On Subtitle Translation of Movies Under Eco-translatology

-- A Case Study of E-C Translation of My Brilliant Career

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Abstract

The movie My Brilliant Career is adapted from the novel of the same name written by Miles Franklin, which describes the struggle of modern women to pursue independent life. Based on the perspective of Eco-translatology, this paper studies subtitle translation from linguistic dimension, cultural dimension and communicative dimension to analyze the translation strategies used in the translation process, and to discuss the role of Eco-translatology in guiding translation of subtitle translation, in order to provide references for the future study.

Keywords

My Brilliant Career; Subtitle translation; Eco-translatology; Three-dimensional transformations.

1. Introduction

The Australian movie My Brilliant Career, released in 1979, is a coming-of-age movie with distinctive women topics based on the Australian novel of the same name. The original novel, a classic Australian literature, is written by Australian female writer Miles Franklin and published in 1901 with the help of Henry Lawson, known as "the first Australian novel". Its Chinese translation was translated by Professor Huang Yuanshen, and was published by Jiangxi People's Publishing House in 1989. Domestic scholars have made in-depth discussions on the rich literary value of the novel, including the interpretation of the heroine's image, characters' psychology and theme of the novel. By contrast, the movie My Brilliant Career, which was adapted from the novel, has not received the attention of domestic scholars. The movie tells the story of a female figure who has literary talent and dares to fight against the conservative environment in order to realize the literary ideal with infectious pictures and flexible subtitle language. Based on this, its subtitle translation not only requires linguistic accuracy, but also conveys cultural characteristics and highlights the theme. Based on Eco-translatology, combined with the translational eco-environment in which the movie is located. This paper analyzes the subtitle translation of My Brilliant Career from three-dimensional transformations of language, culture and communication, and sorts out the translation strategies used by the translator in process of adaptation and selection, in order to find out how to translate with the language that is easily accepted by the audience without losing the movie culture and characteristic connotation from the perspective of Eco-translatology, and to provide ideas for subtitle translation of movies with distinctive themes.

Eco-translatology was put forward by the famous scholar Professor Hu Gengshe, which was initially explored in 2001, was founded in 2003, was integrated in 2006, and was fully expanded in 2009. It is an interdisciplinary theoretical research based on social and academic development. The research objects mainly include three aspects: first, the translational ecology, that is, the study of environment of target language; Second, the textual ecology, that is, the study of translations; Third, the ecology of "translation community", that is, the study of translators. Eco-translatology integrates the Chinese concept of "harmony between man and

nature" and the principle of "adaptive selection" of western biological evolutionism, and emphasizes the translator's adaptation and selection in the translational eco-environment. The best translation is the result of the translator's selective adaptation and adaptive selection and transformation in the multi-dimensional translational eco-environment. With reference to ecological terms, Eco-translatology has also formed its own unique terminology system, such as translation community, translation chain, translational ecology, translational eco-environment, degree of holistic adaption and selection, etc., which systematically answers four key questions in the development of translation theory, namely, what is translation, who is translating, how to translate and why to translate, and provides a new perspective for scholars to study translation.

2. Translational Eco-environment of Subtitle Translation of My Brilliant Career

From the protagonist's point of view, the movie My Brilliant Career shows the growth story of a woman who has great literary talent, and has declared to be a writer since childhood with the courage to fight against conservative environment. Women theme is one of the common themes in Chinese and western creation. Eco-translatology, as one of the new interdisciplinary translation research theories, combining ecology and translatology, has the theoretical characteristics of compatibility and integration, which corresponds to and adapts to the characteristics of the movie subtitle translation which is as a bridge between Chinese and western for cultures interaction and information penetration in the world. Eco-translatology emphasizes that the translation should be considered under the translational eco-environment, and Darwin's principle of "survival of the fittest" should be taken as the main thread for translator to make the adaptive choice of translation, which is of guiding significance to movie subtitle translation.

