

Analysis of Subtitle Translation of the Film Green Book Based on Skopos Theory

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Abstract:

As a cross-cultural art form integrating vision and hearing, film has become an important bridge connecting audiences in different countries and regions with its unique charm. This study combined specific film cases, an in-depth discussion of subtitle translation strategies and methods, analysis of different translation strategies on the effect of subtitle, in order to provide useful reference for the practice of film subtitle translation. At the same time, this study also focuses on the role of subtitle translation in cultural exchange and communication, and discusses how to promote the understanding and respect between different cultures through subtitle translation, and promote the exchange and integration of global cultures. Skopos theory based subtitle translation strategy has shown remarkable advantages in the translation practice of the film *Green Book*. It not only helps to accurately convey the cultural information and emotional connotation of the film, but also promotes deep cross-cultural understanding and communication. In the future, with the continuous development of translation theories and the continuous innovation of technical means, we can expect subtitle translation to play a more active role in promoting cultural exchanges and enhancing the movie-watching experience.

Keywords: Skopos theory, *Green Book*, Subtitle translation.

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of the process of globalization, cultural exchanges and integration between countries in the world are becoming more and more frequent. Various cultural elements cross national boundaries and interweave with each other, jointly building a diversified and rich global cultural landscape. Film not only carries colorful storylines and lifelike char-

acters, but also contains profound cultural connotation and artistic style, which is an important way to demonstrate the cultural soft power of a country or region [1]. However, the film's international journey has not been smooth. Due to the existence of linguistic and cultural differences, films are often difficult to be fully understood and accepted by audiences with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This barrier not only limits the scope of the audience of

the film, but also hinders the exchange and dissemination of culture. In order to overcome this barrier, subtitle translation came into being and became an indispensable part of the international transmission of films [2].

Subtitle translation should not only accurately convey the language information in the film, ensure that the audience can understand the plot and dialogue content, but also preserve the cultural connotation and artistic style of the film as much as possible. This requires translators to consider both the accuracy of language and the transmission of culture and artistic expression in the process of translation. Therefore, how to find a balance point to achieve the effectiveness and artistry of subtitle translation has become the core issue of this study.

Based on Skopos theory, this paper analyzes the subtitle translation strategy of the film *Green Book* and its effect. This study is devoted to exploring and practicing effective strategies and methods for subtitle translation, aiming to improve the quality and effect of subtitle translation and inject new vitality into the field of translation. Through in-depth research on the process of subtitle translation, we hope to provide useful guidance for translation practice and promote the further development of translation studies. The effectiveness of subtitle translation is not only related to the international communication effect of films, but also has a profound impact on cultural exchange and integration.

2. Subtitle Translation

As an indispensable part of the international transmission of films, subtitle translation is of great importance. It should not only accurately convey the language information in the film, ensure that the audience can understand the plot and dialogue content, but also retain the cultural connotation and artistic style of the film as much as possible, so that the audience can enjoy the film at the same time, but also feel the unique charm of foreign culture.

This requirement brings great challenges to subtitle translators. Translators need to find a balance between the accuracy of language and the transmission of culture, ensuring the accuracy and fluency of subtitles, and taking into account the cultural connotation and artistic style of the film. In order to achieve this goal, translators need to deeply study the cultural background, language habits and expressions of the target language to ensure that subtitles can be naturally and appropriately integrated into the cultural environment of the target language.

Translators also need to pay attention to the artistry of subtitles. Film is a kind of audio-visual art, subtitles as a

part of the film, should also have a certain artistic expression. Under the premise of ensuring the accuracy of subtitles, translators need to preserve the language rhythm, rhetoric and artistic style in the film as much as possible, so that subtitles become a part of the film art, rather than just a simple language conversion. Therefore, how to find a balance point to achieve the effectiveness and artistry of subtitle translation has become the core issue of this study. This study will discuss the strategies and methods of subtitle translation in depth, and analyze the influence of different translation strategies on subtitle effect, with a view to providing useful reference for the practice of movie subtitle translation. At the same time, this study will also focus on the role of subtitle translation in cultural exchange and communication, and explore how to promote the understanding and respect between different cultures through subtitle translation, and promote the exchange and integration of global cultures.

