Translation Strategies in the Context of International Exchange and Cooperation in Colleges: On Subtitle Translation of *Titanic* from Relevance Theory

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Abstract

As a special mode of translation, caption translation plays an increasingly important role in the field of translation. Therefore, under the background of international exchanges and cooperation among colleges and universities, it is necessary to deepen the understanding of subtitle translation with the help of relevant theoretical studies. This paper aims to analyze subtitle translation from the perspective of relevance theory. The study of film subtitle translation strategy is of great value not only in communication but also in linguistics. Subtitle translation is a great bridge to communicate international culture and promote the continuous prosperity and development of human culture. This paper takes the subtitle translation of Titanic as an example to describe the overall divided into four parts. It demonstrates whether the subtitle translation of the English movie Titanic is successful or not on the basis of the theoretical discussions and the case study.

Key Words: *colleges and universities; relevance theory; subtitle translation; Titanic*

1. Introduction

It is well known that movie has been booming all over the world. However, the movie subtitle translation, which is a type of particular language conversion, draws public attention in the field of translation. And as a newly established term and type, the movie subtitle translation aims to assist the audiences of target language to comprehend the movie plots.

Subtitle translation was firstly applied in 1929, which was regarded as a process of offering synchronized captions for movie as well as TV dialogues (Bartoll 14). And we have good reasons for choosing subtitle translation rather than dubbing. But to pick out a proper approach is largely dependent on the inclination of the nation for which the new version is produced. So because of the traditional reasons, subtitle is attached more importance. To make subtitle translation better, this thesis will review previous studies from the limits on subtitle translation. A famous scholar Gottlieb said: "English subtitles should be no more than two lines at a time, and subtitle translation should be no more than one line, and no more than 13 characters". Jauss emphasized that "all the themes and types of literary works as well as the truth of the related history about the works can possibly affect the audience's horizon of expectations". Thus the subtitle translators ought to take the audience into consideration. In other words, the subtitle translators should make sure that the horizon of expectations of the target language viewers is fully satisfied; What is more, in terms of the synchronization, whether the subtitle translation should be considered a type of translation has been discussed by some researchers.

2. The Relevance Theory

The Relevance Theory is a cognitive theory of human communication on the basis of the intention and inference in communication. It was firstly put forward in the book Communication and Cognition in 1986. Since then, it has drawn the attention of scholars from various schools. "In 1991, Wilson's student Ernst-August Gutt published his doctoral thesis Translation and Relevance". His doctoral thesis introduces the Relevance Theory to the area of translation studies, which presentes an effective tool to help people interpret the relatively complicated phenomenon.

Generally speaking, the cognitive environment can be regarded as the basis of relevance. In 1986, the new definition of "context" was put forward by Sperber in his work Relevance: Communication and Cognition. He maintains that the context in the communication is an active variable, a psychological setting-up of the listener during his comprehending of utterances. The speaker and the listener will combine their new experiences with the existing context, which forms the new context in the continual communication. The cognitive individual environment includes logical information, encyclopedic information, and lexical information. Because of the various cognitive structures, the cognitive environment composed by these three kinds of information varies with the individual. So the successful conversion can be carried out through the mutual manifestation of their cognitive environment. And the determination of cognitive environment can be regarded as a matter of choice and a part of the comprehending process itself. People strive to process messages as correctly and productively as possible.

That is to say, people endeavor to attain more information from each other with the maximum contextual effect as well as with minimum processing efforts. So the cognitive environment is the fundamental factor in the relevance.

3. Subtitle Translation of Titanic Based on Relevance Theory

Titanic is a film about the sinking of the RMS (Royal Mail Steamship) Titanic in 1997. And James Cameron directed this film. In the film, Leonardo DiCaprio acted as Jack Dawson, and Kate Winslet acted as Rose DeEitt Bukater, who were from the different social classes. In the meantime, Jack Dawson and Rose DeEitt Bukater fell in love with each other. They were aboard the 1912 maiden voyage of the fabulous ship which suffered a disaster. The numerous stories happened in two and a half miles beneath the waves of the North Atlantic. In this film, the director made up the love story and the major characters, but some supporting characters were shaped on the basis of the actual historical characters. Gloria Stuart played the old Rose narrating the story.

Successful subtitle translations in the film are related closely to the Relevance Theory and even corresponding with the Relevance Theory. Hence, to some extent, the subtitles are translated so successfully that they have faithfully conveyed the source intention and meaning to the target language audience. In order to be convenient, the case study of subtitle translation in this thesis will be organized according to different translation skills or methods.

