned and the truth of the meaning is pursued to achieve the purpose of communication [6]. The third type is domestication, which refers to the translation of the translator with the culture of the target language masses during the subtitle translation [8]. The fourth kind is foreignization, which refers to the choice of retaining the source

language and culture after understanding the cultural differences. At the same time, the target language audience can understand the plot and content of the film [8].

4. Analysis of Chinese Characteristic Culture in the Film Subtitle Translation

4.1. Local Language Features

The local language is based on the standard Mandarin and is integrated with the local culture. If the understanding of a regional culture is not deep enough, it is easy to cause misinterpretation.

Example 1 "倒霉的要起灰灰" was translated into "Worst day in my goddamn life"

These lines appear in the film is about to climax before the plot, namely "looking for aliens". The journey seems to be on the eve of dawn, encountering a newly married couple taking wedding photos. The cameraman mutters: "bad dust" and says the weather is gloomy to the ideal effect.

In the Sichuan and Chongqing dialects, a very unlucky person is called "bad dust". It was not translated directly into "Ashes will be raised". It is based on what he wants to say and his dissatisfaction with the line. Finally, it was translated into the extreme colloquial expression of "Worst day in my goddamn life" in English culture. This sentence links the context by conveying this line of dissatisfaction. It suggests that the "search for aliens" outcome may be as uncertain as the weather. It uses the Coherence Rule and makes the target language masses better understand the plot development.

Example 2 "听他的我真瞎了" was translated into "I was such an idiot"

This line comes from Qin Cairong, a member of the editorial department, who felt very angry when she remembered being tricked by another member, Tang Zhijun, into buying a bunch of useless electrical appliances. Qin considers that the quality of work and life has plummeted because of Tang's absurd obsession with aliens. This sentence translates into "I was such an idiot".

In China, people usually use the phrase "I'm really blind..." to express their regret. "Blind" does not mean that people can not see in the physical sense, it is just a colloquial expression to vent people's emotions. If it is translated literally in subtitle translation as "I was blind to listen to him" is not accurate. Translated as "I was such an idiot", it can spread the regret of the character Qin Cairong effectively. Thus, the target language audience can understand Tang Zhijun's obsession with aliens, and pave the way for the development of the following plot.

4.2. Literary Classics

The film also quotes some famous literary classics in China, not only the superficial meaning of literary classics, but also requires a deep understanding of literary classics.

4.2.1. Poetry "Shu Road is Difficult"

Example 3 The subtitle of the second chapter "蜀道难" was translated into "the odyssey"

"The Shu Road is Difficult" is a poem written by The Chinese poet Li Bai in the Tang Dynasty. By describing the ups and downs of the Shu Road, Li Bai suggested that his official career was also bumpy and his ambition was difficult to achieve. This chapter's subtitle also with "蜀道难", implying that in this chapter a line of people come to the mountains of Sichuan "looking for aliens". The journey will be very difficult, Tang Zhijun's obsession with aliens also makes it difficult to get an ideal result.

Here the subtitle translation quotes the classics. It applies the Skopos rule to make the target language audience better understand the subtitle translation. The ancient Greek myth the odyssey, is close to the target language culture. The Odyssey follows Odysseus' adventures in nature full of unknowns and dangers. The connotation of the story is similar to the "Difficult Road of Shu". Such a translation employs a naturalized translation strategy. A culture close to the target language audiences

contributes to the target language masses' understanding. It effectively eliminates the possible understanding bias caused by cultural differences and it can also make an allusion to the difficulty of the next journey. It suggests that the "search for aliens" journey is likely to be fruitless.

Example 4 "蜀道不难了，上青天的问题也解决了" was translated into "the road to Sichuan is no longer difficult, we can now even go up in the sky"

This line is from a line of people going to the Sichuan train. Tang Zhijun said a sentence about the journey vision and feelings. This sentence embodies the tang for the open journey "looking for aliens" holding an optimistic attitude, thinking the journey will bring life to increasingly down in the editorial department.

Chinese character "shu" refers to the Chinese Sichuan and Chongqing regions. "Dao" means the way. The subtitle translation in this line, such as the sky translation into "go up in the sky", uses the Fidelity Rule. This sentence embodies the subtitle translation loyal to the original while using the foreignization of translation strategy. The sentence also retained the Chinese poetry culture characteristics in the film, but the translation did not burden the target language with the understanding of the masses.

4.2.2. The Famous Novel Journey to the West

Example 5 "宇宙探索编辑部" was translated into "Journey to the West"

The English translation of the film's headline is "*Journey to the West*". But the literal translation would be the Space Exploration Editorial Board. The English translation of the Four Great Chinese Classics Journey to the West is also named *Journey to the West*.

In general, the translation of the film name is translated at the vertical level, retaining the characteristics of Chinese culture and using the translation strategy of foreignization. In addition, the two translation strategies of literal translation and Free translation exist at the same time. The translator embodies the Fidelity Rule, starting from the specific purpose of translation. The first is the shallow meaning. The main line of the film is around the journey of finding aliens in western China, so the main plot content is "the journey in the western region", translated into "*Journey to the West*" is accurate. The second is the deep meaning. Journey to the West is the English translation of the Four Great Chinese Classical novels *Journey to the West*. The translator has described the protagonists as the master and apprentice who take west longitude, implying that the plot content is "looking for something very hard" which is the same as the plot of *Journey to the West*.

4.3. Special Cultural Vocabulary of Modern and Contemporary China

Here modern and contemporary Chinese special cultural vocabulary refers to the hot vocabulary translation in modern and contemporary Chinese society, including the famous TV network Hot Stem in the Universe exploration editorial mainly reflects the Chinese popular TV translation, because this cultural vocabulary in the film, subtitle translation need a concise and clear way to facilitate foreign audience quickly understand.

Example 6 "天龙八部" and "李伯清" were translated as "Demi-Gods and SemiDevils" and "Li's comedy show"

The translations of the show's names appeared in Tang's answers about what Sun could see on the TV snowflake screen, trying to find something related to the alien trail.

"天龙八部" and "李伯清" are very famous TV programs in China. Sun Yitong is babbling, but Tang Zhijun is the side as if to get important clues in general carefully take notes. This line is very humorous, and the difficulty in translation is how to deliver the humorous effect to the target language audience.

First of all, the subtitle translation selects the official translation name of 天龙八部. The translation into "The Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils" highly summarizes the main content of the TV series. Such a translation can reflect that this is a myth-related drama. 李伯清 is a famous pingshu artist in the Sichuan and Chongqing regions. He is humorous and interesting and he is deeply loved by everyone in China. Pingshu is the traditional art of China, that foreign audiences may not understand. So translating the word into "comedy show" can make the foreign audience in a short time to understand the cultural vocabulary. The subtitles were translated by using the Skopos Rule close to the target language masses. It is also easy to use the translation strategy to translate a series of Chinese TV program names, auxiliary spread the movie plot needs to convey the effect.

5. Conclusion

With the booming development of Chinese film, the cross-cultural communication process of film art is the dissemination process of Chinese culture, and subtitle translation plays an important role in the dissemination process of film art. In the process of cross-cultural communication of the film *Journey to the West*, the translation of some cultural words with Chinese characteristics is difficult. From the perspective of the Skopos theory, subtitle translation is based on the plot content of the film and the characters shaped. The translator uses different teleology principles and translation strategies in different contexts and plays a role in spreading Chinese culture on the premise that the target language masses can understand the content of the film.

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