Effective subtitle translation plays a vital role in promoting international film communication and cultural exchange. It breaks down language barriers and allows global audiences to enjoy the best films from around the world without hindrance. Through subtitle translation, the cultural connotation and artistic style of the film can be transmitted, so that the audience can deeply feel the cultural connotation of the film while understanding the plot, and thus enhance the understanding and respect of different cultures [3].

3. Translation Theory

Skopos theory is an important school of translation theory, which emphasizes the purpose and functionality of translation and holds that translation is a purposeful act, whose purpose is to meet specific communicative needs, this point of view is particularly important in subtitle translation [4]. The core idea of Skopos theory is “the purpose determines the method”, that is, the choice of translation method should serve the realization of translation purpose. In subtitle translation, Skopos theory can guide translators to flexibly choose translation strategies according to the types of films, audience needs and cultural background, so as to achieve the best cultural transmission effect [5].

4. Introduction of the Film

The film *Green Book*, with its affectionate and authentic touch, slowly transports the audience into the American society of the 1960s, a time when segregation and discrimination were still deeply rooted, and injustice and

prejudice were in the air. A carefully constructed journey of extraordinary friendship across race and class, the film reveals humanity at its best through the delicate and moving interaction between Tony, a white driver, and Don Shirley, a black pianist [6].

Tony, a blunt, seemingly nonchalant white driver, and Don Shirley, an elegant, restrained, talented black pianist, gradually establish a deep friendship from the initial stranger and misunderstanding during the journey. They face the discrimination and prejudice of the outside world, whether it is the refusal of service in restaurants, or the refusal of accommodation in hotels, they have not shaken their determination to move forward. In this challenging journey, Tony has learned to let go of his preconceptions and accept and understand people of different skin colors and backgrounds with a more inclusive and open mind. Don Shirley, on the other hand, bravely stood up, challenged the injustice of society with his musical talent and personal dignity, and showed the strength and pride of black people.

Their stories are an ode to courage and change, and a call for respect and understanding. In every shot and every line

of the *Green Book*, it shows the deep friendship across race and class, and the desire for equality and harmony [7]. This film reminds the movie-goers that in this world of diversity and coexistence, only by putting aside prejudice and treating each other sincerely can write a more harmonious and beautiful chapter together, and let the light of love and understanding illuminate every corner [8].

5. Translation Strategy in Green Book

5.1 Domestication Strategy and Foreignization Strategy

5.1.1 Domestication Strategy

Domestication strategy refers to the transformation of cultural elements in the source language into cultural elements familiar to the target language audience in order to reduce cultural barriers and improve audience acceptance. In the subtitle translation of *Green Book*, the translator adopts the domestication strategy to deal with some words and expressions with specific cultural connotations.

Table 1. Comparison of original text and translation in the film *Green Book* (1)

Original Text	Translation
Negro	black
Jim Crow laws	racial segregation law

As Table 1 shows, the translation of “Negro” into “black” and “Jim Crow laws” into “racial segregation law” are in line with the cultural cognition of the target language audience and help the audience to better understand the cultural information in the film [9].

5.1.2 Foreignization Strategy

Table 2. Comparison of original text and translation in the film *Green Book* (2)

Original Text	Translation
<i>Green Book</i>	<i>Green Book</i>
Soul Food	Soul Food

In *Green Book*, the translator also adopts the foreignization strategy to deal with some words and expressions with special cultural significance. As Table 2 shows, the literal translation of “*Green Book*” to “*Green Book*” preserves its historical significance as a travel guide for black people; By translating “Soul Food” into “soul food,” it conveys the unique charm of black culture to the audience through transliteration and interpretation [10].

Foreignization strategy refers to preserving the cultural elements in the source language and delivering them to the target language audience through literal translation or transliteration, so as to display the unique charm of the foreign culture.