3.1. Successful Subtitle Translations in Titanic---Brief Explanation

In accordance with the skill of "Brief Explanation", a propositional content may imply the meaning particular to its culture. And in some cases, a brief explanation is a must for the audience so as to achieve the optimal relevance and the speaker-intended contextual effects.

Example 1:

Lizzy: You actually think this is you, Nana?

Old Rose: It is me, dear. Wasn't I a dish?

The above dialogue happened when Old Rose was 84 years old at the beginning of the film. Old Rose and her granddaughter whose name was Lizzy gathered on the ship. They helped some people find the necklace---the Heart of Ocean---in the wreck of ship called Titanic. In the process of searching for the necklace, Old Rose found a picture which was drawn by Jack, whom Rose loved in 1912. When Old Rose glared at the naked girl in the picture, she could not help recalling the memorable scene, when she was lying on a couch in the fabulous room only with a necklace---the Heart of Ocean. And in 1912, Rose was so young and so beautiful that Caledon Hockley, a rich person in America, chased after her all the time and was eager to marry her. Nevertheless, Rose and Jack fell in love with

each other when they met each other aboard. Jack not only saved Rose's life but also encouraged her to live. Thus, when Old Rose's granddaughter asked her whether she was the young lady in the picture, Old Rose felt actually a little unpleasant. This was because the young lady in the picture was Old Rose herself actually in 1912.

"A dish" here was applied to mean a physically alluring person in spoken language rather than "a container for holding or carrying food" or "a specific kind of food prepared for a meal" or other meanings in accordance with the dictionary. Thus, if the translator translated this word as "pan；die"or"ju you mou zhong feng wei de cai", the Chinese viewers will find it is hard to comprehend the meaning in their cultural environment. Since the word "dish" has no connection with a beautiful person, they cannot think of the two different things together. Consequently, the target audience cannot obtain the full cognition about the subtitles even after a lot of efforts. However, the translator here can faithfully convey the meaning of "dish" by presenting an explanatory note in the Chinese subtitle. Thus, the appropriate comprehension will be ensured. And in terms of the target audience, they can easily get the original information in this way.

Hence, the translated subtitle is acceptable to offer the message required to the target audience. Meanwhile, the translated subtitle can successfully aid the audience to gain enough contextual effects in comprehending this utterance without the help of many efforts. Thus, the method of brief explanation serves as a useful way to convey the source meaning to the target audience. In the process of translation, it creates optimal relevance for the target viewers in an appropriate way so that the audience can effortlessly gain the originally-intended information with the fewest processing efforts. Thus, in the process of translating subtitles, the translators are required to assess the non-native viewers' cognitive ability to pick out the proper method and give a brief explanation to the audience in order to adjust to their cognitive environment.

3.2. Successful Subtitle Translations in Titanic---Addition

People in diverse cultural circumstances vary in cognitive ways and customs. Hence, the subtitle translation can narrow the cultural differences by adding some vital messages to minimize the processing efforts of the foreign viewers.

Example 2:

Jack: …And I had no brothers or sisters or close kin in that part of the country, so I lit on out of there and I haven't been back since.

You can just call me a tumbleweed blowing in the wind.

Well, Rose. We've talked…

After being stopped by Jack from committing a suicide, Rose lived on confidently and became even extremely grateful to him. Due to her thanks and curiosity about Jack, Rose invited this poor young man to walk with her on the deck. They wandered together for about a mile on the boat

deck. It can be inferred from his words "tumbleweed" that Jack suffered a lot when he was young. The translator here did not translate the word "tumbleweed" literally into "feng gun cao", but properly added more words to convey its intended information in that context, for there is no such a plant or grass in China. Actually, tumbleweed is "a plant that occurs in desert areas in North America. It breaks away from its roots at the end of its life and then goes off around on the ground" (Fang 79). Jack applied this type of plant here as a metaphor to describe his rootless and homeless life. Thus, the translator added some words in order to provide the most related translation to the audience and reduce the processing efforts and time. In this way, the target audience can get the greatest contextual effects with the least processing efforts. In other words, the translation can achieve the maximization of the relevance in this way. The successful subtitle translation can also be obtained through adding the proper words during the translation.

4. Conclusion

This thesis mainly discusses the subtitle translation of the English movie Titanic on the basis of Sperber and Wilson's Relevance. It talks about some previous studies on the limits of subtitle translation. Then the thesis introduces the Relevance Theory and its feasibility in guiding subtitle translation. Moreover, it reviews English movie Titanic and provides some samples of subtitle translation to illustrate how the Relevance Theory influences the subtitle translation. The methods involve brief explanation and addition. What is more, it demonstrates whether the subtitle translation of the English movie Titanic is successful or not on the basis of the theoretical discussions and the case study.

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