Original Paper

A study on the Translation of Taglines of the Real Housewives of Atlanta under the Perspective of Ecological Translatology

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Abstract

With the acceleration of globalization, film and television subtitle translation, as a new form of translation, is developing rapidly. After translating the American reality show The Real Housewives of Atlanta, this paper focuses on the analysis of the tagline translation at the beginning of each episode to find the most suitable translation. Guided by the theory of ecological translation, this paper analyzes the case of original subtitle translation from the perspective of "three-dimensional transformation" of ecological translation to provide feasible translation strategies for future subtitle translation from the perspective of ecological translatology. As the tagline of each guest at the beginning of the show, it is very distinctive. How to translate it reasonably is a problem worth thinking about. Based on the ecological translation theory, the translator analyzes and summarizes the Declaration from three aspects: linguistic dimension, cultural dimension and communicative dimension.

Keywords

Eco-Translatology, Three-Dimensional Transformations, Subtitle translation, The Real Housewives of Atlanta

1. Introduction

Reality Show (also known as reality show or TV reality) generally refers to the use of television media as a medium, in which ordinary people, who are not actors, make their own actions for a clear purpose in predetermined situations and according to predetermined rules, while being recorded and turned into television programs. Reality shows, as a typical form of imported programs, originated in the Netherlands. With the increasing introduction of overseas reality shows, this type of film and television program form has also become a universal social and cultural phenomenon in China. The popularity of reality shows cannot be separated from the role of subtitle translation, which serves as a bridge for programs to communicate with domestic audiences. The translation strategy used in the subtitles of reality shows determines whether the program can be accepted and also relates to whether overseas popular culture can successfully enter the audience.

The taglines at the beginning of each episode of the reality show not only reflect the personality of each cast, but also hint at the direction of their story in the whole season. It can be said that these taglines represent the whole show. Therefore, it is very difficult to translate these words skillfully and convey their meaning and connotation to Chinese readers. From the perspective of three-dimensional translations in ecological translation, this paper analyzes the sentences in different dimensions to find a more suitable translation.

2. Ecological Translatology

As the strict boundaries between disciplines are gradually being broken, the concept of interdisciplinary studies is constantly being applied to various traditional disciplines to break down barriers and enhance flexibility. Translation studies are no exception, as the cultural and linguistic shifts in translation further promote interdisciplinary research in translation. According to Fang Mengzhi's (2023) statistics, the study of "translation studies" involves as many as 66 disciplines, including aesthetics, hermeneutics, semiotics, etc. Secondly, due to the increasing international attention to ecological environment issues, the "ecological" perspective is also increasingly favored by the academic community, such as ecological criticism, ecological aesthetics, ecological literature and art, and ecological politics. In addition, China has always had the ecological wisdom of "harmony between heaven and man" and "Dao follows nature", which has created unique and favorable conditions for Chinese translation scholars to integrate ecological concepts into translation theory (Hu, 2008)

The emergence of Eco-Translatology is the product of the contemporary background and social thoughts. First of all, Eco-Translatology is inspired by global ecological development. China begins to attach importance to ecological and environmental issues since the 1970s. In this context, the proposal of Eco-Translatology is in line with the direction of social development. Secondly, the field of thought and philosophy has also undergone a transformation from people-centered to ecological integrity since the 20th century. China's rich ancient ecological wisdom characterized by "the harmony of man and nature" and "people-oriented", serves as a vital foundation for Chinese scholars to raise the concept of

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Eco-Translatology. Thirdly, the rapid growth of related disciplines and booming ecological translation studies give impetus to the generation of Eco-Translatology.

