

Translation Strategies of Culture-loaded Words in——The Legend of Zhen Huan from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

Min Guo

Northwest University of Political Science and Law, Shaanxi Xi'an 710122

Abstract: Translation of film and television dramas is a carrier for spreading culture. Many media such as TV dramas and movies play a role in cultural dissemination, and translation serves as a bridge for communication across cultural barriers throughout the entire process. Therefore, the quality of subtitle translation directly affects the effectiveness of Chinese film and television drama translation in spreading Chinese culture. This paper takes the overseas version of the ancient costume drama *Legend of Zhen Huan* as the research object, and analyzes the four translation strategies of literal translation, free translation, domestication and foreignization adopted by the culture loaded words in its subtitles from the perspective of teleology, so as to accurately translate the culture loaded words, handle the differences between the Two Cultures, and faithfully convey the essence of Chinese culture based on the principle of “cultural reproduction”.

Keywords: Teleology; *The Legend of Zhen Huan*; Cultural loaded words; Translation strategy

1. Introduction

The *Legend of Zhen Huan* is a Qing Dynasty palace drama produced by Beijing Television Art Center in 2011. Due to its high viewership, it was later introduced by American streaming giant Netflix. *The Legend of Zhen Huan* was adapted and broadcasted on mainstream television stations in the United States^[13]. This became a hot topic at the time but also raised some doubts: Could foreigners understand it if *The Legend of Zhen Huan* were exported to the United States? So the biggest problem is subtitle translation method.

In order to promote the dissemination of domestic language and culture and comprehensively improve the quality of film translation, it is necessary to attach great importance to the translation of cultural loaded words and to maximize the transmission of cultural information contained in the film to the audience in order to achieve cultural exchange^[1]. Therefore, this article selects the overseas popular American version of *The Legend of Zhen Huan* as the research object, and analyzes the translation strategies of cultural loaded words in the film and television drama *The Legend of Zhen Huan* from the perspective of teleology.

2. Functionalism Teleology

Skopos Theory, originated in Germany and is an important branch of German functionalist translation theory^[4]. It was proposed by German scholars Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer in the 1970s and 1980s. The main representatives of Skopos theory are Hans Vermeer and Nord. The core concept is that the most important factor determining the translation process is the purpose of the entire translation behavior. Translation methods and strategies must be determined by the intended purpose or function of the translation. There are three major principles of teleology: the purpose principle, the coherence principle, and the loyalty principle^[6].

2.1 Purpose Principle

Vermeer believes that the principle of purpose is the primary principle followed in the translation process and also the core principle of skopos theory. The principle of purpose refers to the fact that translation should take effect in the context and culture of the target language^[8]. Generally speaking, “purpose” refers to the communicative purpose of the translation, that is, the communicative function of the translation to the target language readers in the socio-cultural context of the target language. The purpose to be achieved by translation behavior determines the entire process of translation behavior.

2.2 Loyalty Principle

The principle of faithfulness was proposed by Nord. The principle of faithfulness refers to the fact that a translation should not only maintain fluency, coherence, and be understandable by the recipient, but also to a certain extent have a corresponding relationship with

the original text, that is to say, the translation should be faithful to the original text.

2.3 Coherence Principle

It refers to the fact that the translation must conform to intralingual coherence. The translation must be understood by the target language readers. The translation must be understandable to the recipient and meaningful in the target language communication environment and culture^[12]. That is to say, the information presented in the translation should be in line with the recipient's context in order to be understood. Generally speaking, a translation needs to have the most basic fluency. The meaning it wants to express and the function it realizes cannot be discussed at all if the sentence in the translation is not fluent.

3. Translation Strategies of Cultural Loaded Words in the Legend of Zhen Huan from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

3.1 Literal Translation

Literal translation is a translation method that preserves the content and structure of the source language. The translation becomes shorter and can maximize the preservation of the characteristics of the source language culture through word to word literal translation, which helps to spread the source language culture^[2]. *The Legend of Zhen Huan* contains the traditional culture and historical essence of a nation behind it although a place name is only a brief name.