5.1.3 A combination of domestication strategy and foreignization strategy

In the process of subtitle translation, the translator fully considers the cultural and historical background of the film, and carefully chooses the translation strategy to ensure that the audience can accurately understand the cultural information in the film. For the sensitive words involving racial discrimination, the translator adopts the

method of combining domestication and foreignization.

Table 3. Comparison of original text and translation in the film *Green Book* (3)

Original Text	Translation
racist	racist

As Table 3 shows, “racist” is translated as “racist”, which not only retains the meaning of the original word, but also conforms to the Chinese expression habit, so that the audience can intuitively understand the racial discrimination in the film. In the same vein, segregation is translated into segregation, which accurately conveys the segregation that prevailed in the Southern United States at the time and helps the audience better understand the historical background of the film.

5.2 Free Translation and Literal Translation

Strategies

5.2.1 Free translation strategy

Foreignization strategy refers to preserving the cultural elements in the source language and delivering them to the target language audience through literal translation or transliteration, so as to display the unique charm of the foreign culture.

Free translation strategy refers to the flexible translation of the source language according to the language habits and cultural background of the target language in order to convey the main meaning of the source language.

Table 4. Comparison of original text and translation in the film *Green Book* (4)

Original Text	Translation
He’s a real piece of work.	He’s such a weirdo.
That’s some bullshit!	This is outrageous!

In the subtitle translation of *Green Book*, the translator adopts the free translation strategy to deal with some expressions with puns or rich cultural connotations. As Table 4 shows, translating “He’s a real piece of work” as “He’s such a weirdo” conveys the irony of the source language by paraphrasing it [11].

For the colloquial expression in the film, the translator adopts the way of free translation to convey the tone and emotion of the source language close to the characteristics of spoken Chinese. As Table 4 shows, “That’s some bullshit!” This sentence, in the film is full of anger and

discontent [12]. The translator translated it as “This is outrageous!” “Not only accurately conveys the meaning of the original sentence, but also perfectly presents the colloquial characteristics and emotional colors of the original sentence in front of the Chinese audience through free translation.”

5.2.2 Literal translation strategy

The literal translation strategy is to keep the language form and meaning of the source language as much as possible and translate it directly into the target language.

Table 5. Comparison of original text and translation in the film *Green Book* (5)

Original Text	Translation
Don’t make a mountain out of a molehill.	Don’t make a fuss.
How’s every little thing?	Is everything okay?

In *Green Book*, translators also adopt the literal translation strategy to deal with some expressions with specific linguistic forms. As Table 5 shows, translating “Don’t make a mountain out of a molehill” as “Don’t make a fuss” preserves the figurative form and meaning of the source language.

For some formal or intimate expressions, translators use

literal translation to preserve the tone and artistic conception of the source language. “How’s every little thing?” This sentence, in the film is full of caring and kind tone. The translator literally translates it as “Is everything okay?” Not only retains the meaning of the original sentence, but also allows the audience to feel the warmth and care contained in it.

6. Conclusion

The film *Green Book*, with its rich language style, presents the audience with a real and colorful picture of American society. In the film, formal and elegant English is interwoven with colloquial slang and dialects to build a three-dimensional and vivid language environment. In subtitle translation, the translator fully respects and reproduces the language style in the film, and through clever translation strategies, the audience can feel the unique charm brought by the language while enjoying the film.

In addition to the translation of these sensitive words, translators also pay attention to the emotional color and cultural connotation of the film. Through the delicate subtitle translation, the audience can feel the deep friendship that develops between Don Shelly and Tony Lip, and their courage and persistence in the face of racial discrimination. These translations not only help the audience better understand the theme and background of the film, but also inspire the audience to think deeply about equality, respect and understanding. Through careful selection and application of translation strategies, the translator successfully transmits the cultural information in the film to the audience, so that they can deeply feel the humanistic care and social value contained in the film while enjoying the film. The translator also fully considered the historical background and regional characteristics of the film, and made appropriate translations of some words with specific historical or cultural meanings. These translations not only help the audience better understand the plot and the relationship between characters in the film, but also allow the audience to feel the historical and cultural connotations contained in the film while enjoying it.

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