

Analysis of Translator's Subjectivity in Subtitle Translation from the Perspective of Translator's Three Identities

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Abstract: In translation activities, the translator's subjectivity runs through the whole translation process. With the deepening of communication between Chinese and foreign films and television works, subtitle translation has become an important part of the translation industry. Different from traditional translation, subtitle translation has the unique characteristics of film and television art, which lays more emphasis on the play of the translator's subjectivity. This paper discusses translator's subjectivity in subtitle translation from the perspective of translator's three identities, namely, audience, interpreter and recreator.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of film and television industry and technology, people's consumption demand for film and television products is increasing. Among them, foreign language films and TV series have gained a huge audience in China. Watching foreign films and TV series with translated subtitles not only allows the audience to enjoy the original wonderful stories, but also enables them to understand the diverse cultures of different countries. Therefore, the importance of subtitle translation is becoming increasingly prominent. The translator's subjectivity refers to the subjective initiative that the translator, as the subject of translation, shows in translation activities. The translator's subjectivity is not only reflected in the translator's understanding, interpretation and artistic recreation of the works, but also in the selection of the translated texts, the cultural purpose of the translation, the translation strategy and the manipulation of the expected cultural effects in the translated works ^[1].

2. Multiple Identities of Translators

In translation activities, the author, translator, and reader all have their relatively independent but interactive positions with the translator at the center. In the broad sense, the subjects of the whole translation process include the author, translator and reader. But compared with the author and the reader, the translator plays the most active role. When we define the subjectivity of translation, we need to consider the subjective role of the author and reader, but it is the translator who is at the heart of translation activity. In the narrow sense, the translator can be regarded as the only subject of translation.

The translator is not only the reader of the original text, but also the author of the translated text, and plays a decisive role in the translation practice. In the process of translation, the translator acts on the source text purposefully and selectively, and creatively produces the target text through his own interpretation and reconstruction. The translator is the only entity that embodies the subjective initiative in the process of translation.

2.1 The Translator as the Audience

In the process of subtitle translation, the translator is first an audience of the original film or the television work. As an audience, the translator's subjectivity is first reflected in the choice of source

texts. In the selection of texts needed to be translated, the translator has his own subjective initiative and chooses the source text independently according to his own preferences and abilities.

What's more, when acting as the audience of movies and TV dramas, the translator needs to mobilize his emotions, will, aesthetic, imagination and other aspects of the ability to achieve "fusion of horizons" with films and television works. Translators can establish horizons by means of familiar norms or poetics, by familiar works in the literary and historical context, or by the opposition between fiction and reality, between the poetry and the actual function of language. Of these three approaches, the first emphasizes that different literary themes or genres may influence the horizon of expectation. The second emphasizes that the presence of an accepted work in a new work may affect the reader's horizon of expectation. The third suggests that historical facts related to accepted literature may influence the readers' horizon of expectation^[2].

Translators should always remember their identity as an audience and choose translation strategies from the perspective of audience's needs and communication purposes. Translators should not only consider the conversion between two languages, but also consider the audience's viewing experience, such as the length of the letters in a row, the order of the subtitles appear, subtitles and video synchronization, and choose the appropriate translation strategies according to these requirements. Otherwise, it will affect the audience's understanding of the content while watching, and the purpose of conveying the original message cannot be truly achieved^[3].

2.2 The Translator as the Interpreter

The basic characteristics of the translator's subjectivity are the cultural consciousness, the humanistic character, and the cultural and aesthetic creativity of the translator^[1]. As an interpreter, the task of the translator is to distinguish the implied meaning from the non-implied meaning of the work, and fully explore the implied meaning of the original work. At the same time, the translator can also turn to other materials to help him deepen the correct interpretation of the work. The translator must have enough literature knowledge, sensitive artistic appreciation and rich imagination, so as to give full play to his subjectivity^[4].

There is a strong subjectivity in the process of interpretation. First of all, the complexity of language itself and the diversity of meaning make translation impossible to be a simple text conversion. In order to find the most appropriate and reasonable one among many explanations, translators must explore and select them. Secondly, before each translator understands and accepts a work, he or she has already formed a certain knowledge structure. And due to different emotional and life experiences, every translator has his own unique values, aesthetic standards and outlook on life. Therefore, the translator's interpretation will deviate from the original work more or less due to the imprint of times, nation and personal style^[5]. The translator's translation reflects the translator's own understanding of the work, and gives full play to the translator's subjectivity from the aspects of content, theme and rhetoric.

2.3 The Translator as the Recreator

The translator is not only the audience of the original work, but also the author of the translated work, and plays a decisive role in the translation practice. In the process of translation, the translator acts on the source text purposefully and selectively, and creatively produces the target text through his own interpretation and reconstruction. As the subject of translation activities, the translator, while being restricted by various factors, will choose translation strategies according to the purpose of translation and his own style. For example, some translators will adopt domestication and foreignization translation strategies in subtitle translation of foreign film and television works according to the situation and personal preferences. Domesticating translation minimizes the foreignness of the source-language text by changing heterogeneous elements into what is familiar to the target-language audience. Foreignizing translation lays great emphasis on retaining the cultural flavors of the source language and enables the audience to have a foreign viewing experience, thus developing the audience's awareness of cultural differences. Subtitle translation should break through

the concept of equivalence and reconstruct the text according to the communication purpose and the needs of readers in the cross-cultural context. If the translator handles it well, the translated product can promote the audience's understanding and appreciation of the work.

Example 1:

-Mycroft: A small "thank you" wouldn't go amiss.

-Sherlock: What for?

-Mycroft: For wading in. In case you've forgotten, field work is not my natural milieu.

-麦考夫:你不觉得应该跟我说声谢谢吗?

-夏洛克:谢你什么?

-麦考夫:谢我拔刀相助.或许你已经忘了,我很少亲自出马的.(*Sherlock*)

Example 1 is selected from the third season of *Sherlock*. The purpose of subtitle translation is to help the audience in the target language understand the storyline of film and television works and grasp the characters' personalities and experience. Good subtitle translation can not only give Chinese audiences a similar viewing experience to foreign audiences, but also achieve the role of cross-cultural communication. The relationship between Sherlock and Mycroft is very subtle. Their relationship may seem cold, but in fact they care about each other and have a deep brotherly love. The background of this short dialogue is that Mycroft has rescued Sherlock from a dangerous situation. The Chinese translation of "wade in" was "介入", but it is translated to "拔刀相助" here, which is more consistent with the plot setting. Mycroft, as a British government official, said "field work is not my natural milieu", which implies that "I've come to save you". The direct Chinese translation of it should be "野外工作不是我的本行", but it was translated into "我很少亲自出马的". "出马" here is more Chinese style and more in line with the expectations of Chinese audiences for Mycroft, highlighting Mycroft's image as a brother who cares about his brother but is reluctant to express himself [6].

3. Conclusion

By analyzing the three identities of translators: audience, interpreter and recreator in subtitle translation, this paper proves translators' subjectivity in translation activities, and translators' subjective initiative runs through the whole process of translation activities. Subtitle language has five characteristics: instantaneity, conciseness, popularity, comprehensiveness and artificiality [7]. These characteristics of subtitle and the audiences' cognitive ability and appreciation habits determine that subtitle must be concise, vivid, clear, fluent and easy to understand. In the whole process of translation, from the translator's understanding and interpretation of the original text, to the use of subtitle translation strategies such as deletion, alteration, domestication and foreignization, all reflect the translator's subjective initiative in translation. If the translator's subjectivity can be well performed, subtitle translation is more likely to play an important role in international film and television communication, and become an increasingly valuable part of the translation field.

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