

Analysis and Research on the Translation Strategies of Film Subtitle from the Perspective of Skopos Theory ——Take the Film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 1* for Example

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Abstract:

With the trend of global culture exchange, films have become one of important tools to promote culture exchange. Making full use of film subtitle translation can help a country to popularize culture to the world quickly. The introduction of English films can promote the exchange of Chinese culture and English culture, and the film subtitle translation can enhance Chinese audience's understanding of content and background culture about the film. High quality film subtitle translation can promote cultural transmission, narrow cultural differences from different countries and enhance the understanding and identification of different cultures. For this purpose, the work of film subtitle translators is very important. This thesis from the perspective of skopos theory to analyse and research the film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* thus to explore the application of skopos rule, coherence rule and fidelity rule in film subtitle translation. Based on skopos theory to analyse some film subtitle translation cases in order to offer new perspective for film subtitle translators and further more to promote the quality of film subtitle translation.

Keywords: Skopos Theory, Film Subtitle Translation, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization, the internationalization of film and television works has become a powerful tool to enhance Chinese culture's interna-

tional influence [1]. The quality of subtitle translation directly determined the success of cultural exportation [2]. High quality film subtitle translation not only can help people from all over the world to understand film content, but also can accelerate cultural

exchange and dissemination, and then promote cultural understanding and identification. Film subtitle translation is different from flat text translation, take into account film subtitle translation's features, the audience's cultural background and cognitive environment [3]. Many translators face a big challenge that there are big cultural differences among different countries. For the moment, how to make full use of film subtitle translation to promote cultural exchange is an important subject.

The film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 1* is a fantasy film that directed by American director David Yates and co-produced by Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. And Heyday Films. This movie is adapted J.K. Rowling's novel of the same name. The film is about a eccentric but enthusiastic fantastic beasts zoologist Newton Scamander who graduated from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and insist on protecting fantastic beasts from danger. This film can be a prequel to the Harry Potter films, but these two stories have happened in two different time and dimension. The characters repeat in these two series films. For the audience, the film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 1* is a good way to understand the characters' stories which are not mention in the Harry Potter films.

The film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 1* created a great deal of fantastic beasts which may not exist in nature. This film is a native American language film that is full of American cultural features. The translator not only needs to use Chinese meaning to explain the right meaning about fantastic beasts, but also needs to help the audience to understand different cultural backgrounds and accept the content about the film. Using skopos theory to analyse this film's subtitle translation can provide new perspective for film subtitle translators.

This thesis through analyse and research the film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 1* and then to probe subtitle translation strategies from the perspective of skopos theory.

2. The Overview of Skopos Theory

2.1 The Source and Status of Theory

Skopos Theory was created by Vermeer in *A Framework for A General Theory of Translation* in the 1970s [4]. After several hundred years until today, the skopos theory has developed widely. Some translators will choose this theory during their work. The skopos theory stresses that all translations have specific purpose whether literary translation or film subtitle translation. The proposition

and use of skopos theory provide new theory support for translation practice. The skopos theory requires translators to have subjective initiative during the translation work. The translator should have a specific purpose and then combine different cultural backgrounds and the translation standard "Faithfulness", "Expressiveness", and "Elegance" of Yan Fu to translate something faithful to the original novel. The flexibility of skopos theory provides wide development space for film subtitle translation and helps people from different cultures to understand cultural differences, furthermore to promote cultural exchange.

2.2 The Rule and Analysis of Theory

The skopos theory advocates that purpose is the most important factor during the whole translation process, therefore put forward three important rules which are skopos rule, coherence rule and fidelity rule [5]. In the skopos theory, the skopos rule top the first, the coherence rule and the fidelity rule are obedient to the skopos rule [6].

The skopos rule is the most basic rule in the skopos theory [7]. The skopos rule refer to not transferring one language to another language, but taking a specific purpose to translate. This rule requires a translator to consider different cultural background and people's language cognition, thus to help cultural transmission and exchange between two languages. In translation from Chinese to English, translators will consider the difference between two culture and choose the best way to preserve the source language form, in order to help cultural transmission effectively.

