Domestication in Subtitle Translation of *The Big Bang*

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With the increasing popularity of foreign films and televisions in China, more frequent film and TV exchanges also promote cultural exchanges. However, most of the Chinese audience's has not reached the ability to directly understand films and TV plays. Therefore, the research on subtitle translation is great significant. High-quality subtitle translation can convey the information and push the cultural exchange and dissemination. When it comes to the subtitle translation, the focus is the domestication strategies. The domestication strategy is widely adopted in subtitle translation due to the closeness to the audience. Under the guidance of domestication strategy, this paper takes the subtitle translation of American drama *The Big Bang* as an example, to focus on the practical application of domestication strategy. Starting with three methods, the paper analyzes their specific application based on domestication strategy, so as to better understand the domestication strategy and provide help for the application of domestication strategies in film and television translation.

Keywords: subtitle translation, domestication strategy, *The Big Bang*

Introduction

With the popularity of the Internet, film and television provide an opportunity to communicate with people from different countries and explore other countries' culture. In China, many foreign televisions are becoming welcomed by people, especially American TV series.

As mentioned above, in order to attract more target groups and pursue the maximum comedy effect, the English-to-Chinese translation of situational comedy subtitles is based on the domesticating strategy. The domesticating strategy aims to conveying the information of the original language to the target language readers by reducing the exoticism of the foreign language.

The American sitcom *The Big Bang* has been popular among Chinese viewers since it aired in 2007, especially the younger generation who grew up with the Internet. The reason is large that the translator is using a domestication translation strategy.

This thesis mainly focuses on the domestication strategies used in the subtitle translation of the American sitcom *The Big Bang*. Starting with three common domestication strategies, parody, corresponding translation, and Chinese neologism, it sorts out the subtitle translation and lists some representative examples to prove how to apply the skill in the translation, expecting to provide some references for subtitle translation.

A Study of Film and Television Translation

The subtitle translation refers to the display of non-visual content such as dialogue from television and

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film in the form of text. In the relevant literature, many scholars and researchers have explained the definition of subtitle translation differently. The Danish scholar Henrik Gottlieb believes that subtitle translation is a form of multi-media translation with additional synchronization and instant synchronization effect (Gambier & Gottlieb, 2001, p. 56). Y. Gambier made his explanation of subtitle translation that subtitling is only one of the forms of language transfer in television, cinema, and video (Gambier & Gottlieb, 2001, p. 183). From this, it can be concluded that the subtitle translation is a special language conversion, which help viewers better understand the meaning of vague content or fragments in the movie. It also exposes the audience to authentic foreign language experience and pure foreign culture. Correspondingly film and television subtitles generally have the following characteristics.

Firstly, it is an additional auxiliary tool that cannot exist independently.

Secondly, it often appears in a flash due to the rapid changes in the picture of film. The subtitle should in lines with the context at that moment; otherwise confusion and misunderstanding can be caused; therefore their content should be adapted to the level of cultural education and the audience accepts it without any obstacles.

Thirdly, the subtitle translation requires the accuracy and judgment of the translator; even the smallest inappropriate may cause viewers' mistrust and criticism. The results largely depend on the wording of the subtitle translation; therefore, the choice of common words is appropriate.

Research on Domestication Translation

Domestication strategy is widely used in the translation process. Domestication has been known since ancient Rome (Venuti, 1995, p. 240). According to Nida, the criteria of domestication is that the translation is not limited by the original form of the language level, such as vocabulary, grammar, but the original content is retained (Nida, 1982, p. 990). Later, developed by Lawrence Venuti, he defines domestication as: the mainstream values of the target language culture and the deliberately conservative approach to assimilation of the original text, so that it caters to the local canonical publishing trend and political needs (1995, pp. 20-24). Canadian translator Robinson explored the perspectives of domestication theory. He thought that domestication adopts the method of assimilating the target language into the source language and localizes the original works (1991, p. 95).

In simple terms, domestication means that the translation signifies that the linguistic characteristics and the cultural factors of the source language should depend on the culture of the target language, so as to make the expression of the translation more located. The main task of subtitle translation is, according to the purpose of film, to convey the most relevant information to the audience in a specific cultural background most effectively. This coincides with the connotation of the domestication strategy.

According to the above study of subtitle translation and domestication strategies, it can be found that there are rules to follow: Firstly, subtitling should strive to ensure that the audience in the target-speaking country quickly understands the dialogue in the film or television in a limited number of languages and time zones. Secondly, subtitle translation should not be limited to the content of the dialogue, but should also explore the meaning behind it, taking into account the cultural background.

Domestication Strategies in Subtitle Translation of *The Big Bang*

The Big Bang is a sitcom. The protagonists Sheldon and Leonard work at the California Institute of Technology. Their IQ is high, but their emotional intelligence is low. One day, a beautiful neighbor, Penny,

broke into their peaceful life, and a series of anecdotes happened. The characters in *The Big Bang* are highly educated, most of whose words are obscure and difficult to understand, and involve a lot of physical knowledge. However, the audience is not necessarily highly educated, so the translator uses more domestication strategy. So that Chinese audiences can really integrate into the plot even if they do not understand the character's high-level humor or English.

Next the author analyzes several domesticated translations used in the subtitle translation of *The Big Bang*. The subtitle translation version selected in this paper was translated by YYeTs.

Chinese Neologisms

Internet terminology refers to words that have a wide range and frequency of use in online chats for a period of time and have a certain meaning. The translation of these new words will make the translation grounded and easy to be sought after by young audiences. In order to narrow the aesthetic distance with the Chinese audience, translators must fully add some internet buzzwords ingeniously according to the evolution of the times to create a familiar language and cultural atmosphere for Chinese audiences.