Eco-translatology defines translation as "a selection activity of the translator's adaptation to fit the translational eco-environment". (Hu Gengshen, 2003:284). According to the concept of Eco-translatology, subtitle translation is based on the translator's adaptive choice in the translational eco-environment. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator should comprehensively analyze the translational eco-environment in which the source language subtitles and the target language subtitles are located, and consider the factors that may affect the survival probability of the translated subtitles. This paper takes the subtitle translation of the movie My Brilliant Career as the research object, analyzes the translational eco-environment of the movie on the basis of understanding the basic information about the movie, and points out the factors that affect the multi-dimensional integration.

"A 'translational eco-environment' refers to the worlds of the source text and the source and target languages, comprising the linguistic, communicative, cultural, and social aspects of translating, as well as the author, client, and readers." (Gu Gengshen, 2003:284). From the perspective of the movie production team, including directors, producers and most of the actors are women, which determines that the movie language is mostly presented from a female perspective. Translators need to consider the speech characteristics of different female characters in the movie in order to achieve what the movie wants to show about the role conflict, class division and prominent theme. On the other hand, from the point of view of movie audience, unlike readers of literary works, movie subtitle audience has limited time to understand the movie subtitle, which requires subtitles and their translation to convey comprehensive, accurate and understandable information in a limited time, so as to connect movie pictures and dubbing, and achieve the effects shown by movies. Finally, movie subtitles and their translation need to be based on novel works. The original work My Brilliant Career is known as the "first Australian novel" because of its true and natural description. Its unique

position has influenced the presentation of the movie to a certain extent. The subtitles of the movie with source language play an auxiliary role of the, however, the subtitle translation of the target language should maximize the display of the world described in the novel from the aspects of language, culture and communication, so the importance of excellent subtitle translation is self-evident.

3. Three-dimensional Transformations of Subtitle Translation in My Brilliant Career

Eco-translatology divides the translation process into two stages. The first stage is "the translational eco-environment 'selects' the translator as the source text has pride of place" (Hu Gengshen, 2020:86), that is, the translator's adaptation to the translational eco-environment. Before starting movie subtitle translation, the translator should fully understand the language characteristics, cultural background and the effect and function of movie dialogue of the movie respectively with source language subtitles and target language subtitles, so as to provide the audience with subtitle translation that conforms to the language habits of the target language.

The second stage of the translation process is "the translational eco-environment 'selects' the translation as the translator has pride of place" (Hu Gengshen, 2020:86), that is, the translator chooses or decides the form of the translation. In the process of movie subtitle translation, the translator needs to make adaptive selection and transformation from multiple dimensions. Language dimension, culture dimension and communication dimension are the three central dimensions that the translator needs to integrate at the same time. Under the principle of "multi-dimensional integration", Eco-translatology holds that the translation with the highest degree of multi-dimensional transformation is the best translation. The following examples focus on the analysis of prominent transformation in a certain dimension for analysis and research.

3.1. Adaptive Selection and Transformation in Language Dimension

The adaptive transformation of language dimension refers to "the translator's adaptive transformation of language form in the process of translation, which is carried out in different aspects and levels". (Hu Gengshen, 2011:8) When dealing with movie subtitle translation, translators should pay attention to adaptive selection and transformation in vocabulary, sentence patterns, language style and so on.

Example 1: Must you play those vulgar songs? There are so many nice ones, aren't there?

Translation 1:你干嘛尽弹那些下里巴人的曲调？不是有许多阳春白雪的调子吗？

Example 1 is what Sybylla's aunt said when she is puzzled by Sybylla's playing music. The situation of Sybylla's aunt is different from that of Sybylla's mother. She has been living in a high-class environment before and after marriage, maintaining elegance in language and living habits. Therefore, when dealing with its language, the translator pays more attention to the arrangement of vocabulary and sentence patterns. The translator translates "vulgar songs" and "nice ones" into "下里巴人的曲调" and "阳春白雪的调子" respectively, and all of them adopt four-character patterns in vocabulary, which shows the balancing of two contrasting ideas. This form not only reflects Sybylla's aunt is of good upbringing but also is in sharp contrast with the expression of the mother in Example 3.