In a nutshell, the global ecological development, the transformation of modern thought as well as the booming ecological translation studies contribute to the occurrence of Eco-Translatology and lay the solid foundation for further related research. Professor Hu proposes that Eco-Translatology is not an independent subject category. Eco-Translatology researches on translation in an integrated ecosystem and forms a systematic study of "translational eco-environment", "translation community" and "adaptation and selection" (Hu, 2006). The "translational eco-environment" clearly refers to the world performed by the source text, the source language and the target language. More specifically, it refers to the world involving language, communication, culture, society, and the interaction between translators and readers (Hu, 2011)

As an independent subject and the leading role, the translator completes translation activities through the translator's subjective consciousness during the translation process. The concept of translator-centeredness differs from the traditional centeredness of source text and underlines the vital role of the translator during the translation process (Hu, 2014) The concept of "translator-centeredness" actually puts forward higher requirements for translators. In a certain sense, it shifts from focusing on specific language and writing to developing the overall ability of translators.

In 2004, Hu Gengshen published the book "Translation Adaptation and Choice Theory", proposing the ecological translation theory and using Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest to explain translation activities. This theory believes that the process of translation is the translator's adaptation and selection of the ecological environment, emphasizing the central role of the translator in the translation process. In terms of translation methods, the translator's adaptive choices in the translation process are relatively focused on language, culture, and communication dimensions (Hu, 2011). Moreover, through practical testing, ecological translation studies have been a research direction that has attracted attention from the academic community and is also a highly recognized interdisciplinary subject in translation studies, opening up new perspectives and directions for translation research. The ecological translation theory focuses on "adaptation and selection" and applies the "three-dimensional" transformation to translation practice, emphasizing the translator's ecological environment in the translation process. It focuses on the quality of the translation, emphasizes the cultivation of translator's abilities, and also emphasizes the subjectivity of the translator in the translation process, which is a new translation theory. This theory advocates for a "three-dimensional" transformation, which includes the dimensions of language, culture, and communication.

As an emerging translation theory, ecological translation studies have strong Chinese cultural characteristics. It is an original ecological translation theory with Chinese traditional and localized characteristics, developed and proposed by contemporary Chinese translation scholars for the first time. It conforms to the ecological concept of "harmony between heaven and man" that Chinese people have upheld since ancient times. Therefore, for some translated texts that require localization in China, this

theory is undoubtedly very suitable. In order to obtain an English translation that is both faithful to the original content and reproduces the original style, this article will analyze and summarize the subtitle translation in the variety show the Real Housewives of Atlanta from three aspects: linguistics, culture, and communication.

3. Case Analysis

Ecological translation studies believe that "translators can only produce appropriate translations by truly adapting to a specific translation ecological environment in multiple dimensions and at least making choices and transformations in three dimensions (linguistics, culture, and communication) during the translation process." (Liu, 2009) It should be noted that in translation, these three dimensions do not exist alone, but work simultaneously. Although these three dimensions will be separated and analyzed as examples in this article, it is only for the purpose of better analyzing how these three dimensions work. However, in actual translation practice, it is not possible to separate and translate independently. Instead, it is necessary to simultaneously satisfy these three dimensions, and the translation of the declaration at the beginning of the variety show needs to simultaneously satisfy the selection and transformation of the "three-dimensional" English original text.

3.1 Linguistic Dimension

After fully considering the overall ecological environment of translation, the first consideration should be the adaptive choice of language form. (Shu, 2010) Due to significant differences in language expression between Chinese and English, "linguistic dimension" refers to the translator's need to convey the original text's wording, sentence structure, and writing style during the translation process. As Yuan (2021) pointed out, it is necessary to preserve the language characteristics of the source language to the greatest extent possible while ensuring that the translation conforms to the reading habits of the target language readers.

ST1: Don't check for me less you got a check for me

TT1:少管老娘的闲事，除非你有票子在手。

In this sentence, check appears twice, but it has two completely different meanings. The first check is used as a verb, which means to stop or restrain, and the second check is used as a noun, which means "支票". The two "check" appears here for rhyme, and the two plosives express the strong character of the character, so in the translation, the self-proclaimed name is translated into "老娘", the first check is translated into "管", the second check is translated into "票子", and the same purpose is achieved in the original text through a more assertive expression.

ST2: I'm on a spiritual journal and still traveling first class

TT2:我在进行一场心灵旅行，头等舱永相随。

The spiritual journey in this sentence is usually translated as"心灵的成长和觉醒", but in order to correspond with the first class in the next sentence, it is directly translated as "心灵旅行". At the same time, the original text is two closely connected sentences, but the Chinese form is usually loose, so the

sentence is directly opened, and the second sentence is very casual.