The coherence rule requests that translated text should have logic and legibility [7]. Different language has different way of using words, the translator should consider the language is coherence or not. In translation from English to Chinese, because the different way of using words between English and Chinese, the translator requires to adjust the order of the words, thus to guarantee the translated text is coherence and easy to understand.

The fidelity rule indicates that the translated text ought to keep a kind of "continuity between paragraphs" between text and text [7]. The translator not only should faithful to the original text, but guarantee the consistency of the translation. During the translation, translators can not change the original meaning of the text, but the translator can adjust the translation order legitimately, based on different cultural backgrounds, language cognition and so on. This rule also embodies that translation is based on purpose. In translation from English to Chinese, the translator chooses this rule in order to translate the original text faithfully and gracefully.

3. Analysis of the Subtitle Translation of Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 1 from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

3.1 The Skopos Rule

Example 1: A seeker after truth.

寻找真理之人。

When Newton arrives in New York and sees a woman who is from an anti-wizard group, called “The Second Salem”. The woman is giving an inflammatory speech. This sentence is come from the woman’s speech. If this sentence is translated as “真理的追求者”, the audience can also understand the meaning of the sentence. But, the translator follows the skopos rule to translate this sentence as “寻找真理之人”. The translator translates the sentence like this can create a speech environment for the audience, thus helping the audience better understand Newton’s situation.

Example 2: Millions of people read your newspapers.

上百万人订阅您发行的报纸。

This sentence comes from the conversation between Mr. Xiao and a woman from the second Salem. The woman compliments the influence of Mr. Xiao. The sentence “Millions of people read your newspapers.” can be translated as “数百万的人们读你的报纸”, but this translation may cause misunderstanding for the audience. At this time, the translator should combine Mr. Xiao’s identity and position in the film to translate legitimately. Mr. Xiao is the president of the news agency and is very influential in the press. At the same time, Mr. Xiao’s eldest child is a senator who has a huge voice in politics. To combine Mr. Xiao’s identity and the information from the film, the translator translates this sentence as “上百万人订阅您发行的报纸”. Translating this sentence like this can give consideration to the plot of the film and help the audience to understand the real meaning of this sentence.

Example 3: Nobody gives away anything valuable for free, Langdon.

没人会给你免费的午餐, 兰登。

This sentence comes from the conversation between Mr. Xiao and Langdon who is Mr. Xiao’s the youngest son. Langdon rushes into Mr. Xiao’s office and wants to tell Mr. Xiao a big news that does not need remuneration, but Mr. Xiao tells Langdon, “Nobody gives away anything valuable for free, Langdon.” This sentence can be translated as “没人会免费赠送贵重物品, 兰登”, but translating the sentence like this is not fit with a powerful father would say to the child. At this time, the translator

adopts an ancient Chinese idiom “天下没有免费的午餐” to express the real meaning of this sentence. This sentence can also express Mr. Xiao’s education for Langdon. Translation like this not only can keep the original meaning of the sentence, but fit the Chinese culture as well, thus to better assistance cultural exchange between Chinese and English.

Example 4: Miss Goldstein: Madam President, I’m sorry to interrupt, but this is critical.

戈德斯坦恩小姐: 会长女士, 很抱歉打扰你, 但此事十万火急。

Madam President: You ’better have an excellent excuse for this intrusion, Miss Goldstein.

会长女士: 你这样鲁莽的擅自闯入, 最好有个合理理由, 戈德斯坦恩小姐。

This sentence comes from a conversation between Miss Goldstein and Madam President, and at this time, Miss Goldstein carries a suitcase of fantastic beasts. In America, the magical congress of the United States of America does not agree on witches and wizards to keep fantastic beasts, because the magical congress thinks that fantastic beasts will cause chaos in the wizarding world. The translator considers the urgency of the film plot, so he chooses a translation method which close to Chinese culture, therefore to help the audience understand Miss Goldstein’s hurry. The word “critical” is translated as “十万火急” and “intrusion” is translated as “鲁莽的擅自闯入”.