Example 1:

I am so digging the Shamy.

我必须好好八一八谢米。

At the party, Penny heard that Sheldon had a girlfriend named Amy. She cannot wait to know more detailed news. In this sentence "digging" is translated as "八一八". The word is a web buzzword, taken from the extended meaning of the Chinese word "trigram", meaning gossip and mining privacy. Here the translator adopts the internet popular word "八一八" to accurately translate the meaning of "digging", so that Chinese viewers can easily understand Penny's words, and more understanding for Penny, a girl who loves gossip.

Example 2:

I can't believe what I'm hearing. This is deeply hurtful.

真不敢相信你会说这种话，太伤人家的小心肝了。

You are too sensitive.

你还是个玻璃心。

Rajesh is an Indian, and his father has always supported Rajesh's daily expenses, but now his father no longer pins his hopes on Rajesh, demanding him, which makes him very uncomfortable. Therefore, the above dialogue came into being. Both "小心肝" and "玻璃心" can be regarded as Internet terms. "小心肝" shows that Rajesh has been unable to grow up relying on his father. Feeling sensitive and easily hurt, it is very appropriate.

Corresponding Translation

Interpretation points out that the same or even exactly the same situation can be shown in different languages. Similarities are common in similar activities, so in many cases the content of the language to be expressed is equivalent, but the form is different. This so-called nested translation is to directly apply the ready-made expressions in Chinese, imitating words. It is more direct, especially with some Chinese idioms and colloquial translations. This translation method is closer to audience's cultural tradition, and is easier for the audience to resonate.

Example 1:

Leonard called, and he said that you were pining for a young lady.

莱纳德打电话给我，他说你为伊人消得人憔悴。

Sheldon and Amy broke up and Sheldon seemed too terrible. Sheldon's mother said words when she saw Sheldon at the first sight. Here, the translator quoted the famous sentence in Liu Yong's word "Butterfly Flower" to translate, and translated "pining for a young lady" as "for the people to make people haggard". The Butterfly Flower is a famous poem written by Liu Yong, which expressed the loneliness of wandering in a foreign country and the missing of lovers, so that the Chinese audience clearly understands the state of Sheldon at that time.

Example 2:

Why would I put on lot on when I have such soft hands?

我这双芊芊玉手，怎么可能需要擦护手霜呢？

Sheldon invited Amy to watch Amy's favorite "Prairie Hut". In order to cover up his nervous and irrational behavior, he kept rubbing his hands and praised his "soft hands". The phase "soft hands" in the source language is adopted an exaggerated rhetoric. If it is just translated into soft hands, there is no doubt that the exaggerated colors of the words disappear, and the translator chose a Chinese idiom "芊芊玉手" which originally described the girl's hands and fingers as nice and slender, but when it came out of the male protagonist, it naturally gave the vocabulary an exaggerated tone, achieving the effect of humor.

Parody

That is the meaning of parody, which changes grammatical meanings but still follows the word formation principles. The imitative words are not the same as new words, but stronger than literal translation of foreign words. In this sense, audience can quickly master the meaning of the sentence, and the use of the parody also lets the context more humorous. The audience of the play is mainly young people. Therefore, translator fully considers the audience's reasoning, imitating some young familiar languages.

Example 1:

Your words fall like acid rain on the wounded petals of my heart.

你的一字一句都像是冷冷的酸雨在我破碎的心上胡乱地拍。

Rajesh was refused again for the reason that he was a good man, and he said this sentence above. This subtitle translation imitates the lyrics of a famous song "Ice Rain", which performed by Liu Dehua. The original sentence is 冷冷的冰雨在脸上胡乱的拍. Almost all of Chinese people are familiar with the lyrics, and we often use the sentence to describe troubles. This expression is also humorous, which is in accordance with the connotation of the sitcom. Thus such translation can easily bring the sad feeling expressed by Rajesh to us.

Example 2:

I help the weak. It's yet another way I'm exactly like Batman.

我向来帮助弱者。又一次证明了我就是蝙蝠侠再世。

Leonard met his friend who bullied him in the high school and planned to let his friend apologize for what he did. However, Leonard still was afraid of him, so Sheldon helped him criticize his friend. And Sheldon said the word when he evaluated himself. This translation imitates a Chinese idiom "华佗再世", which originally describes the superb medical skills. In another words, the man with superb medical skills saved people in need, and in this sentence, the translation expressed Sheldon was Leonard's hero, who saved him when he was in trouble, vividly conveying the heroic image. In the same time, the sentence was said by Sheldon himself, which

impressed the overconfidence of Sheldon.

Conclusion

The characteristic of the domestication translation strategy is that the translation is easy for the readers of the target language to accept, and shortens the distance between the reader and the original. Through the above example, we can see that the domestication strategy can greatly reduce the pressure and difficulties when the audience reads the subtitles. The personalized atmosphere close to the audience can even produce additional dramatic (or comedy) effect. Especially in the translation of sitcoms, sitcoms as a special art form, its main purpose is to achieve a stronger humor effect and attract more target audiences. The Chinese translation of "The Big Bang Theory" uses a large number of domestication translations to try to achieve the same feelings as the Chinese audience and the English audience, experiencing the humor and the fun. As a result, a domestication strategy is recommended in the subtitle translation of sitcoms of foreign works.

Of course, that's not to say that domestication strategy is perfect; it also has some limitations. For example, it is not conducive to the communication and development between different cultures, but these are not within the scope of this article.

Based on specific translation cases, this paper takes *The Big Bang* as an example, analyzing several translation techniques commonly used when adopting domestication strategy, and studies its guiding role in subtitle translation. Representative examples also summarize the previous experience and lessons in film subtitle translation, and provide some help for subtitle translation.

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