3.2 Cultural Dimension

"Cultural dimension" refers to the translation of content with cultural characteristics, which requires attention to the reader's reading experience while cleverly conveying the cultural connotations of the source language. Language is not only a tool, but also an important carrier of cultural inheritance. Language and culture are interdependent and cannot exist alone. (Edward, 1921) Because the cultural background of the target readers is different from that of the original text, the cultural dimension strives for translators to not only overcome language barriers, but also cross cultural gaps to avoid misunderstandings.

ST3: I was "Gone with the Wind," but now I'm back and two as false

TT3:我曾经随风而逝，现在王者归来，美丽翻倍。

"Gone with the Wind" in this sentence is obviously a pun on the American classic Gone with the Wind, comparing herself to Scaelett O'hara, although American audiences will smile and quickly understand the meaning, but for Chinese audiences, the book is not so familiar. Therefore, in the translation, I did not deliberately translate this pun out, but focused on the last sentence, and integrated the spirit of the original Scarlett into the second sentence, which was translated into "the return of the king", so as to better convey the meaning of the whole sentence.

ST 4: This Phoenix has risen, and I'm saying in, "By, ash."

TT4:凤凰涅槃，对垃圾说再见。

In Western mythology, the origin of Phoenix evolved from a mixture of the Assyrian undead bird and the Egyptian sunbird. In Western culture, it symbolizes rebirth. The cities in the United States that were destroyed by civil war and natural disasters have the image of Phoenix on their city flags and seals. The Phoenix Nirvana in Chinese comes from Mr. Guo Moruo's work of the same name, and its material also comes from Western mythology. These two can be said to be a perfect match, so the translation is perfect.

3.3 Communicative Dimension

The communicative dimension focuses on communicative intention, emphasizing whether the final translation can achieve the original intention and whether the translation can be accepted by readers in the ecological environment of the target language. Due to differences in ideology, religious beliefs, national psychology, and other aspects between different languages, it is inevitable that there may be some misunderstandings or misunderstandings in bilingual cultural exchange. In order to ensure that the target language readers can accurately and clearly understand the original meaning, it is also necessary for translators to supplement the expression of interpersonal intentions appropriately to avoid any misunderstandings

ST5: The only time that I look back is to see how far I've come

TT5:姐唯一回头的时候，就是为了看看自己的成功之路。

The meaning of this sentence is that the guest will never regret looking back, but when translated as

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"看看自己走过的路", the effect presented on the subtitles may not meet expectations, because Chinese audiences may not understand English, and reading this passage on the quickly flashing subtitles may not immediately understand its meaning. Therefore, the translator needs to translate it more directly, that is, "成功之路", so as to eliminate ambiguity and make it clear at a glance.

ST6: I'm living my dream, not above my means

TT:6 老娘想要的随手可得。

If this sentence is literal translation, it will be very tedious and lengthy, and it cannot express the meaning it wants to express. However, if we combine the tonality and character of the whole reality show, we can well analyze that the core of this sentence is to show off their rich family conditions, so it is directly and simply translated into a sentence, which not only conveys the meaning, but also conveys the meaning. It also expresses the handsome character.

4. Conclusion

After conducting this translation project, the author found that ecological translation theory has certain guiding significance for subtitle translation, and linguistic dimension, culture dimension, and communicative dimension are the three basic dimensions of subtitle translation. In translation practice, translators need to flexibly choose translation strategies and methods based on different situations and purposes. In terms of linguistics, translators should follow the principle of "adaptive selection" based on the characteristics of film and television subtitles, and make appropriate adjustments to film subtitles; In terms of culture, translators should have a deep understanding of the cultural background of the target language and adopt appropriate cultural compensation strategies; Although ecological translation studies have played a certain role in promoting subtitle translation research, the author believes that there are still many issues that need further research. I will continue to explore and contribute to the translation of film and television works in my future studies.

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