3.2. Adaptive Selection and Transformation in Cultural Dimension

Cultural adaptation requires that "translators pay attention to the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotations in the process of translation". (Hu Gengshen, 2011:8) In translation activities, translators should adapt the content of the source language

culture system to the content of the target language culture system, so as to avoid obstacles in understanding meaning caused by cultural differences.

Example 2: well, you know what they say: Heed the spark or you may dream the fire.

Translation 2: 他们说的事你都明白，千万注意不要引火烧身。

The sentence "Heed the spark or you may dream the fire" is an Australian idiom. If literally translated it into "小心火花，否则你会害怕火", which will not only hinder the audience's understanding of meaning, but also lose the cultural characteristics of idioms. When dealing with it, the translator adopts the methods of free translation and the positive expression with negative translation, translating it into "千万注意不要引火烧身" with the same effect, in which the negative meaning of "不要" has an emphasis effect, and "引火烧身" is a Chinese four-character idiom, which is adaptive to the target language and culture, and is convenient for the audience to understand the meaning of sentences without losing the cultural characteristics of sentence subtitles.

3.3. Adaptive Selection and Transformation in Communication Dimension

The communicative adaptability transformation requires that "the translator should pay attention to the adaptive selection and transformation of bilingual communicative intention in the process of translation". (Hu Gengshen. 2011:8) In the process of translation, the translator should not only pay attention to the expression of language information and cultural connotation, but also pay attention to the transformation at the communication level, that is, whether the purpose of the original communication can be achieved.

Example 3: -You're a new chum, aren't you?

-Certainly nor. I've been in the colony well over three months.

-Oh, still wet behind the ears.

Translation 3: ——恐怕你也是新来乍到的吧？

　　　　　　——当然不是,来了三个多月了。

　　　　　　——那也跟我差不了多少。

This is a conversation between the protagonist and Frank, a male character who is responsible for picking her up, when she first arrived at her grandmother's house. "New chum" in the first sentence corresponds to "in the colony" in the second sentence of within context, and "new chum" is interpreted as "archaic informed Australian and NZ, a recent British immigrant" in dictionary, which has a certain cultural background. From 1788 to the 1960s, by banishing criminals and encouraging freemen to emigrate, Britain has successively established six colonies in Australia. The male character Frank who talks to the protagonist just moved to Australia from Britain, and "in the colony" represented Australia's position at that time. When dealing with these two translations, the translator cuts down the cultural connotations. Considering the conciseness of movie subtitles and the audience's acceptance, only the most prominent meanings are retained, so as to avoid the obstacles to the understanding of the sentence meaning by the audience who don't understand the cultural background. The third sentence "wet behind the ears" is an idiom, which corresponds to "乳臭未干的；少不更事的" in Chinese, used by the hostess here, has the meaning of joking, indicating that the other party has just arrived. If idioms are translated literally, it will not only be out of context, but also cause errors in the audience's understanding of dialogue. Therefore, the translator adopts the method of free translation, and translate it into "那也跟我差不了多少" which is in line with the context. This translation is with certain colloquial features and naughtiness, which is consistent with the character of the protagonist.

4. Conclusion

Eco-translatology provides a novel research direction for subtitle translation. Guided by Eco-translatology, this paper makes an all-round analysis of the subtitle language of the movie My Brilliant Career from three perspectives: translational eco-environment, adaptive choice and selective adaptation of translators, with the principle of "three-dimensional transformations". From the linguistic point of view, the translation not only adjusts the language structure to the watching habits of the target language audiences, but also shows different women's life classes through different language features. From the cultural point of view, the translation shows the connotation rendered by the original culture through the culture familiar to the target readers; From the communicative point of view, the translation can accurately and clearly reflect the communicative intention and achieve the purpose of communication. Generally speaking, the translator gives full play to the translator's subjectivity from three perspectives, and selects translation strategies in combination with the translational eco-environment, thus realizing the adaptive selection and transformation of the translation in language, culture, communication and other aspects, and realizing the cross-cultural communication of the movie.

Acknowledgments

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