Example 5: Everyone there’s dying.

那里的人都是行尸走肉。

This sentence comes from a conversation between Mr. Kowalski and Newton. Mr. Kowalski is a humorous pastry chef. The sentence can be translated as “那里的所有人都死了”, but a translation like this is not enough to show Mr. Kowalski’s humor. The translator should consider the personal features of Mr. Kowalski and combine what Mr. Kowalski wants to express “The workers in the cannery are numb and have no thoughts.” To translate the sentence as “那里的人都是行尸走肉” is more vivid.

3.2 The Coherence Rule

Example 1: Will we die, just a little□

后会有期。

This sentence was Grindelwald who said in the film when Grindelwald is caught by Newton. Grindelwald is the most powerful villain in the film. The sentence “Will we die, just a little?” can be translated as “我们会死吗, 只是一点点”. But the translator should consider the logic and the plot of the film and combine what Grindelwald really wants to say is two points. First, nobody can really catch Grindelwald. Second, Grindelwald says “goodbye”

to young lover Dumbledore who is also Newton's teacher. So the real meaning of this sentence is "To say goodbye is to die a little." The translator should consider the coherence of the context subtitles and the bond between the characters, so that translate the sentence as "后会有期". The word "后会有期" in Chinese means "People who can see each other again." Translation like this can not only express the arrogance of Grindelwald, but also show Grindelwald's deep love for Dumbledore.

Example 2: When his sweetheart left he cold.

爱人离开，留他独自寒心彻骨。

This sentence comes from the interlude Blind Pig. The sentence can be translated as "当他的心上人离开他的时候". The translator should consider that the sentence is a lyric and then add appropriate rhyme or rhetoric to translate the sentence more elegance. So, the translator can translate this sentence as "爱人离开，留他独自寒心彻骨", thus to retain the story of the original English song without damaging the elegance of the song.

Example 3: Langdon: Just look at the evidence.

兰登：睁眼看看这些事实。

Father: Really.

父亲：闹够了吗！

The sentence was Langdon who said in the film. Langdon tries to persuade the father to accept a big news that does not need remuneration, but Langdon's successful father and brother think that Langdon is unreasonable. Langdon wants to prove himself and get rid of the identity of the unloved youngest son in the family. But at that time, Langdon's brother is running for president, so Landon's father Mr. Xiao as a powerful president of the news agency would never allow to publish big news to divert the attention of the public. Here, Mr. Xiao response Langdon "Really" is not express a sense of surprise, but Mr. Xiao is dissatisfaction with Langdon. To translate this sentence as "闹够了吗!" can accurately express the emotions of the character.

Example 4: Do this and you will be honored among wizards. Forever.

事成之后，你将在巫师界名垂千古。

This sentence comes from a conversation between Mr. Graves and Credence. Mr. Graves says this to Credence in order to inspire Credence to find a child from Dumbledore family. The original sentence has two parts, can be translated as "把这个做好你会在巫师界享受尊容""永远的". But the consider should consider that this is a private conversation between Mr. Graves and Credence, and Credence has no choice but to find the child. This is superior demand junior must to do. The sentence looks like inspiration, but actually vicious. The translator can combine two

parts into one and translate as "事成之后，你将在巫师界名垂千古". Translation like this is simple and smooth.

Example 5: What brings you here?

你来这是办什么的？

The sentence was Mr. Kowalski who asked for Newton. This sentence usually is translated as a common saying in Chinese culture "什么风把您吹来了?" In Chinese culture, this common saying is used to express the deferential attitude of juniors to superiors. Here, there is no grade between Mr. Kowalski and Newton, so the sentence is translated as "你来这是办什么的?" To translate like this can decrease misunderstandings and help audience to understand the plot better.

3.3 The Fidelity Rule

Example 1: I don't know, they just come.