The translation of place names with Chinese cultural characteristics usually only uses Chinese pinyin transliteration, it becomes meaningless and empty symbols in the eyes of Westerners and inevitably erasing the cultural connotations carried by the source language. In the American version of *The Legend of Zhen Huan*, it is likely more conducive to cultural exchange and dissemination if literal translation is used for translation:

Example 1: 这些日子没来寿康宫请安，还请您不要怪罪。

Translation: Please don't blame me for not coming to the Hall of Longevity in Wellbeing to pay my respects these days.

In Example 1, the Empress Dowager's palace was named "Shoukang Palace", which reflects the ancient Chinese people's prayer for health and longevity and embodies beautiful meanings and wishes. Therefore, it can be translated as "the Hall of Longevity in Wellbeing".

3.2 Free Translation

The meaning of the text can be both explicit and implicit. Some meanings are self-evident to the original reader and do not need to be explained, but some are often hidden between the lines or in the cultural context behind the text^[14]. The differences between Chinese and Western cultures can lead to the implicit meaning of some cultural loaded words appearing in the film not being understood by foreign audiences. So appropriate explanatory paraphrasing is necessary in subtitle translation^[3].

Example 2: 来人！剥去她的贵妃服制！打入冷宫！

Translation: Now, you strip off the problems of her rank and send her to the Cold Palace.

In Example 2, the hierarchical differences in the status of imperial concubines in ancient China were mainly reflected and distinguished through their attire and attire. So "imperial concubines' attire" was paraphrased as "the emblems of her rank" for easy understanding.

3.3 Domestication

Domestication translation refers to the translator's adherence to the values of the target language culture when translating. The American version of *The Legend of Zhen Huan* contains many culturally loaded words, Chinese idioms, celebrity allusions, and other words and sentences with strong Chinese language and culture.^[5] Therefore, the domestication translation strategy is also an ideal translation strategy in the subtitle translation of *The Legend of Zhen Huan*.

Example 3: 所有女子都想入选，唯有咱们小姐想被撂牌子。

Translation: All other girls want to be chosen, only you wish to be passed over.

In Example 3, the term "liaopaizi" is a word with cultural significance. This is a term used in the Qing Dynasty for selecting women. In the translation of this sentence, the translator directly translates the word "pass over" to express its connotation. It also expresses the profound meaning of the original text although it is different from the original image.

3.4 Foreignization

Foreignization translation is the process of retaining expressions of foreign cultures and languages in the translated text, deliberately breaking the language and cultural norms of the target language by retaining certain exotic elements in the original text. The purpose is to

enable readers to understand foreign cultures and enrich the target language culture and expressions.[7] For the translation of some loaded words with implicit Chinese classical cultural connotations in the subtitles of *Legend of Zhen Huan*, the use of foreignization translation transcends cultural differences preserves the characteristics of Chinese culture and better conforms to the principles of teleology to meet the needs of communication. Such as the following examples:

Example 4: 世人都是这样，先敬罗衣后敬人。

Translation: The common people of estimated people's status according to their clothing.

In Example 4, People look at their clothing and judge their social status based on their clothing with a derogatory element in it when he look at a person. The translator adopted the view that people rely on clothing by using the word "estimate" instead of translating every word in this sentence. Therefore, it can be translated as to estimate people's status according to their clothing

Example 5: 天下有多少女子希望自己入选，好一家子鸡犬升天。

Translation: Every girl twisted to be selected, so that her whole family could rise up through her success.

In Example 5, it is important to note the translation of the term "jiquanshnegtian". In traditional Chinese, it is an idiom and allusion. Later extended to metaphorically describe a person who has become an official, and those who are related to him also gain power, in order to satirize those who rely on power to rise and become wealthy. The translator did not directly translate the word "jiquan" but instead replaced it with "through her success" in this sentence, expressing the meaning that the whole family will turn over and live a superior life due to the selection of their daughter.

4. Conclusion

Under the guidance of scientific theories, film subtitle translation can develop better and make contributions to the external dissemination of Chinese culture. Functionalism Skopostheorie emphasizes that translation behavior should mainly be determined by the purpose of translation, which is to achieve a better communicative role^[9]. The translation of *Legend of Zhen Huan* is nothing more than a cross-cultural communication activity. In cross-cultural communication, the collision of different cultures will inevitably lead to difficulties in understanding. The translator should analyze the purpose of his translation and flexibly choose different translation strategies based on the Functionalism skopos principle in the process of cultural translation, so as to improve the quality of the translation and promote the exchange and dissemination of different cultures^[11].

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