我也不明白，突发奇想吧。

The sentence was Henry who asked for Mr. Kowalski where Mr. Kowalski's ideas come from. The sentence "I don't know, they just come." can be translated as "我不知道，它们就来了". The translator should consider Mr. Kowalski's humor and previous experience. Mr. Kowalski as a NoMaj who was erased after the Great War in the wizarding world. Although Mr. Kowalski could not remember what had happened before, but the image of fantastic beasts are still in Mr. Kowalski's memory, so Mr. Kowalski always has some fantastic memory. This sentence is translated as "我也不明白，突发奇想吧" can reflect that Mr. Kowalski was impressed by this magical memory.

Example 2: We'll go somewhere, we'll go anywhere.

我们去别的地方，我们浪迹天涯。

This sentence comes from Mr. Kowalski having to apart with Queenie, after the Great War in the wizarding world. Mr. Kowalski as a NoMaj has to be erased. At this time, Queenie falls in love with Mr. Kowalski and does not want to leave Mr. Kowalski alone. Queenie wants to be with Mr. Kowalski all the time. The translator should consider character the features of Mr. Kowalski and Queenie. This sentence can be translated as "我们要去些地方，我们要去任何地方" may destroy audience viewing. So the translator can base the original meaning of the text and add some rhyme, and then translate the sentence as "我们去别的地方，我们浪迹天涯". Translation like this can reflect the character of free and do not want to be separated from each other.

Example 3: You get well now!

希望你早日康复。

Queenie enter into Magical Congress of the United States of America and try to rescue sister Tina and Newton. At

this time Queenie meet a colleague who is fond of Queenie. Queenie lying to the colleague and want to leave quickly. The colleague said this sentence in order to show concern to Queenie. The sentence “You get well now!” to be translated as “你现在好了!” is inappropriate here. The translator should consider the film plot and character relation. At that moment, Queenie is in an unnatural state and want to leave quickly. The colleague has wanted to talk with Queenie for a long time, and the colleague also wants to share his best wishes with Queenie. Here to translate the sentence as “希望你早日康复” not only can contains the colleague’s best wishes to Queenie, but also shows the gingerliness when the colleague meets Queenie. Example 4: Anyone harms him, they will answer to me.

敢伤他的人我让他好看。

In the battle, Mr. Graves told this in order to soften up Credence. The sentence “Anyone harms him, they will answer to me.” can be translated as “任何人伤害他，都要问问我答不答应” is also feasible. But the translator can base the original meaning of the text and consider character features. Mr. Graves has no feelings for Credence but only utilize. At such a nervous moment in the battle, Mr. Graves just want to soften up Credence quickly. To translate as “任何人伤害他，都要问问我答不答应。” is inappropriate here. This translation shows strong personal feelings. So to translate as “敢伤他的人我让他好看” can reflect that Mr. Graves is a man of greed and just want to soften up Credence.

Example 5: MACUSA are coming.

魔法国会的人来了。

The complete spelling “MACUSA” is “Magical Congress of the United States of America”. In the film, MACUSA refers to the main governing body of the Magical Congress in the United States. The literal translation of this sentence is “美国魔法国会来了”。But this translation destroys the original meaning of the text and will cause audience misunderstanding. The sentence wants to express “The staff of MACUSA is coming.” So to translate the sentence as “魔法国会的人来了” is the suitable translation. The translator makes some additions to help the translation become more logical.

4. Conclusion

With in-deep cultural exchange, the role of films will become more and more important. Whatever importing foreign films or exporting domestic films, the work of film subtitle translation is very worthy of attention. High quality film subtitle translation is not only deliver the film to the international market, but also promotes cultural exchange among different cultures. To make full use of film subtitle translation can bring the culture of a country to the world. Through analysis of the film subtitle translation of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 1*, translators can be found to use three rules of the skopos theory. This also reflect that the skopos theory can offer new perspective for film subtitle translation. Therefore, translators can consider use three rules of the skopos theory in the follow-up work.

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